

Japanese Girl Meets Nepali Boy:
Mutual Fantasy and Desire in “Asian” Vacationscapes of Nepal

by
Chisono Yamaga

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
The University of Manitoba
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Anthropology

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

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Abstract

Recent research on global tourism has focused on the relationships between Western tourists and non-Western locals. However, there have been unique cultural processes in global tourism, which are not only bound to this binary. As a Japanese student, my concern is how Asian female tourists create intimate ties with Asian local men – particularly Japanese female tourists and Nepali men.

I conducted this research from October 2005 to February 2006 in major tourist areas including Kathmandu and Pokhara. I contacted Japanese women and Nepali men in these areas through touristic encounters. By interpreting their stories, I analyzed how they reproduce the fantasy of the transnational sexualities of Other and Self. Through revealing the processes of recreating the fantasy, the vacationsapes of Nepal are illustrated as the chaotic sites of social changes as well as the sites of the “hope” of establishing new relations among Asian people in contemporary Asia.

Acknowledgments

I owe this project to all people with whom I talked in Nepal and Canada. Although it would be impossible to thank everyone who has helped me to conduct this project, I would like to express my sincerest thanks to all the subjects appeared in this thesis. Without your kind cooperation of sharing emotions and stories with me, this project would never have been possible. All your words, tears, and smiles are now part of my life. Thank you.

This project was made possible by the endless patience, understanding and valuable guidance of my advisor Susan Frohlick. I also would like to thank her for the generous financial support from her research grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Thank you Susan – for everything, always. The other two members of my committee – Jessaca Leinaweaver and Colleen Berry provided me with constructive suggestions and great encouragement. Thank you both.

Chapter 1

I SHOW YOU MY HEART

1.1 Starting from My Travel Diary

At night, I walked with *didi* (an elder sister in Nepali) and *dai* (an elder brother in Nepali) [who are the managers of the guesthouse] in Kathmandu Durbar Square. I felt so good. I realized that I am a “woman”. (translated by author)¹

This passage is taken from my travel diary. It was written in 1999 when I stayed in Nepal as a Japanese backpacker. I was 26 years old and traveled alone. I still remember the day I enjoyed a night walk in the steamy weather of May. The orange streetlights illuminated the erotic figures of gods and goddesses in wooden Hindu temples. Rickshaw drivers were sleeping, lying in their showy vehicles. Wearing cotton clothes and beach sandals, I felt the pleasant night breeze on my cheek and body. The smell of urine and garbage. The sound of temple bells. Listening to the Nepali conversation between *didi* and *dai*, a married couple who were my Nepali friends, I was deeply immersed in my imagined landscape of “authentic” Asia. It is one of my most vivid memories, an example of how important my tourist experience of Nepal is to my life. Remembering that day and reading my diary again and again, a question came to mind: why was it that the tourist space of Nepal had made me say that I was a woman? My research for this thesis started from this question. Searching for the answers to this question, I re-entered Nepal six years later in October 2005 as a Japanese ethnographer.

Emerging from my earlier tourist experiences in Nepal in 1999, my research focuses on sexual identity in the context of global tourism, especially intimate relations between Japanese women and Nepali men in the transnational touristic spaces of Nepal. Theories of globalization and transnational sexuality suggest that sexual desire and fantasies of Others and Self formulate sexual identities in transnational spaces including

global tourism (Appadurai 1997, Stoler 1997, Povinelli and Chauncey 1999, Grewal and Kaplan 2001). For example, Stoler (1997) examines the politics of sexual desire toward the Other in transnational colonial spaces. Povinelli and Chauncey (1999) contend that the study of transnational sexuality shows how the process of globalization is experienced by individuals in sexual ways. Employing these theories, this research aims to articulate the processes of imagination in the formulation of the sexual identities by Japanese female tourists and Nepali men.

Exploring touristic encounters in transnational spaces, most research has focused on Western male tourists and non-Western local women. However, since the mid-1990s, feminist scholars have started researching how Western female tourists recreate their exotic and erotic imaginations toward non-Western local men. Pruitt and LaFont (2004) have researched romantic relationships between Jamaican men and Western female tourists. Sánchez Taylor (2001) conducted a great number of interviews with white female tourists and local beach boys in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. Kempadoo (1999, 2001) also discusses the sexual relationships between Western female tourists and Caribbean men. However, the fact that many scholars have focused on Western female tourists to the exclusion of other ethnicities is problematic. Is sexual desire for local men in global tourism exclusive to Westerners? Remembering my backpacker experience in Nepal, I argue that it is not. In order to explore this question, I chose Nepal as my field site.

Investigating sexual desire in the transnational spaces of Nepal, Ortner (1996) and Adams (1996) have both studied the politics of romance and sexuality between Sherpa men and Western female mountaineers and trekkers. Liechty (1996) describes the largest

tourist area, Thamel, as the primary location where Western female tourists engage in sexual relationships with young Nepalese men. Remembering my tourist experiences in Nepal, I wondered why these scholars do not mention Japanese female tourists because Japan has been one of Nepal's major hosted countries (Table 1). Looking at the percentages of tourists to Nepal in the national populations, Japan ranks only between eighth and twelfth although Nepal is geographically closer to Japan than other Western countries (Table 2). Nepal is the fifteenth most popular country in Asia for Japanese tourists to have visited in 2004 (Ministry of Land Infrastructure and Transport of Japan 2006).² Considering these facts, Nepal is not a major destination for outbound Japanese tourists to choose. However, it is still true that Japanese are one of the dominant tourist groups in Nepal just like other Western tourists, so the interactions between Japanese female tourists and Nepali men are focal issues to research. Massey suggests that "if the problem of the postmodernists is that while celebrating the existence of the Other most of us are consigned to being means of constructing the identity of white, heterosexual men, the problem of the modernists is that they do not see us, really, at all" (1994:228). In overcoming this problem, examining how Asian female tourists create ties with local Asian men – particularly Japanese female tourists and Nepali men – becomes significant.

Table 1 Tourist Arrivals in Nepal by Major Nationalities from 2000 to 2004

		2000		2001		2002		2003		2004
1	India	95,915	India	64,320	India	66,777	India	86,363	India	90,326
2	Japan	41,070	U.S.A	33,533	Japan	23,223	Japan	27,412	U.K.	24,667
3	U.K.	40,442	U.K.	32,052	U.S.A	21,007	U.S.A	22,101	Japan	24,231
4	U.S.A	37,765	Japan	28,830	U.K.	17,518	U.K.	18,838	U.S.A	20,680
5	Germany	26,263	Germany	21,557	Germany	15,774	France	15,865	France	18,938

Adapted from: Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal 2005:34

Table 2 The Percentages of Tourist Arrivals in the National Populations

		2000		2001		2002		2003		2004
1	Switzerland	0.229	Switzerland	0.135	Switzerland	0.133	Switzerland	0.188	Sri Lanka	0.079
2	Netherlands	0.102	Netherlands	0.085	Netherlands	0.052	Netherlands	0.052	Netherlands	0.068
3	Denmark	0.091	Denmark	0.072	Austria	0.039	Denmark	0.040	Austria	0.053
4	U.K.	0.068	Australia	0.054	Denmark	0.038	Australia	0.040	Switzerland	0.051
5	Austria	0.064	U.K.	0.054	Australia	0.037	Austria	0.037	Denmark	0.049
6	Australia	0.064	Austria	0.051	U.K.	0.029	U.K.	0.031	Australia	0.049
7	France	0.041	France	0.036	France	0.022	France	0.026	U.K.	0.041
8	Japan	0.032	Sri Lanka	0.029	Germany	0.019	Japan	0.022	France	0.031
9	Sri Lanka	0.032	Germany	0.026	Japan	0.018	Spain	0.021	Spain	0.029
10	Germany	0.032	Japan	0.023	Sri Lanka	0.017	Germany	0.018	Italy	0.021
11	Canada	0.027	Canada	0.022	Italy	0.014	Sri Lanka	0.016	Germany	0.019
12	Spain	0.022	Italy	0.015	Spain	0.013	Italy	0.014	Japan	0.019
13	Italy	0.020	Spain	0.015	Canada	0.012	Canada	0.013	Canada	0.015
14	U.S.A	0.013	U.S.A	0.012	U.S.A	0.007	India	0.008	India	0.008
15	India	0.010	India	0.006	India	0.006	U.S.A	0.008	U.S.A	0.007

Adapted from: Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal 2005:34,
U. S. Census Bureau 2006

In contrast with research on the binary between Western female tourists and non-Western local men, studying the intimate relations between Japanese female tourists and Nepali men is a unique project because both groups have the idea that they are Asian. In general, Asia is the geographic term that means the largest continent bounded by the Arctic, Pacific, and Indian oceans (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. 2006). A Japanese dictionary also explains that the term Asia is geographically defined as “the region from the Malay Peninsula to Siberia in a south-north direction and from Japan to Turkey and Arabia in an east-west direction” (NTT Resonant Inc. 2006). However, the term Asia is not only limited to this geographic usage. Harootunian explains how Miki Kiyoshi, an influential Japanese philosopher, re-conceptualized the term Asia in the interwar period (2000:359). According to Miki, Japan is part of Asia because it has absorbed enormous

cultures from East Asia, mostly China (Harootunian 2000:395); and Japan should take leadership of creating cooperation in “the space of Asia” that is “the Japanese Empire” (Harootunian 2000:384). Anderson argues that national identities are reformulated in each member’s sense of communion with others and he calls a nation an “imagined community” (1991:6). In this regard, Japanese reformulated the term Asia into the geopolitical, imagined community of “Asia” through their desires of exploiting Asian neighbours under the guise of cooperation.³

Considering the term Asian, the identity of being Asian is often stereotyped in terms of phenotype and physical differences such as skin colours, faces, and body frames. Keiko, a Japanese female tourist, said that her Nepali boyfriend Raju had the same physical character of “Mongolian” face as Japanese men have. Nepalis use the notion of skin colour to distinguish Asian tourists such as Indian, Korean and Japanese from other tourists called *kuire*, which means white people in Nepali (Hepburn 2002:622). On this point, the term Asian is a certain kind of biological category so-called “race”.⁴ However, Nagel suggests that we need to re-examine these “assertions of physical or biological differences”:

We will try to understand the social, economic, political, cultural, and/or religious agendas behind difference claims made in social constructions of ethnicity, gender, or sexuality. (2003:5)

Rather than assuming rigid biological categories, Nagel introduced the framework of “ethnicity” as “differences between individuals and groups in skin colour, language, religion, culture, national origin/nationality, or sometimes geographic region” (2003:6). As a student of cultural anthropology, I would like to follow Nagel and analyze the term Asian as a category of ethnicity. Importantly, the term Asian is not universally used in

the same manner but has different meanings depending on individual and group understanding. In this thesis, I will discuss an ethnicity, Asian, from the perspective of national identities of Japanese-ness and Nepali-ness.

For example, the works of Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), a Japanese native ethnologist, were re-evaluated since the 1970s because his descriptions of Japanese villagers evoke the romantic imagination to see rural Japanese in the early twenties as the authentic Japanese; in other words, the national identity of Japanese-ness was reformulated in Japanese nostalgic sentiments (Robertson 1998:28-29, Ivy 1995:63-64). This romantic, nationalistic imagination for “rural Japanese in past” is projected on other Asian “developing” countries. After the 1990s, Japanese travelogues mention how Japanese tourists enjoy the feeling of being assimilated in the landscapes of other Asian countries. One of the most famous travelogues, *Asian Japanese* (Kobayashi 2004), describes how Japanese backpackers enjoy becoming authentic Asians, which Kobayashi calls “Asian Japanese”. These Japanese tourists travel to Nepal in order to search for an “authentic” Asian-ness they feel they have lost in Japan.

In contrast, Nepali people see Japanese tourists in relation to their indigenous notions of Nepali-ness and Asian-ness. Hepburn suggests that Nepali people use the word “Tourist” to refer to wealthy, white people or *kuire* in terms of colour as well as behavior (2002:625). One Nepali *thangka* [a Buddhist painting] painter said,

Tourists come from France, Germany, Japan, America, Korea. American means white with black hair, but can be from any country and we don't know which. Japanese aren't Americans Japanese are many and better than the others ... polite, not greedy, give the most for *thangkas*. As for whites ... most are greedy, and they want the *thangka* cheap. They always say “no money.” (Hepburn 2002:625)

Instead of assuming timeless models, Bourdieu suggests anthropologists to observe practices in everyday life (1977:6). Here, the Nepali painter illustrated how the physical category of non-whiteness is reformulated into the symbol of Asian values by paralleling Japanese tourists' performance with Nepali ideal behaviour, being polite, not greedy. Thus, Nepali people perceive Japanese tourists as being in the distinct category of an Asian tourist population with which they assume to share similar values and practices.

An ethnicity, Asian, is an indigenous category which is historically and geopolitically recreated and individually conceptualized in daily performances depending on individuals and groups. I will examine how the ethnic term Asian is re-conceptualized as the imagined identity of being "Asian" that Japanese and Nepalis assume to be shared.⁵ No studies to date have focused on these distinct categories of authentic "Asian-ness" and tourist population. It is now necessary to research how tourists and locals, who share the sense of "Asian-ness" yet differ in many ways, establish relations with each other in the context of global tourism. In view of the shared sense of "Asian-ness", the various sexual fantasies of Others and Self are discussed at local and global levels. This research explores the specific processes of formulating sexual identity undertaken by Nepali men and Japanese female tourists and discusses the sociocultural issues around them, such as social systems, power relations, economic asymmetry and gender ideology.

1.2 The People and Places I Encounter

I conducted five months fieldwork from October 2005 to February 2006 in the major tourist areas of Kathmandu (the capital), Patan (an ancient city near Kathmandu), and Pokhara (a natural resort city in central Nepal). Most tourists visit these three cities to

enjoy the historical sightseeing in Kathmandu and Patan and the magnificent mountain view from Pokhara. I mostly stayed at guesthouses in Thamel area in Kathmandu valley. Thamel area is called the biggest “tourist ghetto” in Asia where countless guesthouses and colourful souvenir shops are awaiting foreign tourists. I commuted from the Thamel area to Patan city and Kathmandu Durbar Squares, which are famous for their ancient Hindu and Buddhist temples. I also stayed in the tourist area in Pokhara near Lake Phewa, which is well known as the base site of Annapurna Himalaya trekking. My main subjects are Japanese female tourists and Nepali male tourism workers who have a sense of “intimacy” with each other.⁶ I visited tourist spots such as public squares, restaurants, cafés, gift shops, and travel agencies in order to solicit Japanese tourists and Nepali tourism workers. In this thesis, I changed the names of my subjects in order to keep confidentiality and anonymity. When I found it possible to identify people despite changing the names, I changed or left out other information about them.

I interviewed 43 Japanese women, including 28 tourists in total. I used Japanese language with my Japanese subjects. I tried to talk with the Japanese female subjects who did not simply identify themselves as tourists. Smith defines a tourist as “in general, ... a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change” (1989:1). However, the concept “tourist” is used in many different ways. McCabe argues that “the use of ‘I am a tourist’ ... is not necessarily linked to any ideological position on the nature of a tourist experience” (2005:99). In fact, I found some Japanese women who defined themselves as non-tourists encountered Nepali men in the tourist spaces of Nepal just like other Japanese tourists. For example, Noriko was a Japanese female student studying Nepali language

and spoke fluent Nepali. Although she told me that she was not a tourist, Noriko defined herself as a temporary resident who could behave freely just as other tourists. I found that some Japanese female students like Noriko were also mobile subjects who expressed some kinds of feeling that they were on vacation although they attended schools. I also observed that these subjects enjoyed their tourist-like-aspects by moving around touristic spaces such as cafés in Thamel. However, my intention is not to categorize these subjects as tourists but to observe them as the actors to constitute the tourist spaces of Nepal. Thus, I included these Japanese female students as my “tourist” subjects who engaged in intimate relations with Nepali men in the context of global tourism. In my interview, 16 Japanese women told me that they engaged in the special relationships of romance, love, and sex with Nepali men while others explained only their images of Nepali men. Among these 16 Japanese subjects, six self identified tourists; five were international students in Nepal; and five were either married or international students who had met their Nepali male partners during travelling Nepal as tourists.

I interviewed 48 Nepali men in total. I spoke Nepali, Japanese or English with my Nepali subjects depending on their language ability. Fifteen Nepali men, who were mostly tourism workers, talked about their experiences of romance, love, and sex with Japanese female tourists while others explained only their images of Japanese tourists. Among the 15 Nepali subjects, six were tour guides, two were guesthouse managers, four were tourist-shop workers, one was a Japanese teacher who used to be a front desk clerk, one was a meditation facilitator, and one was exporting clothes. I included these Nepali men as “tourism worker” subjects although the Japanese teacher, the meditation facilitator, and the exporting businessman are not exactly tourism workers. However,

they often encounter Japanese female tourists in everyday life and their jobs are much influenced by global tourists. In this sense, they are also “tourism worker” subjects who create the context of global tourism. All these Japanese and Nepali subjects were in between their early twenties and mid thirties.

Gupta and Ferguson argue that we need to reconsider the concept of field sites because “a hierarchy of purity of field sites” is not valid in an era of globalization (1997:13). Amit claims that subjects are increasingly likely to be as mobile as the ethnographers today (2000:12). In order to describe the “flexible” and “mobile” situation of global tourism, I use Löfgren’s new term “vacationscapes” (Frohlick 2003:528). Löfgren proposes the term “vacationscapes” as spaces interplaying between physical and mental landscapes regarding vacation (2004:102). For example, Bishop and Lillian (2002) analyze the cyber space of Internet postings regarding sex tourism in Thailand as a vacationscape. In fact, many discussions about the relationships between Japanese women and Nepali men are observed in the largest Japanese Internet community of *Ni Channeru* (Channel 2).⁷ For example, one Japanese person posted in *Ni Channeru* on March 2005: “For Japanese women visiting Nepal, getting sex is as easy as getting *momo* [meat dumpling snack]” (*Ni Channeru* 2005). Since I believe that fantasy and desire take on important roles in examining global tourism and transnational sexuality, I should mention that my field is not only comprised of geographical tourist sites in Nepal. Thus, in my fieldwork, I researched multiple vacationscapes including various major tourist areas, Japanese travelogues and guidebooks, and the cyber space of Internet sites.

1.3 Observing My Positions

Since my research was to be based on participant observation, which places a researcher within a web of relationships, reflexivity was a significant factor in the process. Cultural anthropologists have become conscious of the ways they use their subjectivity in the process of ethnographic research. This new phase is characterized in terms of “reflexivity, self-criticism, and increasing eclecticism” (Brettell 1993:1, see also Rosaldo 1989a, Okely 1992, and Visweswaran 1996). Thus, it was necessary to examine how my identity “worked at” the field, and how I realized that I was observing both the identities of subjects and of myself in collecting stories in the transnational spaces of Nepal (Gupta and Ferguson 1997:37). I was a researcher studying global tourism in Nepal; at the same time, I shared the experience of realizing transnational sexuality with other Japanese female tourists.

However, my main concern was collecting Japanese female tourists’ personal stories about intimate relations with Nepali men, including romance, love, and sex. These issues were often too sensitive for female tourists to share with me. In order to overcome the problem, I tried to share my life experiences with Japanese female tourists. We discussed various topics such as why we started to travel, what our families said to us, and what we were doing in Japan before and after the trip. Yukiko, a Japanese female tourist, said to me:

In our twenties, we are more open about love relations with men. But after coming to our thirties, we come to have a strong guard against men. You feel the same way, right? ... I have been so tired that I travel for relaxation. It is very difficult to manage relationships with female co-workers. I am so tired. ... Since I turned 25, I have come to realize how terrifying human beings are.

Feeling empathy for Yukiko, I also explained how I behaved and felt in different ways from when I was in my twenties. Just as in my conversation with Yukiko, I shared stories about my life with the Japanese female tourists I met. Doing so, I could collect their personal stories about intimate relations with Nepali men that were part of their life stories.

In sharing my life stories with Japanese female tourists, I came to realize that they were observing me while I was an ethnographer observing them. Rosaldo criticizes the privileged status of ethnographers in relation to their subjects:

Social analysis must now grapple with the realization that its objects of analysis are also analyzing subjects who critically interrogate ethnographers – their writings, their ethics, and their politics. (1989a:21)

Just as Rosaldo questions the hierarchy between the observer and the observed, I recognized that I was being observed and criticized by my subjects of Japanese tourists. During my interview with Natsuko, a Japanese female tourist, she started to interview me:

Now let me ask you some questions. Do you have a boyfriend? Does he live in Canada? Why did you travel and trek alone in your twenties? Why did you choose Nepal as your field?

It seems that Natsuko was trying to make sense of her travel experiences by observing me. Definitely, I was one of her subjects here and she interviewed me according to her agenda. Even outside of the interview context, I was often challenged with the question, “What is your hypothesis?” I became worried about how to answer such a difficult question. I explained the outline of my research and what I was thinking at that time. Some of my informants criticized my idea. Rika, a Japanese woman married to a Nepali man asked me to show her some of the articles that I referred to in making my hypothesis. Rika

responded in her email, “After reading some parts of the article, hmm, I feel like it is something different.” Rika told me that she loved her Nepali husband not because of his social background as was suggested by the authors of the articles but because of his personality.⁸ Rika’s response shocked me and reminded me that my fieldwork was made up of reciprocal communication. Although I questioned the unequal relations between the observer and the observed in class discussions at university, I was still annoyed with being observed and criticized in the field. I described this in my field notes:

I am on the same level with other Japanese tourists. We discuss on the same level. I am observed and have to explain what I am thinking. I often feel discomfort in realizing that I am observed. I feel like disclosing all of myself in front of them. This is my dilemma. I feel so ashamed!

My sense of shame sometimes stopped me from stepping into the places where Japanese tourists gathered. I was often worried about how I was observed by other Japanese tourists. However, my feelings of annoyance clearly highlighted the question of my authority as an observer.

In addition to the challenged hierarchy between Japanese female tourist and myself, how did I see my position with Nepali men? When I met Nepali tourism workers as a tourist, I explained my role as a student interested in researching with them. Even though I emphasized my role of researcher, Nepali tourism workers often categorized me as a tourist. Moreover, I wondered how Nepali male tourism workers saw my body as an independent female tourist in sexual ways. Researching intimate relations between beach boys and Western female tourists in Thailand, Malam employed the strategy of presenting her role as a “researcher” in order not to be involved in sexual relationships with her subjects, Thai beach boys (2004:181-182). Following Malam, I tried to emphasize my identity as “researcher”. However, I could not escape from exposing my body as a

Japanese female solo-tourist even though I presented my body as that of a researcher because I had been located in sexual settings such as conversations about romance, love, and sex. Coffey explains that “[t]he cultural importance of sex in these [sexual] settings made the positionality of the sexual self more transparent and real, yet more difficult to separate from the fieldworker self” (1999:86). I sensed the sexual aspects of my body in two contexts – situations where I felt “old” and alcohol drinking.

I sensed my sexual body in my early thirties as that of an “older” Japanese woman in the tourist spaces of Nepal. Harsharaj, a Nepali tourism worker speaking fluent Japanese, did not talk much to me although I saw he often flirted with other Japanese female tourists. Although I tried to make friendly conversation, Harsharaj seemed to behave distantly from me. I asked his Japanese male friend Tsuyoshi why he was unfriendly with me. Tsuyoshi answered, “He wants to have a Japanese girlfriend, but young one. He often tells me that he is interested only in Japanese women who are in their twenties. So you are ... [out of his interests].” In fact, the age of women plays an important role in the way both women and men see women’s bodies in Nepal and Japan. In Nepal, an elder woman friend is often called “*didi*” [an elder sister] while a younger woman friend is called “*bahini*” [a younger sister] according to Nepali age hierarchies (Ahearn 2002:157-159). I was conscious of whether I was called “*didi*” or “*bahini*” due to the Japanese common sense that older women are sexually less attractive. I am not sure if Tsuyoshi’s analysis is true or not; however, I sexualized my body as an “older” woman who I thought Harsharaj did not like talking with; as a result, I started placing a distance between him and myself.

In contrast to the situation with Harsharaj, my body as a Japanese woman led to my success in a gift shop exchanging conversation with Nirmal who is a Nepali male worker who speaks fluent Japanese. When I visited his shop and said that I was collecting love stories between Japanese and Nepali, he invited me to drink *chayang* [local rice wine] in a local bar. I remembered other Nepali men said to me, “it is more suitable to talk about our love stories in a bar.” In Nepal, women’s alcohol drinking in public is linked with casual sex because both behaviours are transgressing Nepali norms (Liechty 2005:22-25). I am familiar with the idea in Japanese society as well since Japanese people are often allowed to break norms when they are drunk, just as Japanese people say, “Everything’s informal tonight!” in drinking settings. Thus, drinking alcohol in a bar is obviously a sexual setting for both Nepali and Japanese. Nirmal took me to a table in the back of the local bar, which was located on a maze of local back-streets. Nirmal started to speak about the long love stories of his Japanese friends. We had drunk three pitchers of *chayang*. We enjoyed our conversation in Japanese:

Nirmal: If I were not married and you didn’t have a boyfriend, how about me [as your boyfriend]? Ha ha ha!

Chisono: I am not young enough to be your girlfriend.

Nirmal: No problem! You are not old. We are just in our thirties.

Chisono: Thank you! But you have a Nepali wife and I have a Japanese partner. What can we do?

Chisono in her heart: He knows how to make people feel good. I feel very comfortable with him. I can understand why Japanese women trust him.

In this scene, we were clearly situated in the sexual setting of a local bar enjoying our wine and conversation about love and sex. Although we did not have any physical contact, the conversation shows that my body and his body were the sexual subject of

each other. Here, I employed my feminine body as a tool to exchange our stories about romance, love, and sex. The sexual setting in a bar also helped me to understand how Japanese women start making intimate relations with Nepali men.

My shifting positions as a tourist, ethnographer, and friend often made me feel unsettled. Becoming a tourist, Nepali people saw me as one of the tourists who came and went. Nima, a Nepali male tour guide, told me in Japanese, "I make friends with Japanese tourists like with you, but they will be gone soon. I often feel lonely." Although Nima continued contacting his Japanese friends via emails, repetitious separation from his tourist friends clearly marked him with the feeling of loneliness and I felt that I was one of the tourists who left this mark in his heart. Saroj, a male shop-owner, compared me with another Japanese ethnographer who was researching his community by saying in English and Nepali, "You are busy with talking with Japanese tourists. But you do not know anything about us." Their words bit into my heart. Even though I claimed that I was a researcher trying to understand Nepali culture, did they see me as a tourist who has a short relationship with Nepali people? Although I shared the feeling of becoming a tourist with other Japanese tourists, I often felt alone in the field. During conversation with other Japanese tourists in a "happy" tourist mood, I had the invisible pressure of my duty as an ethnographer to observe them as my subjects. Did they consider me their tourist friend even though I was recording their stories? Galani-Moutafi argues the task of anthropologists that differ from that of tourists:

All three [ethnographers, travelers and tourists] journey beyond their geographical and cultural boundaries but the practices and image of tourists and travelers suggest that they do not necessarily achieve the type of self-consciousness attained by anthropologists who work within a self-reflexive paradigm as they gaze at the Other (2000:204)

Just as Galani-Moutafi defines self-reflexive works as the profession of anthropologists, I believe that my inner conflict is a mark to distinguish myself as an anthropologist from other tourists. Thus, I had and continue to struggle with my multiple positions, as long as I am a student of anthropology.

1.4 Meeting People and Showing My Heart

Employing my multiple positions in the field, I had to consider the ways in which I approached and established relations with my subjects. Especially thinking of my Japanese subjects, I needed to consider the ways to deal with my transient subjects. The tourist spaces of Nepal were open arenas for various people to come and go. There were many possibilities to encounter my subjects beyond my expectation. I tried to be ready to speak to any Japanese female tourist as well as Nepali male tour guides in various places such as the streets, cafes, and restaurants at any moment. I had to be active in approaching subjects by saying “Hello! You are a Japanese tourist, right? Are you her tour guide? May I talk with both of you?”; otherwise, I would miss the chance to collect stories. Indeed, it was a hard task for me. I often became shy, tired and depressed in playing an active role in approaching people. I wondered if my fieldwork with mobile subjects was a restless work because I had to become a kind of hunter who targeted moving subjects in the open arena of tourist sites. Even now, I cannot find a way to easily connect myself with mobile subjects in the open spaces of vacations; however, I think that it is the very nature of ethnographers to become restless and active players in creating relationships with the subjects.

Even after I was successful in encountering people in the field, I faced other problems. One is that my research theme contains highly personal issues including romance, love and sex that are not easily revealed. Another is that my tourist and tour-guide subjects as well as I, a tourist ethnographer who moved around three cities for five months, were all mobile, so I needed to develop rapport with these subjects within a short period of time. I wondered how I could make my subjects feel comfortable enough to tell me their personal stories in their first contact with me. In order to deal with these problems, I employed some strategies. First, I did not use tape recording devices, nor question sheets in order to make my informants feel relaxed enough to tell their personal stories. Second, I tried to share my life experiences with my subjects such as the interview with Yukiko. However, I thought that these strategies were not enough for my informants to tell me their private matters including romance, love and sex. Considering the issue over and over again, I came to have the idea of sharing my personal story – my romance, love and sex with Nepali men. In the process of establishing strong friendships, we accept each other only after we open the door of ourselves to our friends. If rapport is a kind of friendship, the disclosure of the researcher's personal experiences is a necessary condition for rapport. However, I had inner conflicts. I feel shy about talking about my personal experiences with various people. If I speak about my personal matters in the field, I might have to write my private matters in my paper. I felt very awkward about revealing my personal matters for an academic purpose.

Behar argues the dilemma of revealing personal matters in public by referring to the case of Jamison, a Danish psychiatrist who suffered from mental illness:

Yet if science makes it possible for the unspeakable to be spoken, if science opens borders previously closed, why is Jamison so anxious about her revelations? Why is

she not more comforted by science? Like other scholars stretching the limits of objectivity, she realizes there are risks in exposing oneself in an academy that continues to feel ambivalent about observers who forsake the mantle of omniscience (1996:12).

Despite the dilemma of revealing myself, I thought that it was not fair that we asked others to reveal their personal experiences for our academic purposes without talking about our personal matters. Frohlick argues for the narrative of a researcher-self “as a resource and tool for reflexivity, although this is not in any way straightforward” (1999:88). Like Frohlick, my personal narrative should be a powerful tool in understanding others. However, like Behar, I wondered how much my personal matters should be exposed in the field and in the academic arena for better cultural understanding, and I could not help feeling embarrassed in taking such risks.

Even on the way to Nepal in the airplane, I could not decide to what degree I should speak about my personal matters in the field. Without finding the answer, I conducted my first interview with Anil who was a male Nepali tour guide. After I introduced my research, Anil agreed to talk about his life. Anil told me his love stories involving foreign tourists, including a Japanese woman, in Nepali and English. I found out that all of these love stories ended with tragedy. Telling his stories, Anil stared into distance with a look of melancholy. I felt sorry for Anil because I made Anil remember things that he might not want to recall. I could gain academic profit from Anil, but what did Anil gain from me? After the interview with Anil, I supposed that Anil was happy to tell his personal story to me as a researcher who was going to understand his background. However, I felt uneasy with the situation where Anil was revealing personal matters while I was only receiving his story. Why did not Anil have a right to collect my

personal story in the same way? Feeling both grateful and guilty toward Anil, I came to feel that I should tell my personal love story in order not to be only a receiver.

I tried out the strategy of telling my personal story when I was talking with Rika, a Japanese woman. Rika explained how she had met her Nepali husband while travelling in Nepal. However, Rika seemed to keep distance from me as I was researching her by asking what I was writing in my notes. How could I become closer to Rika as a friend? Remembering my feeling with Anil, I started to tell my personal love story instead of only listening to her. I told her that this was my third time visiting Nepal. I confessed that I had a Nepali boyfriend when I was a backpacker and explained that my research question emerged from my actual experiences. Indeed, I was not only a researcher studying intimate relations between Japanese women and Nepali men, but I was also one of the subjects who experienced having intimate relations with Nepali men. Although it was a matter of the past, I was uncomfortable telling my personal story. Rika started asking me how I met him, what attracted me about him, and why we broke up. I told her my personal love story in detail. I met him, a freelance tour guide, in the street near Thamel. At first, I was attracted to his face that looked different from Japanese but still similar to us. After I left Nepal, the physical distance between us finally led to our break up and he married another Japanese woman. Due to this romance as well as my trekking experiences, I came to become more interested in Nepal and that finally motivated me to do this anthropological research. Thus, I felt that my backpacker experience in Nepal totally changed my life. While I was telling my story, Rika seemed to become closer to me saying, "We can be good friends." Calling myself "tourist ethnographer" that meant

my ambiguous role of becoming a tourist, ethnographer, and friend, I described the complex situation in my field notes:

This research is based on the disclosure of ourselves. A “tourist ethnographer” means a researcher gives and takes our stories as a tourist. Not being only a receiver, I cannot proceed to make conversation without revealing myself. I am playing a conversation game of catch with my subjects.

After the day I wrote this passage, I decided to tell my personal love story in order to “dramatize the intersubjective give-and-take of fieldwork” (Clifford 1988:43). By telling my love story, some of my subjects revealed their love stories to me. I met Kumar, a Nepali man, in a tourist café. Kumar once refused to tell his love story by saying in English, “It is a private matter. I don’t know much about you, so I can’t tell you.” However, after I talked about my own love story, Kumar’s flippant face turned serious and he suddenly said, “Well, I had a Japanese girlfriend before.” I was surprised to see how Kumar opened his door to show me something he had considered too private to talk about. This was also the case with Tomoko, a Japanese woman, who said to me after our interview, “I did not know how much I could tell you about myself. But because you spoke talked about your experiences, I felt I could tell my love story too.” Interviewing Rika, Kumar, and Tomoko, I understood how effectively my personal story worked in asking them to speak their stories.

However, revealing my story did not always lead to success. I interviewed Bijay, a Nepali male worker in a guesthouse. Bijay looked uncomfortable, saying in Japanese, “I used to have a Japanese girlfriend.” In order to make him relaxed, I told him that I also had had a Nepali boyfriend. However, Bijay asked me his name and where he used to work. Bijay said, “I know him.” I was very shocked. Although I made a decision to reveal my story, I could not help feeling embarrassed at the fact that my subjects knew

details about my past. Bijay still looked uncomfortable with me and I felt too embarrassed to continue with the interview. Due to this experience, I wondered again to what degree I could tell my personal story to my subjects. I faced a similar situation in interviewing Ram, a Nepali male tour guide. Ram was drunk on many bottles of beer in a guesthouse lounge. Ram asked me if I had a Nepali boyfriend or not. I answered yes. Ram was cynically laughing at me and asked me, "What is his name?" I felt like I had been insulted and refused to answer the question. I could not continue the interview. I had failed to establish a dialogue with my subject again.

What does the failure mean? Visweswaran argues the agency of ethnographers' role as a trickster "makes the distinction between success and failure indeterminate, altering us to the 'possibilities of failure'" (1996:100). Just as Visweswaran re-configures the notions of field and home through her failure in her interview, I needed to re-examine the procedure of revealing myself I employed in my interview. I made a decision to reveal my personal love story in order to dramatize my give-and-take fieldwork. However, when talking about my past in front of Bijay and Ram, I could not continue my interview because I felt embarrassed. Taking the failure into account, I remembered my interview with Naomi, a Japanese woman. Naomi told me, "To tell the truth, I used to have a Nepali boyfriend when I traveled in Nepal. But it is a story of the past. It is finished." Naomi did not continue to speak about her love story. Why did Naomi stop talking about her past? Was it the same reason I refused to speak my past in front of Bijay and Ram? I assumed that the procedure of revealing my story would challenge the hierarchy between the researcher and the researched. I supposed that I could be on the same level with my subjects by telling my love story for them. I wanted

to be honest with my subjects by revealing myself. However, it was not that easy to get closer to my subjects as long as I was researching them. If I was shocked and embarrassed in telling my personal story, my subjects might have felt the same way. Considering Naomi's feelings and mine, I realized that I could not escape from the power relation between an observer and the observed. Thus, I had to keep in mind that I had been dealing with very sensitive issues including people's sensitive emotions.

1.5 Writing Our Ethnography

I revealed my personal stories to my subjects while they also told me their own narratives. Exchanging private stories including romance, love, and sex, I sensed a feeling of friendship growing between my subjects and myself. I drank local wine, shared plates of local snacks, and exchanged life stories with my Nepali subjects with a sense of fellowship. Some Japanese women visited my room in order to discuss their problems with me while I talked over my worries about life with them. My subjects often showed me genuine emotion with no hesitation and I reciprocated. However, I also needed to be cognisant of another part of myself – that is the role of researcher who tried to interpret their stories and emotion not only for the sake of friendship but also for my research. I had to inform my subjects again that I was researching them because they often forgot my role as a researcher in the process of building friendship. As one of my strategies, I purposely showed them my notes in order to confirm their consent to participate my research. Nevertheless, I often felt awkward in notifying my subjects that I was “observing” them because I was afraid of breaking our sense of fellowship. I was also bothered by the idea that I might be exploiting our friendship for my own research. This

conflict shows that I moved across the boundary of friendship and fieldwork; in other words, I could neither be just a friend nor just a researcher and I had to shoulder the burden of negotiating my shifting positions with my subjects.

Indeed, it was a difficult job for me to continue playing the multiple roles even after I left the field. Because I found it difficult to draw a line between friendship and fieldwork, I emailed my ethnographic texts to my subjects, Keiko, Noriko (Chapter 4) and Nima, Bimal (Chapter 5) in order to confirm whether or not I could include their narratives. I also emailed the corresponding part of my thesis to the subjects who said they would like to see my thesis. This means that I revealed to them how I sympathetically and critically interpreted their stories and emotions. I was afraid that they would dislike my interpretation and I would lose our friendship. So far, I have received only favourable responses from them; however, I was worried about what they really think of me, their “unusual” ethnographer friend. Hendry explains this emotional burden in the field:

In general, during fieldwork, it might be thought better to avoid expressing negative opinions about matters close to the hearts of informants. In other words, one can really only pretended to be a friend. Nevertheless ... I sometimes grew tired of the role I was playing, and made the mistake of revealing this to my host, as friend, rather than as informant ... however, my mistake actually led to a deeper understanding of the people I was investigating. (1992:172)

As Hendry points out, the dilemma of standing on the ambiguous boundary between friendship and fieldwork will lead to better understanding of the people I was researching. Then, I posed a question, how can I deal with my shifting roles as a friend, anthropologist, tourist, Japanese woman in writing my ethnography for better understanding? Coffey suggests:

The narratives of ethnographic friendship are indicative of social actors sharing lives and biographies in the field. They serve to remind us that we are part of what we study. In researching, constructing and writing the lives of others we are engaged in negotiating and writing ourselves. (1999:47).

Becoming annoyed with the burden of negotiating my multiple roles, I realized that my dilemma itself was part of my ethnography as Coffey says. I thought that what I could do was to become the subject of my research just as my subjects were illustrated in my ethnographic texts. Thus, I came to consider the idea that I should include my personal narratives, such as my travel diary and emotional state in the field, in my thesis.

Clifford argues that ethnographic truths are “*partial* – committed and incomplete” representations because ethnographic texts are reflexive products of ethnographers who are enmeshed in power relations with others (1986:7). Following Clifford, it is necessary to realize that reflexivity and personal concerns play a significant role in selecting topics, interpreting data and transforming field notes into ethnographic texts. Consequently, my ethnographic texts are constructed from data which are interpreted with the imagination of my memory (Coffey 1999:110). Thus, my personal narratives in my memory should be described “as a resource and tool for reflexivity” (Frohlick 1999:88). Numerous scholars have argued that the emotions of researchers work in ethnographic writing as a guide to understand others and orient readers for their better comprehension (Behar 1996, Rothernberg 1999, Watson 1999). Coffey explains the role of our emotions: “[a]s well as a distinctively physical activity, fieldwork is about emotions. ... It should be acknowledged, reflected upon, and seen as a fundamental feature of well-executed research” (1999:158-159). However, there were dilemmas in revealing my own emotional narratives in my thesis.

The emotional dramas surrounding my position and procedure in the field showed my bias and emotional situations – my subjectivity. Being observed by other Japanese tourists, I could not help feeling ashamed. In spite of emphasizing my position as a researcher, I sensed my sexual body in front of different subjects in diverse ways. By revealing my personal story, I felt grateful, shocked, and embarrassed depending on situations I was in. Importantly, my emotional orientation toward others was not only seen in my personal matters, but was also greatly influenced by the cultural and social settings around me (Rothenberg 1999, Frohlick 1999). Employing multiple positions, I played an active role building the relations with my subjects and my presence had a great influence on my subjects to re-construct their pasts and tell me their stories. I have had similar experiences as my Japanese female subjects due to my backpacker experiences and I felt that I was part of these subjects. I thought that the social and cultural settings around me should offer good material for studying about my subjects. Thus, I felt that exploring the emotions of the researcher-self would lead to a better understanding of social and cultural practices of people including those of the researcher.

Rosaldo examines his cultural bias and emotional state again and again in order to understand the grief and rage of an older Ilongot man in headhunting (Rosaldo 1989a:1-21). As long as ethnography is the study of understanding specific experiences of particular people, the subjectivity of an ethnographer should be included in ethnographic texts. Then, subjectivity can work as a guide to navigate readers for better comprehension (Behar 1996:16). However, I still hesitated to expose my emotions in my ethnography since it meant that unknown people could read the inside of my life. Behar

discusses how ethnographers have experienced the dilemma of exposing the emotions of their researcher-selves:

How do you write subjectivity into ethnography in such a way that you can continue to call what you are doing ethnography? Should we be worried that a smoke alarm will blare in our ears when the ethnography grows perilously hot and “too personal”? (1996:6-7).

Considering the issue, Watson (1999) provides an ethnographic account in which his emotional fabric was vividly illustrated in his wife’s home village. Watson asks us: “how reliable an instrument are one’s own emotions for identifying what is being felt by another?” (1999:143). His account reveals “an evocation of what he came to feel” in the field (1999:145). Reading his account, Watson’s tears, joy and laughter allow us to share some of his specific experiences deeply (1999:159-160). I considered how I could succeed in using my emotions as an instrument to guide the readers into “being there” like Watson. I assumed that Watson’s account was successful because of his sincere attitude toward the subjects and readers to honestly reveal his emotions in ethnographic texts.

I thought the best way to expose my emotions in my ethnography should start from the disclosure of my travel diary. Fullagar uses her travel journey in Nepal, India, and Thailand as intersubjective narratives which “do not function to provide autobiographical detail of journeys, rather they provide a means of reading desire in travel and theory” and “open up other stories, and hence ethical relations, between self and other, self and world”(2002:61). Thus, I started my writing with the excerpt from my diary in this thesis. Although I felt shy doing so, I thought that it provides the best ways to understand the relationships between Self, the Other, and the world we live in. Coffey suggests that “[f]ieldwork starts from where we are. We do not come to a setting without

an identity, constructed and shaped by complex social processes.” (1999:158). Just as Coffey says, I placed my backpacking experiences and my love affair with a Nepali man at the starting point of this project while hoping that my personal narratives would lead to better understanding. Despite my struggles over exposing myself, I believe that the description of my own emotions and narratives will help my readers, including my subjects, understand how I engaged in the relationships with them and interpreted their stories in particular ways

I consider my writing to be the cultural product of my observation and the cooperation of subjects. Indeed, my ethnographic work is the product of multiple subjects including myself. As long as I negotiate with others, I identify not only others but also myself. The study of people is the study of myself. Then, the question of exposing myself (my personal narrative and emotions) appeared in front of me. Although I felt shy in describing a great deal of my introspective processes in this chapter, this confession was necessary for me to make up for my sense of guilt of revealing my subjects’ private matters for my academic purpose. In being sincere with my subjects, I wanted to overtly describe my personal narratives and emotions in this thesis.

Ethnography to me is the “never-to-be-completed task of full understanding and perfect translation” of human negotiation between others and myself, and inside my identity (Watson 1999:2). Through struggling with these issues, I hope my research will further the study of tourism and contribute a new perspective toward establishing better relationships among various people in tourism.

Chapter 2

GLOBAL TOURISTS EXPECT EROTIC ENCOUNTERS

2.1 Sex Tourism or Romance Tourism?

From Bangkok to Kathmandu via Dhaka
Take off. Growing elation inside me. Altitude and my heart beating are going up.
(author's travel diary, March 1999)

In this scene, the airplane is the metaphor of global tourism. Just as my feeling of excitement in global tourism grew, so too did my feeling of elevation as the airplane was lifting off. It is true that I was expecting that something would happen to me after the airplane landed in Kathmandu. That was not only the adventure of Himalayan trekking, but also the voyage of romance, love, and sex. In fact, after arriving at the Kathmandu airport, I came to be attracted by Nepali men and encountered touristic adventures involving romance, love, and, sex. This experience led to my new sense of gender, "I am a woman" as written in my travel diary. I wonder whether I was one of sex tourists who are blamed as neo-colonialists, just as Japanese male sex tourists exploit women in the sex tourism market of "peripheral" countries such as those in Southeast Asia (Hall and Tucker 2004:11, Bishop and Robinson 1998:173)?

Sánchez Taylor (2001) defines female tourists who enjoy sexual or romantic pleasure with local men as "sex tourists" just as male tourists defined as sex tourists. Sánchez Taylor conducted a great number of interviews with heterosexual white female tourists in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. According to the survey, none of the female tourists who had sex with local men perceived their partners as prostitutes or gigolos (Sánchez Taylor 2001:54). Similarly, local men did not perceive themselves as prostitutes or gigolos (Sánchez Taylor 2001:758). However, Sánchez Taylor refutes the distinction between female sex tourists and male sex tourists because male sex tourists

also see their relationships as romance that female tourists consider their relations to be (2001:759). Thus, Sánchez Taylor categorizes female tourists engaging in either sexual or romantic relations as “sex tourists” just as male tourists engaging in sexual relations with locals are seen as sex tourists.

In addition, Phillips contends the relationships between white female tourists and local beach boys in Barbados “can be easily fitted under the umbrella of prostitution” (1999:191). Focusing on economic exploitation, Phillips (2002) concludes that their relations are unequal in the form of neo-colonialism. Kempadoo (1999, 2001) also discuss the sexual relationships between white female tourists and Caribbean men in terms of neo-colonial hierarchy. Kempadoo contends that “liaisons between Caribbean men and female tourists and Caribbean women and male tourists are similar” since male hustlers in Barbados are “highly dependent upon the women’s wealth” (2001:49).

In contrast, Pruitt and LaFont argue that those female tourists are “romance tourists” as having the particular qualities of “romance, love and the possibility of a long-term relationships in addition to sex” and distinguish “romance tourism” from “sex tourism” (2004:318). Since romance is a dominant theme of gender and sexual relations in Western culture, Western female tourists explore the opportunities to fulfill the fantasies of romance and “self-realization”, which may not be found at home (2004:319-320, 331). In a similar way, Dahles and Bras (1999) deny the applicability of the concept of prostitution in the relations between white female tourists and local beach boys in Indonesia. Dahles and Bras suggest that their relations “may be extended into a more protracted, diffused and personalized liaison, involving both emotional attachment and

economic interest” so that they call the local beach boys “romantic entrepreneurs” (1999:286, 288).

Furthermore, Jeffreys examines whether female tourists are engaged in sex tourism as male tourists in asking, “do women do it too?” (2003:223). Jeffrey contends that authors such as Sánchez Taylor, Kempadoo, and Phillips, prove that women do pay for sex as well, so that the category of sex tourism is “ungendered” (2003:232-226). However, Jeffreys emphasizes the differences between male sex tourists since female tourists are likely to engaged in romance or serious love rather than sex as Pruitt and LaFont propose (2003:228). Jeffreys strongly proposes that “*women do it too* in relation to sex tourism does not withstand careful attention to the relations of power, the effects, the meanings and the contexts of the behaviour” (2003:236). Therefore, Jeffreys disagrees with the inclusion of female tourists in sex tourism and underlines the differences between male and female tourists. These scholars underline the fantasy of romance in the relations between female tourists and local men and in this way distinguish female tourists from male sex tourists.

Accordingly, Herold, Garcia and DeMoya challenge the categorization of female tourists into either sex tourism or romance tourism. Herold, Garcia and DeMoya (2001) conducted wide-ranging interviews with female and male tourists, female sex workers and beach boys in the Dominican Republic. The research shows how beach boys use elaborate skills in “playing on female vulnerability” so that the relations cannot be defined as a simple formula of exploitation of locals (Herold, Garcia and DeMoya 2001:985). Herold, Garcia and DeMoya conclude that these relationships cannot be categorized in either romance or sex tourism, rather they move on the continuum between

romance and sex, although there are considerable gender differences: female tourists are motivated toward romance; male tourists toward sex (2001:994-995).

The typology of tourist behaviour and the differences between female tourists and male tourists are focal issues here. Although I agree with the idea that female tourists behave in different ways from male tourists, the emphasis should not be on the distinction between women and men. This is because some female tourists behave in just the same way as male sex tourists. On this point, I disagree with the idea that women should be excluded from sex tourism. However, I do not want to categorize those female tourists as “sex tourists” by undervaluing the romantic aspect of their relations that might be greatly different from that of male counterparts. Then, as Herold, Garcia and DeMoya argue, should I apply both labels of sex and romance tourism to tourists of any gender on the continuum of the sex-romance binary?

Before answering the question, I want to move away from these debates that focus on the categories of sex and romance tourism. Rather than discussing these categorizations, there is much more important analytical and ethnographic work to do in the area of gender, sex, and tourism. Since the process of global tourism is culturally unique and contains various meanings and possibilities, including romance and prostitution, the typology of tourist behaviour can be misleading in stereotyping the relations between hosts and guests. Therefore, I do not use the category of “sex tourism” or “romance tourism” but focus on researching the specific “processes” of various relations of gender, sex, and tourism on a case-by-case basis. In doing so, I focus on the unique processes in which Asian subjects, especially Japanese female tourists and Nepali men, are intimate with one another in the area of sex, gender, and tourism.

2.2 Transnational Sexual Identity and Desire

Rather than categorizing the behaviour of female tourists, it is now significant to examine various processes in which female tourists create intimate relations with local men in the context of global tourism. It is necessary to address theoretical frameworks that explain the process in which their sexuality and desire are distinctively reproduced in transnational spaces. One important theory is found in Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1978). Examining the history of Europe in the eighteenth century, Foucault suggests that sex is deployed on each individual through multiple discourses of sexuality (1978:18). Moreover, Foucault proposes that desire is not pre-existent but generated through the power relation among social bodies: "Where there is desire, the power relation is already present; an illusion, then to denounce this relation for a repression exerted after the event; but vanity as well, to go questing after a desire that is beyond the reach of power" (1978:81). For Foucault, desire and sexuality are formulated through the regulatory practices of discourses into multiple power relations. Discourses produce and maintain their power in the name of "truth" so that specific sexual identity becomes hegemonic (Foucault 1980:131).

Another significant framework is Freud's psychoanalysis of desire and sexuality. In *Mourning and Melancholia*, Freud argues that the reaction to the loss of a loved object appears as a form of melancholia because the free libido is withdrawn into the ego so that the ego formulates itself with the loved object through identification; in other words, the shadow of a loved object falls upon the ego (1964:245-249). While Foucault suggests that sexuality and desire are generated by sociocultural factors, Freud tells us that

psychological energy of libido takes on an essential part in formulating ego's sexual identity. For example, Japanese women are more discouraged to engage in casual sex than Japanese men. The discourse "good women should not have casual sex" is reproduced in the male dominated relationships. According to Foucault's theory, the discourse becomes common sense or "truth" in Japanese society and generates the desire of Japanese women to become chaste women as their ideal sexuality. From the perspective of Freud's theory, since Japanese men long for women of virtue, Japanese women, in order to become attractive to them and to fulfill their own sexual desire, create their ideal sexuality as chaste women.

Stoler examines both Foucault and Freud's theories in order to describe politics of desire in colonial Southeast Asia. Stoler critiques these theories respectively:

For Freud, sexual desire is a cause; for Foucault, an effect. Freud accounts for the psychological contortions of the individual at war with her or his own subliminal desires. ... For Foucault, the cultural conventions of racism emerge out of social bodies at war with themselves. (1997:29)

In fact, while Freud see desire as the force that causes individuals to establish sexuality, Foucault proposes that desire is an effect of sociocultural constraint, which formulates individuals' sexuality in various ways. However, Stoler contends that both Freud and Foucault are complementary and their projects do converge:

If Foucault has led us to the power of *discourse*, it is Freud who has, albeit indirectly, turned us toward the power of *fantasy*, to imagined terror, to perceived assaults on the European self that made up the anxious and ambivalent world in which European colonials lived. (1997:29, emphasis added)

According to Stoler, both Freud's fantasy and Foucault's discourses reproduce certain sexual identities in transnational colonial Southeast Asia. Thus, both discourse and

fantasy take an essential role in the construction of desire and sexuality in transnational colonial spaces.

Following Freud's theory, Stoler argues that the repressed desire of colonialists is projected on the colonized Other in a form of fantasy: the loved object is projected on ego in a form of melancholia. Projected colonial desire is "offered to account for racism and Europe's imperial expansion" (Stoler 1997:31). Said contends that the Orient is a "place where one could look for sexual experiences unobtainable in Europe" (1990:190). Referring to Said, Stoler purports that colonialism creates places for colonial elites to release their sexual desire, which cannot be gratified under Western hegemonic morals (1997:32). For example, colonized "native" bodies are described as eroticized "objects" in Western literature; and the sexual assault on colonized women is considered as emancipation of libido repressed in the West (Stoler 1997:32). Thus, the colonized Other becomes a sexual signifier to reflect fantasy of exoticism, which is repressed by Western regulatory practices.

However, Freud's repressive hypothesis does not fully explain the politics of sexuality in colonial Southeast Asia. Following Foucault, Stoler contends that colonial discourses of desire are reproductive of Western hierarchy, which Freud's theory does not explicate (1997:34). For example, local women in sexual and domestic service were seen as a part of the "wage of whiteness" for European men (Stoler 1997:36). Mixing "the lower elements" of Europeans and Asians was considered to be a eugenic peril so that the children of mixed parentage were stigmatized as "*soldatenkinderen*, a term that implied illegitimate and sordid origins" in colonial Indies (Stoler 1997:37). Terms such as "wage of whiteness" and "*soldatenkinderen*" reflect the Western hierarchy of morals,

class and race. In addition, these words are productive of certain “truth” of repression, which naturalizes Western hegemony. Here, the discourses of Western hegemony are accepted as “truth” so that people may not even feel repressed. Foucault contends that “the notion of repression is quite inadequate for recapturing what is precisely the productive aspect of power” (1980:119). Indeed, when discourses reproduce a certain “truth”, they hold power to naturalize that “truth”. Thus, complementary to Freud’s repressive hypothesis, Foucault’s theory of discourse explains the reproductive role of desire in generating certain “truth” and power.

Stoler explains that the politics of Western desire is “colonialism, itself the quintessence of a process in which the mirroring of bourgeois priorities and the mimetic subversion of them played a defining role” (1997:45). Thus, externalization and mimesis form a cyclical politics of desire: repressed desire is projected on the Other in a form of fantasy; the fantasy of the Other generates discourses of desire in multiple ways; the discourses of desire reproduce the hegemonic hierarchy of the West; desires are repressed under Western hegemony; and repressed desire is projected on the Other. In the cyclic politics of desire, sexual desire is indeed both a cause and an effect. Therefore, it is obvious that both Freud’s notion of fantasy and Foucault’s concept of discourse are significant in considering politics of desire in transnational spaces such as colonial Southeast Asia.

However, is the politics of desire observed only in colonial spaces of globalization? It is now necessary to examine politics of desire in other global spaces. Grewal and Kaplan (2001), in their examination of the transnational studies of sexuality, argue that the academic term “transnational” has been conceptualized from an ahistorical

view that ignores the historical aspects of nation-states and early capitalism (2001:665). Grewal and Kaplan also point out that transnational sexuality has been discussed in binary ways – modern-traditional and global-local (2001:669-673). For example, global feminists conceive of themselves as “modern” subjects having free choice over their bodies, while their “traditional” subjects are observed to be deprived of choices or agency (Grewal and Kaplan 2001:669-670). The “local” is often explained as the subjects to work in the resistance to the “global” (Grewal and Kaplan 2001:671). Grewal and Kaplan suggests that “[t]ourism is linked both to the colonial history of travel and to new forms of globalization in late capitalism” and propose that by acknowledging these limits of separation in the study of sexuality, we should make further discussions that bridge “the fields of global and transnational studies and those of sexuality, gender, women’s, ethnic, and cultural studies” (2001:673-675).

Similarly, Povinelli and Chauncey (1999) propose that the study of sexuality should be conducted from global and transnational perspectives. Povinelli and Chauncey introduce Harvey’s theory of “space-time compression” as being most influential (1999:441). Harvey illustrates the condition of the post-modern era after the early 1970s as “an intense phase of time-space compression” (1990:284). Inda and Rosaldo explains that Harvey’s time-space compression refers to “the manner in which the speeding up of economical and social process has experientially shrunk the globe, so that distance and time no longer appear to be major constraints on the organization of human activity” (2002:6). In addition, Povinelli and Chauncey introduce Appadurai’s theory of “scapes” which conceptualizes a process of globalization as “a series of provisional, interlocking, deterritorialized ‘scapes’ rather than as a set of sovereign, territorial-based nation-states”

(1999:441). Appadurai proposes that the notion of “-scape” illustrates “the fluid, irregular shapes” of landscapes from various perspectives of “different sorts of actors” (2002:50). Löfgren’s term “vacationscapes” comes from this concept of “scapes”. Incorporating these theories, Povinelli and Chauncey contend that social and cultural accounts of sexuality should be examined from multiple perspectives of globalization and transnationalism (1999:445).

Accordingly, Povinelli and Chauncey propose that “if sex can learn from globalization and transnationalism, these schools have much to gain from critical studies of sex” (1999:45). Indeed, the theories of globalization and transnationalism are embodied at individual levels. We can discuss the theories of globalization and transnationalism only when we examine the social and cultural account of each subject in global and transnational contexts. The study of sexuality shows how the processes of globalization and transnationalism operate for each subject to realize her-his sexual identity in a particular way. Povinelli and Chauncey claim that “[t]he dynamism of the subject is related in one-to-one fashion with the dynamism of discourse and practice [in the area of globalization and transnationalism]” (1999:445). Thus, the transnational study of sexuality offers important clues to understanding how the theories of globalization and transnationalism are embodied at the individual level.⁹

This research asks how fantasy and discourse take on essential roles in formulating transnational desire. In thinking of the transnational processes of establishing intimate relations between female tourists and local men, we must also employ various perspectives that are not limited to binaries of global-local, modern-traditional, and synchronic-diachronic. The study of Japanese female tourists and Nepali

men should challenge these binaries and suggest what effects the actual processes of transnational vacationscapes produce in constructing transnational sexualities in specific ways.

2.3 Seeking the Authenticity of Other and Self in Vacationscapes

Stoler stresses the unequal process of promoting imperial sexuality through the Western fantasy of the Other and discourse of desire. Globalization theorists advise us to employ various perspectives beyond the binary thinking of global-local, centre-periphery and physical-imagined. It is now necessary to examine how modern tourists experience fantasy and desire in seeking “authenticity” through tourist activities in vacationscapes. Boorstin (1964) uses the term “pseudo-events” which means inauthentic experience brought by artificial settings of standardization in the modern era. Mass tourism is an example of a “pseudo-event”. Boorstin argues that “[tourist] attractions offer an elaborately contrived indirect experience, an artificial product to be consumed in the very places where the real thing is free as air” (1964:99). Thus, the concept of “pseudo-events” suggests that tourists are so gullible that they fail to see the original in toured objects (Wang 1999:352-353). However, MacCannell condemns Boorstin’s pseudo-events of tourist experiences arguing that tourists are in fact aware of inauthenticity: “[T]he concern of moderns for the shallowness of their lives and inauthenticity of their experiences parallels concerns for the sacred in primitive society” (1973:589-590). MacCannell also proposes that real lives of locals can be accessed only at the backstage of tourist settings, so that the front stage “for outsiders who are permitted to view details of the inner operation of a commercial, domestic, industrial, or public institution” is the

tourist space of inauthentic reality which MacCannell calls “staged authenticity” (1973:596).

However, Wang points out that MacCannell uses the concept of authenticity in two senses: the authenticity of tourist feelings and knowledge, and the authenticity of toured objects (1999:353). When MacCannell notes that modern tourists are concerned with seeking authenticity in tourist space, the notion of authenticity means the state of their authentic feelings and knowledge (Wang 1999:353). However, when MacCannell comments on the concept of “staged authenticity”, the concept of authenticity turns out to be the authenticity of toured objects as the original; and modern tourists become the victims of observing inauthentic objects even though they feel or believe that they are experience something authentic (Wang 1999:353). In this regard, MacCannell discusses only objective authenticity and overlooks the feelings and knowledge of authenticity (Wang 1999:353). In order to make these differences clear, Wang demonstrates three types of authenticity: objective authenticity, constructive (or symbolic) authenticity, and existential authenticity (1999:350).

Wang explains constructive (or symbolic) authenticity as the multiple projections of tourists’ images: “tourists are indeed in search of authenticity; however, what they quest for is not objective authenticity (i.e., authenticity as originals) but *symbolic* authenticity which is the result of social construction” (1999:356). The ideal images of modern tourists are projected onto toured objects in vacationscapes through the desire of seeking authentic Other no matter whether the objects are in fact real there. An example of constructive authenticity is offered in the film, *Cannibal Tours* (O’Rourke 1988) where it is described how Western tourists project their exotic fantasy on “natives” in

Papua New Guinea. Wang suggests that existential authenticity indicates the special state of authentic Being, "one is true to oneself" (1999:359-360). Although objective authenticity and constructive authenticity are both "object-related authenticity" which involves "whether and how the toured objects are authentic", existential experiences entail interpersonal feelings of authenticity regardless of the concern of toured objects (Wang 1999:351). Experiencing existential authenticity, tourists feel that "they are more authentic and more freely self-expressed than in everyday life, not because they find the toured objects are authentic but simply because they are engaging in non-ordinary activities, free from the constraints of the daily" (Wang 1999:351-352). Thus, Wang proposes that existential authenticity is a distinctive source of tourist experiences (1999:352).

Considering the search of authenticity in tourism, Wang proposes moving perspective on toured objects toward the intra-personal aspect of a tourist Self such as authentic experiences of self-making or self-identity (1999:363). An example of seeking existential authenticity is seen when Cohen (2004) argues that the adventurous narratives of backpackers take a central role in increasing the value of the heroic image of Self within their communities. Noy (2004) also researches the narratives of Israeli backpackers and suggests that there are two themes of the narrative: adventurous discovery of authentic Others and spiritual recognition of self-change.

Just as Israeli backpackers enjoy experiencing "self-change", Japanese female tourists have enjoyed discovering an authentic Self in domestic tourism. Ivy (1995) researches the successful campaign, "Discover Japan" used by Japan National Railway in the 1970s. The "Discover Japan" campaign targeted Japanese women who are freer

because they have fewer social responsibilities (Ivy 1995:37-38); and the campaign promoted ordinary scenery of Japanese daily life (Ivy 1995:47). The planner, Fujioka Wakao explains the concept of “Discover Japan” with the linkage with “discovering self” by equating Self with Japan:

For discovering, there is no need for nature or scenery or people. Discovery is really one’s own self. “Discovery myself,” I said to myself. The self of travel, the discovery of myself, traveling through myself.... “Discover myself” [jisukabā maiserufu] had become our campaign concept. (Ivy 1995:40).

Furthermore, Fujioka insisted that advertising was no longer the information of commodification; rather it should appeal to contemporary cultural and social consciousness (Ivy 1995:45). In other words, “Discover myself” was and continues to be the cultural and social agenda for modern Japanese tourists. According to these examples, it is clear that modern tourists enjoy seeking objective and constructive authenticity of Other as well as existential authenticity of Self. I have posed the question how does the fantasy and desire of authentic Other and Self operate in erotic ways? I explore this question focusing on exoticism.

Nagel defines sexuality as “socially, mainly genitally defined individuals with culturally defined appropriate sexual tastes, partners, and activities” (2003:8). Nagel suggests that ethnic differences evoke the exotic fantasy in erotic ways (2003:9-10). The sexual desire to interact with the exotic Other parallels the desire of global tourists to seek authenticity of Other and Self in erotic ways. For example, researching Western female tourists in the Caribbean, Kempadoo contends that the fantasy of their ideal real men is projected toward Caribbean beach boys (2004:139). Pruitt and LaFont argue that although Rastafarian culture is originally resistant to the West, ironically the image of Rasta men such as dreadlocks attracts Western female tourists who seek the powerful

Other like a lion (2004:324-327). These Western female tourists also search for a new Self engaging in different sexual behaviour from at home because they believe that having sex is “natural” in Jamaican “natural” lives (Pruitt and LaFont 2004:32). Similarly, Adams suggests that the spiritual, exotic and sexual images of Sherpas generate Westerners’ desire to “become like Sherpas”, which produces a sense of erotic intimacy toward Sherpas (1996:56). Adams argues that “the intimacy sought with Sherpas is usually one that desires mutuality, to bring Westerners going to the Himalayas a new spiritual awakening. Sometimes the intimacy sought with Sherpas ends up being sexual” (1996:56). In the Himalayas, tourists’ desires to discover spiritual self-awareness and the exotic Other often lead to a feeling of intimacy and romance toward Sherpas (Adams 1996:56-57). It seems that these tourists seek erotic and exotic Others and want to acquire authenticity from them to become authentic Selves in emotional, physical contiguity such as sexual contacts or intimate communication. Thus, authenticity is connected with sexuality and the fantasy of seeking authenticity is reproduced through the erotic desires of global tourists directed at local Others.

However, the imagination of authentic Other and Self is not only a practice concerning global tourists, but also local hosts. It is true that local people take an active role in discovering the authenticity of Other (as tourists) and Self (as local hosts). Urry describes the social and cultural process of tourism services:

[T]he social composition of the producers, at least those who are serving in the front line, may be part of what is in fact ‘sold’ to the customer. In other words, the ‘service’ partly consists of a process of production which is infused with particular social characteristics, of gender, age, race, educational background and so on. (2002:61)

When tourists seek the “authentic” backstage, the imagination figures prominently in creating the “reality” which tourists consider authentic. The process of producing the “reality” has actual impact on the social lives of local hosts according to their “gender, age, race, educational background and so on” as Urry suggests.

In fact, numerous scholars have researched the cultural changes of local hosts brought about through interaction with foreign tourists. For example, Pruitt and LaFont argue that Jamaican beach boys pick up and elaborate the exotic image of Rasta men in order to stress their appeal in contrast to Western men (2004:326). This is also the case with Sherpas who are famous among Westerners for their “special” skills as mountaineering guides in Nepal. Adams argues that “portrayals of ‘Sherpa culture’ reflecting Western ‘desire for authenticity’ are as real a part of most Sherpas’ lives today as any existing outside the arena of Sherpa relationships with Westerners” (1996:72). Adams contends that modernity means not only the adaptation of Western practices, but also the creation of a new need that is based on the desire to become “ideal Sherpas” for Westerners (1996:109). In this regard, Sherpas have adapted their ideal state of Self or Sherpa-ness to the new circumstance of authentic Other so that they engage in searching for authentic Other and Self just like Western tourists do. Similarly, Ortner (1996) and Fisher (2004) argue that the fantasy of Western ideal machismo has been projected on Sherpa men, which reinforces the pre-existing ideology that assigns a lower status to women in Sherpa society. Frohlick (2003) describes how young Sherpa men have challenged the Western stereotype of Sherpa as “Everest climbers” by claiming the ideal status of “global mountaineers” just like other Western climbers.

Although these scholars argue for the imagination of Sherpas, I believe that there are other Nepali tourism workers who attempt to become ideal Nepalis in order to attract foreign tourists. It is understandable that the existential authenticity of being ideal Nepalis becomes a new need for other Nepali people in contemporary Nepal. In addition, seeking the imaginative authenticity of Other formulates a new form of life in modern Nepali society. Hepburn contends “the context of local cultural meaning in which ‘tourists’ – however they might be conceived in Western categories, or ‘form of life’ – are conceptualized differently in the forms of life of Nepalese culture(s)” (2002:612). Liechty also suggests that both Nepalis and tourists engage in creating the fantasy of seeking Other:

[A]reas such as Freak Street and Thamel are not simply “tourist ghettos,” if by these words we mean spaces only of, by, and for tourists. Rather, as translocalities, these are spaces in which a variety of Nepalis and a variety of foreigners interact, playing roles (wittingly or otherwise) in a space where multiple imaginations of “others” meet. There are simultaneously places that foreigners imagine from a distance and sites from which Nepalis imagine distant places. (1996:101-102)

It is true that fantasy, imagination and desire reproduce the reality of globalization at a local level. The fantasy and desire of seeking on authentic Other and Self are generated in complex processes which can not be illustrated in simple binaries of global-local, modern-traditional, and synchronic-diachronic. Indeed, the fantasy of desire of authentic Other and Self are the cultural and social reality for Japanese tourists and Nepali people in the vacationsapes of Nepal.

Describing my feeling of excitement in my travel diary, I illustrated that what I expected in the airplane was the encounter of the exotic Other as well as my authentic Self. I wanted to become a wild heroine who overcomes natural threats in the Himalayas

which represented the powerful Other. This memory in the airplane reminds me of Keiko who told me about travel and Self:

I cannot change myself so easily just because of travelling. But I can find a way to change myself in this trip. Now it is romance. I feel like carrying it out to the end. I was different in Japan because I was always escaping.

When I read this narrative, I understood that I was also waiting for a romantic “change” inside me by encountering the heroic Other who would provide romantic adventures.

Just as Keiko, I hoped to become an adventurous heroine who overcomes not only natural threats but also romantic dramas in the Himalayas. It is obvious that my sexual identity has been uniquely formulated in the process of global tourism just as my heartbeat went up in the airplane. I believe that studying intimate relations between Japanese women and Nepali men in global tourism offers deep insight into how this fantasy and desire create new forms of sexuality for both the Nepali and Japanese in specific ways.

Chapter 3 ASIAN JAPANESE WOMEN TRAVEL TO NEPAL

3.1 Japanese Women Travelling Abroad

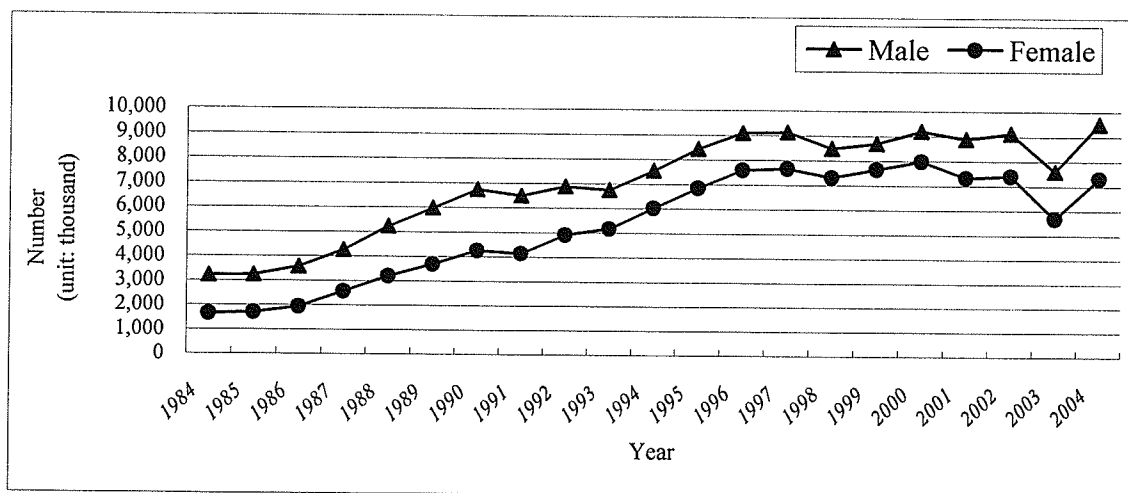
Today, I moved into a local place from the tourist site, Thamel. Quiet. I see candlelight in small temples at night. People are praying beside the candlelight. Beautiful. ... I am a tourist drifting without having to work. I should respect local people who work hard.
(author's travel diary, Kathamandu, March 1999)

I had moved from Thamel to the Basantapur area where hippies used to gather in the seventies but fewer tourists stay these days. I was tired of the tourist ghetto of Thamel where Nepali tourism workers always hassled me. Escaping from the colourful and busy tourist streets, I wanted to stay with the “real” people and scenery of Asia in the ancient capital of Basantapur where wooden temples and houses stood side by side. Seeing the religious practices of local people, I enjoyed the fantasy of touching the “authentic” locality of Asia. It is obvious that I was seeking “local-ness” in the landscape of Asia. For me, the concept of Asia had been constructed from the fantasy of Other which is “local-ness” and the gap between my position as a tourist and the Other as local people. Thus, expressing ideas like “beautiful” and “I should respect local people”, I romanticized the people and scenery in the vacationsapes of Nepal, which I observed as “authentic” Asia. In this chapter, I will discuss how Japanese pursue the concept of Asia through touristic encounters with the Other especially from the perspective of Japanese female tourists. Then, I will discuss how Japanese women enjoy travelling to Nepal, a country which represents the “authentic” Asia in an indigenous way.

Examining the demographic figures of Japanese tourists, the number of outbound tourists dramatically increased during the Japanese bubble economy from 1986 to 1990 (Table 3). Although the number of outbound tourists fell during recession years, the

number almost tripled from 4,948 tourists (4.11 percent of Japan’s population) in 1984, pre-bubble economy year to 16,831 tourists (13.17 percent) in 2004 (Ministry of Land Infrastructure and Transport of Japan 1998, 2005). Hashimoto argues that the bubble economy was long enough to cause Japanese behaviour to become consumption-based (2000:39). Even after the bubble economy ended, the consumer boom has continued so long that international travel has become a material possession for the Japanese (Hashimoto 2000:39-40).

Table 3 Outbound Japanese tourists

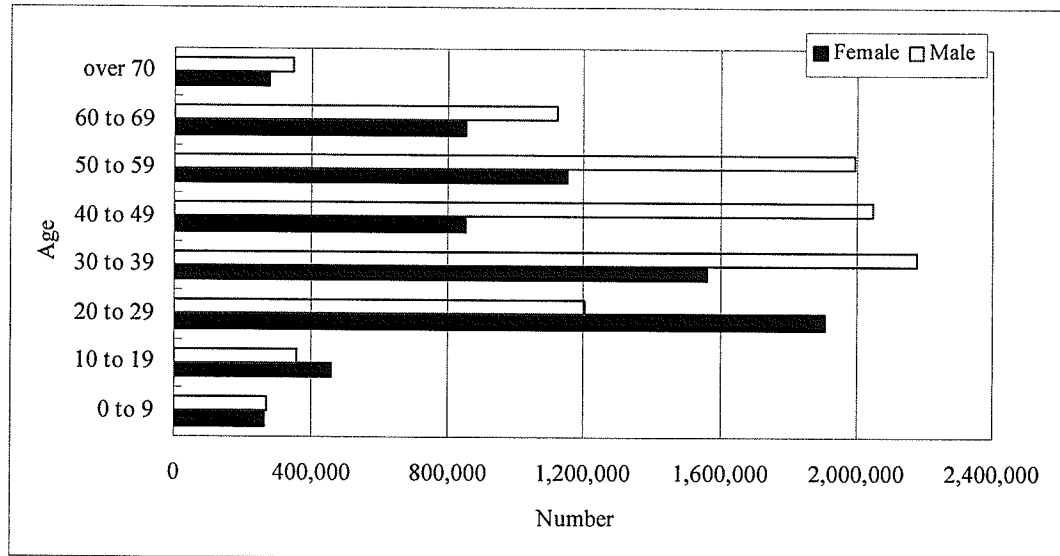


Adapted from: Ministry of Land Infrastructure and Transport of Japan 1998 and 2005

Examining the number by age and gender in 1996, Hashimoto contends that of all age cohorts of Japanese female tourists, those between 20 to 39 years old are the biggest tourist population (2000:35). Hashimoto’s claim also applies to the profile of Japanese female tourists in 2004 (Table 4). Reviewing studies and surveys conducted by Japanese researchers, Hashimoto says that “this group of tourists [Japanese women aged 20-39] has been known for its spending power, adventurous behaviour and individual-based travelling” (2000:35). It is noteworthy that my subjects, Japanese women, were all from

this group: eleven were aged 20 to 24 twenty-three were aged 25 to 29; and nine were aged 30 to 35.

Table 4 Gender, age groups of outbound Japanese tourists in 2004



Adapted from: Ministry of Land Infrastructure and Transport of Japan 2005

Lock illustrates how Japanese women are pushed out of office work when they have children and carry the heavy burden of familial responsibilities through the interviews with Japanese middle aged women who experience the time of *kōnenki*, Japanese notion of menopause, as the change of their familial roles from childcare to the care of aged people (1993:46-48). Indeed, many Japanese women work only briefly for companies because they choose to take on domestic roles after their marriage or childbirth; as a result, Japanese young women are often put in charge of less-responsible positions in office. Hashimoto analyzes that Japanese young women aged 20 to 39 are the freest from the familial and social responsibilities and this is the reason they dominate international Japanese female tourism (2000:42-43). Especially, Japanese unmarried women living with parents can enjoy the freedom to spend their time and money on

themselves, and so go travelling abroad (Hashimoto 2000:43). Hashimoto reports that Japanese young women, having fewer social responsibilities and less familial pressure, enjoy consumer practices such as shopping for prestigious designer goods while travelling abroad (2000:45). For example, Tamie, a Japanese female tourist age 28, told me “I like travelling. If I take a vacation from work, it will be only less than week, so I quit my job. I have travelled to Southeast Asian countries and China for three and half months, then I came here [to Nepal].” In fact, all 28 Japanese female tourist subjects were single and independent tourists; of which twenty-three were unemployed; one had a part time job; and four were university students.

Besides materialist consumer behaviours, significant changes have been observed in Japanese behaviour in the mid-1990s. Iwabuchi contends that in the mid-1990s Japanese people had started to seek “spiritual renewal” instead primarily pursuing material benefits (2002:176). Iwabuchi describes the situation in Japan at that time:

[Seeking spiritual sites] arose in the context of a prolonged economic recession and a series of gloomy social incidents, such as an increasing number of brutal murders by teenagers and the nerve gas attack in the Tokyo railway system by the Aum Supreme sect. ... it was now an attempt to regain the energy and vitality Japan had lost by identifying itself with the promising land of “Asia”. (2002:175-176)

Related to but different from shopping tours, spiritual tours allow many Japanese tourists who feel pessimistic about Japan’s present and future to leave Japanese society in order to pursue spiritual changes in other Asian countries. Iwabuchi argues that “more mystical, destitute, and chaotic sites in Asia” such as Bali, Varanasi and Kathmandu are chosen by Japanese tourists, especially backpackers, in order to achieve spiritual renewal (2002:176). According to Iwabuchi, Japanese tourists travel to other Asian countries to seek spiritual renewal. In other words, Japanese tourists desire the existential authenticity

of Self that is “a potential existential state of Being which is to be activated by tourist activities” (Wang 1999:352). Significantly, the Japanese trend from material consumption toward spiritual conquest parallels the global shift from “collective consumption” to “symbolic capital” that is one of the conditions of postmodernity after the 1970s (Harvey 1990:340-341). In his theory of practice, Bourdieu introduces the notion of “symbolic capital” which refers to “the systematic emphasis on the symbolic aspect of the activities and relations of production, to prevent the economy from being grasped *as an economy*” (1977:172). Similarly, in his theory of shopping, Miller reveals how the market consumption largely depends on cultural and social factors, such as family love and devotion, in our daily practices (1998). Thus, rather than seeking the pleasure to purchase materials, Japanese tourists became more interested in symbolic accumulation, such as spiritual renewal, through various activities in the global capitalist system.

How do my Japanese subjects express the existential authenticity of spiritual renewal in relation to their economic freedom? Kayoko, a Japanese female tourist at the age of 30, explained how she refreshed herself by travelling:

This trip is like the summer vacation of my life. I need to do this. But I know that the luxury of travelling is made possible by exploiting the economic gap between Japan and the rest of Asia... I expected I would travel for one year, but I continued for two years and now. I want to travel for one more year. I will go to Southeast Asia for relaxation.

Kayoko talked with me in a tourist café, which offered a cup of coffee for 50 rupees (a glass of milk tea is sold for 5 rupees in the street). I agreed with Kayoko because I felt that my backpacker experience was necessary for me to revitalize myself, too. However, drinking luxurious coffee in a tourist café, I realized that I was the same kind of

exploitative tourist Kayoko described. It is obvious that Japanese female tourists can take advantage of the strong Japanese economy and financial freedom in order to enjoy spiritual renewal and the term “spiritual travel” seems to be consumer materialist parading under the guise of spirituality.

3.2 Japanese Female Tourists Become “Asian Japanese”

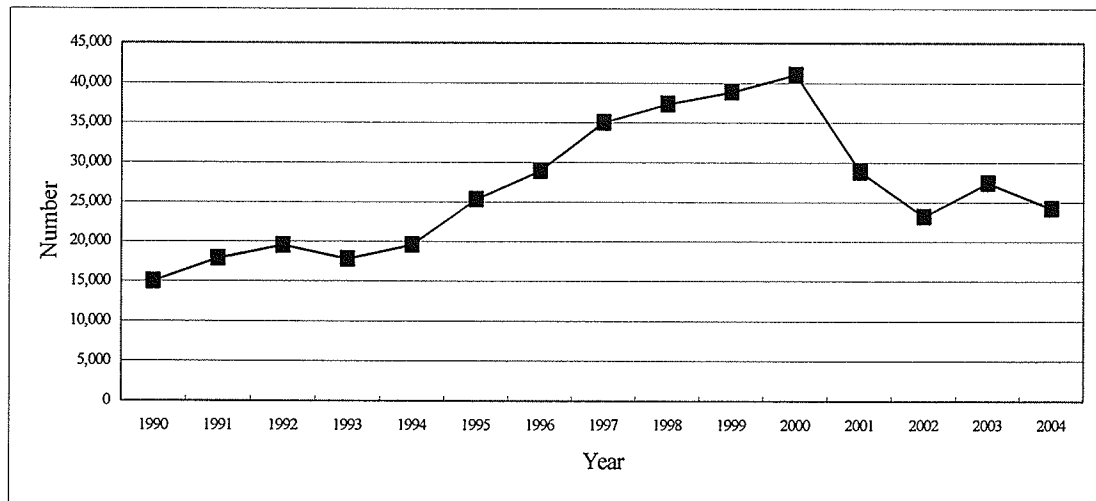
Why do Japanese women travel to other Asian countries? Hashimoto proposes that the mass media plays an essential role in the decision making of young Japanese women to travel abroad (2000:45). Pioneering backpacking experiences in Asia is the book series *Shinya tokkyu* (Midnight Express) first published in 1986 (Iwabuchi 2002:176). In *Shinya tokkyu*, volumes 1 to 3, journalist Sawaki Kōtarō describes his travels from Hong Kong to the Malay Peninsula to India and Nepal, and then heading to his final destination, London (Sawaki 1999a, 1999b, 2000). Following Sawaki’s route, photojournalist Kobayashi Kisei published the first volume of *Asian Japanese* in 1995, which Iwabuchi states “quickly sold more than fifty thousand copies” (2002:176). Feeling sick of “the media-saturated daily life in Japan” (Iwabuchi 2002:176), Kobayashi took photos of Japanese backpackers, whom Kobayashi calls “Asian Japanese” who wander around Asian countries seeking their “real” selves that cannot be found in modern Japanese lives (Kobayashi 2004:7-8,366).

The cover of *Asian Japanese* is a monochrome photograph of Ryoko, a 29 year old Japanese woman, dressed in backpacker style clothing— sandals, crumpled shirt and long hair. Ryoko is illustrated as a free-floating backpacker who seeks spiritual peace in Asia by escaping from her stressful life in Japan. The background of Ryoko’s photograph

is not a showy touristic site, but an ordinary alleyway in Kathmandu. Just as I state in my own travel diary, Ryoko says “I want to see people who live humble and ordinary lives in Asia” (Kobayashi 2004:129). Why does Ryoko want to see the “ordinary” lives of people in Asia? Does Ryoko represent other Japanese female tourists travelling to Asian countries? We need to look at whether and how Japanese female tourists desire the spiritual landscapes of Asia just like Ryoko in *Asian Japanese*.

Konishi reports that adventure books and travelogues such as *Asian Japanese* became more topic-oriented in the 1990s when international travel was more familiar to Japanese (2000:2). Interestingly, the number of Japanese tourists in Nepal has dramatically increased since 1995 when *Asian Japanese* was first published (Table 5). It is understandable that *Asian Japanese* reflected the fact that Japanese female tourists had become more interested in spiritual adventure by travelling within Asia in the 1990s.

Table 5 Japanese Tourists in Nepal



Adapted from: Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal 2005:34

I interviewed a Japanese woman named Yuka beside her husband’s house in a resort city, Pokhara, which was located in an idyllic place where water buffalo were

walking around the streets. I was talking with a Nepali shopkeeper in a grocery shop who introduced me to Yuka. She wore a sarong and was carrying an aluminium washtub, so she looked like a Nepali housewife. Yuka told me that she met her Nepali husband when she was backpacking around Southeast and South Asian countries in the late 1990s. She described for me her image of Nepal:

Well, nostalgia. I felt something nostalgic here. It was my first time to visit Nepal, but I felt like I was born here. Although I was born in Tokyo, I feel nostalgic in viewing this scenery. ... I naturally accept it rather than I believe it. ... The idea came to me on its own. That will be never understood by others who only consider it as something strange.

Yuka told me that she had been interviewed by Kobayashi, the author of *Asian Japanese*. I described in my fieldnotes: "I met Japanese women backpackers like her [when I was travelling within Asian countries in the 1990s]. She looks very relaxed and easygoing just like Ryoko in *Asian Japanese*." A few days later, I met Rika, a Japanese woman like Yuka married to a Nepali man. Rika was as old as I was and used to travel Nepal in the 1990s. When I visited her house, I found *Asian Japanese* on her bamboo bookshelves. Rika told me that these books were so important to her that she brought them from Japan. I remembered that *Asian Japanese*, which a Japanese male backpacker gave to me in my first international trip to Myanmar, also had a big influence on me.

Although it is true that *Asian Japanese* had some degree of impacts on Japanese women backpackers in the 1990s, how does it influence Japanese women travelling to Asian countries today? I met Kiyomi, a Japanese woman age 26, who was backpacking around the world. Kiyomi wore a cute red jacket and blue jeans just like the casual styles I see in Japan. She invited me to her room in a guesthouse in Thamel. I saw her big backpack beside the wall and her underwear drying on ropes. I asked, "Do you know the

book *Asian Japanese*, which was very popular in the 1990s when I was backpacking?”

Kiyomi answered with a surprised face:

I know it, but what! That serious style of travel is uncool. Most tourists enjoy travelling with digital cameras and spending money without so much scrimping as the tourists in *Asian Japanese* these days, you know? We aren't seriously thinking about "life". Even tourists who do not have much money enjoy travelling with having fun and laughing. Young tourists, such as 22 year olds, all seem to enjoy their trip. I have never met anyone who had said, "I am trying to discover myself".

Kiyomi strongly denied any connection to the stoic, rough, and serious travel styles of Japanese tourists appearing in *Asian Japanese*. Similarly, Kayoko and Yuriko, Japanese female tourists in their early thirties, told me "*Asian Japanese* used to be very popular, but now it's old fashioned". It is true that the tourists in *Asian Japanese* speak about the difficulty of their adventurous travels and the meaning of their lives in a serious tone and these Japanese female tourists see the serious travel style of *Asian Japanese* as out-of-date. Arai (2006) analyzes the influence of *Asian Japanese* on Japanese tourists in Bangkok according to his surveys in 1995 to 1996, and points out that the stoical tone of *Asian Japanese* is not applicable to most young Japanese tourists since the mid-1990s to today. In this regard, it seems that the Spartan serious pictures of heroes in *Asian Japanese* were the products of Kobayashi's fictional imagination to some degree and it is obvious that they do not apply to many independent Japanese tourists in a real sense today.

However, the theme of spiritual renewal in *Asian Japanese* is still valid for Japanese tourists today even though they reject the stoical travel-style. Despite the fact that she rejected the "serious" idea of discovering herself, Kiyomi "seriously" told me her theory of love and life which she formulated in her trip saying, "After everything, I came to believe that love sees no borders." Indeed, young Japanese tourists casually enjoy

travelling to Asian countries, seeking spiritual renewal as well as new consumer practices of laid-back travel-styles such as carrying small high-tech digital cameras. The phrase “Asian Japanese” obviously illustrates how Japanese tourists take pleasure in finding other sides of themselves, so they do not see themselves just as Japanese, but as “Asian Japanese” who see themselves cosmopolitan tourists travelling in Asia. I believe that the travel book *Asian Japanese* clearly portrays how Japanese independent tourists still enjoy the desire of becoming “Asian Japanese” today even though the serious travel-styles are seen outdated. But why is there a photograph of a Japanese woman on the cover of *Asian Japanese* instead of her male counterpart? The cover photograph of Ryoko represents the fact that Japanese female tourists have been noticeably the group engaged in the adventurous behaviour of individual travelling. Consequently, the cover photograph suggests that Japanese female tourists have played a central role in the alternative consumer practice of spiritual adventure in Asia. They are fulfilling the fantasy of “I am an Asian Japanese”. This leads to the idea that other Asian female tourists from the “First World” also engage in having the fantasy of a spiritual Asia.

In *Asian Japanese*, Kobayashi asks Ryoko why she continues to travel within Asia rather than Europe or America. Ryoko answers:

Well, I think that even though I don't go to countries outside Asia, this is enough. I believe that there's no one who looks more beautiful and interesting than older guys in India. I cannot think of white men as cool. ... I become different when I stay in Asia from when I stay in Japan. I find a different side to my personality in Asia than what I am in Japan. (Kobayashi 2004:348)

Of course, Japan is an Asian country in a general sense. However, Ryoko thinks that Japan is not Asian because her term “Asia” refers to a place where she can discover the existential authenticity of her true Self, an authenticity she believes is not available in

Japan. We then have to ask what does “Asia” mean to Japanese tourists travelling to Asian countries. Historically, Japan aimed to become the leader of Asian nations. The Japanese Imperial Army targeted other Asian countries by modelling European colonialism during the Second World War. This project was called “the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” in which they tried to construct “a New Order” in Japanese territories in East and Southeast Asia by “demanding liberation of Asia from the Western colonial powers” (Ahn 2004:2). Igarashi points out that Japan played the male role by feminizing and patronizing other Asian nations during the war (2000:35). For example, Asian women from “Japan’s Asian neighbours – as Korea, China, Taiwan, Indonesia, and Malaysia and the Philippines” were brought to the battlefields and forced to become “militarily sexual slaver[ies]” for Japanese soldiers (Watanabe 1995:503). However, Japan became feminized by the conquering nation, United States, after the war and was forced to offer “the sexual comfort stations” to the American soldiers (Igarashi 2000:35).

Referring to the historical background, Iwabuchi explains the indigenous Japanese concepts of Asia and the West:

Regarding Japan’s cultural return to Asia in the 1990s [such as the “Asian” travel boom], one cannot help but be struck by its multifaceted and contradictory dimension. However, these dimensions have been obscured by a historically constructed taxonomy of binary oppositioning between “Asia” and “Japan” – with “the West” as a powerful third Other – which still strongly curbs the Japanese transnational imagination. ... Admittedly, the new articulated Japanese interest in Asia has much to do with perceived cultural and racial commonalities, age-old historical connections, and geographical proximity. (2002:199)

Just as Iwabuchi argues, Ryoko illustrates the binary comparison of Asia and Japan while situating the West as outside her interests. In fact, Japanese tourists desire to see the imaginative landscapes of Asia, which is opposed to Japan, while they consider that “the West” as an absolute Other. I asked Keiko why she chose Nepal as her destination.

While snacking on a doughnut at a small local tea-stall behind the main street of Thamel, Keiko answered¹⁰:

I felt stuck in Japanese society. ... I wanted to travel to a place where nobody knows me. ... Before this trip, I went to see a tarot card reader. ... I was divided between America and Asia, but she said Asia was better. I did not want to go to countries like Thailand because everyone goes there.

For Keiko, America and Asia are the spaces of the exotic Other where nobody knows her and she can escape from a frustrating Japan. Interestingly, Keiko consulted the spiritual game of tarot for making the decision. This fact suggests that she had been already a spiritual tourist for self-renewal in Japan before she left for Nepal. Another Japanese tourist Mayumi also told me how differently she experienced travels within Asia as compared to those in Europe. Mayumi seemed full of emotion as she told me how Nepali people treated her kindly. Mayumi said earnestly in a tourist cafe where hundreds of Japanese books were available to read for free:

Nepal is something intimate. ... We are the same-Asian. ... I started travelling in Europe when I went to see a Swiss friend. I met a Japanese tourist in Istanbul. He had traveled within Asia. I was influenced by him, so I started travelling in Asia. Asia is different from Europe because there are more chances to get to know people who live in Asian countries. I have the impression of having more heart to heart communication in Asia. So, I am deeply moved by meeting many local people in Nepal.

Mayumi lamented the lack of heart-to-heart relationships in Japan and felt that Asia, not Europe, is the place where they are available. I am not sure whether it is true that the European people Mayumi met were less communicative than the Asian people she met. However, for Mayumi, Asia represents the space of the intimate Other who offers heartfelt interaction in the logic that “we are the same-Asian”. It seems that what emotionally moved her was the imagined connectivity of being “the same-Asian”. Thus,

it is obvious that these Japanese women imagine Asia as a community where emotional interactions among “the same-Asian” people are available.

The term “Asia” refers to the space which is not the powerful Other like the West, but the familiar and weaker Other. While Japanese people fantasize the West as the powerful Other, the Japanese notion of Asia is constructed from the fantasy of a paradise of a friendly Other who can satisfy the desire of Japanese female tourists who are frustrated in Japan. In this regard, their term Asia is not used in the general sense, but it refers to an imaginative landscape for Japanese to see the constructive authenticity of Other in intimate ways. Asuna contends that since the 1990s, the Japanese reconstructed the geographic concept, Asia, as a subjective community through their individual Asian interactions (2004:10-11). Just as Asuna argues, the geographic notion, Asia, is transformed into the subjective, imagined community, “Asia”, living in each Japanese imagination. Thus, the landscapes of Asia become the subjective, imagined spaces of “Asia” in which each Japanese tourist can search for the existential authenticity of an authentic Self as “Asian Japanese”. The narratives of Japanese female tourists suggest that these Japanese women have the fantasy of becoming “Asian Japanese” in travelling in the imaginative landscape of “Asia”.

3.3 Travelling to Nepal and Enjoying an Authentic “Asia”

Appadurai suggests that fantasy and imagination play central roles in global cultural processes (2002:49). The fantasy of becoming “Asian Japanese” is also a key factor in Japanese tourists’ participation in their cultural globalization in Nepal. Just as the “Asian Japanese” Ryoko describes, Nepal represents one imaginary landscape of friendly “Asia”.

The image of Nepal as the intimate Other is well demonstrated in the conversation between three Japanese women, a Japanese female student Makiko, a Japanese female tourist Asuka and me as a Japanese tourist-ethnographer. While eating Tibetan dishes together in a local restaurant close to Thamel, I heard they talk as following:

Makiko: There is something common between Japanese and Nepalis. Nepalis seems to share an intimacy with us as well.

Asuka: Yes. It is like a concave body fitting into a convex body. They are different, but closely interlocking.

Makiko: In contrast to white people, Nepal belongs to the same Asian region as Japan. That's why.

In fact, 28 Japanese women among 43 expressed their intimate feelings toward Nepali people and scenery by using key words such as intimate, kind, naïve, nostalgic, and, relax in unstructured interviews while 15 describe Nepal as their travel-destination of an "exotic" Other. Perhaps, that is why Asuka said, "They are different, but closely interlocking." Junko, a Japanese female tourist, also told me "I have an exotic image of Nepal". However, Junko emphasized how she felt closeness toward Nepali people saying, "One Nepali man gave me a ride for free in the country side. I was a bit anxious but he was kind. In a Hindu temple, when I complained that the entrance fee was too expensive, but a Nepali man asked me if he could lend me some money. They are very kind."

Interestingly, the image of Nepal as the intimate and weaker Other is not only observed on an individual level but at a national level. Cabezas discusses the national project of making the fantasy of a Cuban hero in relation to the active role of Cuban beach boys (2004:1008). Cuban beach boys are seen as national heroes who can control foreign women who represent the global power to intrude into Cuba (Cabezas 2004:1008). In the same way, Iwabuchi explains the nationalist project of creating the Japanese

imagination of “Asia” by using Water Benjamin’s word “dreamworld” that refers to the site of generating capitalist consumer desire in the 1930s:

“Asia” has served to fuel Japan’s imagination of a phantasmagoric capitalist dreamworld, one which transcends (if only temporally) the contradictions and limitations of containing intensified transnational flow within a nationalist framework. ... For conservative thinkers, capitalist modernizing Asia is a site where Japan’s long-standing nationalist project for extending its cultural reach to a pan-Asian sphere has been reactivated. In this case, Japanese capitalist consumer culture has not simply offered a sense of nationalistic pride, it has also played a diplomatic role in healing the wounds inflicted on Asia by Japan’s imperialist history. (2002:201)

Indeed, creating the fantasy of “Asian Japanese” coincides with the nationalist project of expanding Japanese capitalist consumer culture in the dreamworld of Asia. Although Nepal was not brought under the Japanese imperial rule, Japanese nationalist pride takes a central role in “healing the wounds” inflicted on Nepal in the era of capitalist globalization.

The fantasy of Japanese nationalist pride in Nepal is expressed by the term “friendship” just as Japanese female tourists describe Nepal as the intimate Other. Ambassador Hiraoka presented a message on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Japan – Nepal diplomatic relations under the title “Celebrating 50 Years of Friendship and Building 50 Years of Future” in February 2006:

Japan and Nepal have traditionally been maintaining an unblemished record of friendly and cordial relations. By virtue of their common Asian heritage, there is a strong spiritual and cultural link between the people of both our countries. Asian values are deeply rooted in our societies and people. These similarities have certainly helped to bring both the countries spiritually closer. Over the years our relationship has grown manifold into a mutually beneficial and cooperative relationship covering a diverse field of human activities. (Embassy of Japan in Nepal 2006a)

Clearly, Japan has been intending to conduct a diplomacy of “friendship” with Nepal which is based on the spiritual intimacy of similar “Asian” values. For example, the

Embassy of Japan in Nepal describes how diplomatic relations started from the spiritual friendship of Buddhism: “Long before any official contact between the two countries, the people of Japan and Nepal established a friendship over a century ago when the Reverend Ekai Kawaguchi, a Japanese Buddhist monk, visited this country on his way to Tibet” (Embassy of Japan in Nepal 2006b). This “friendship” diplomacy has been conducted by offering large amounts of aid through the Japanese government’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) programs in various projects such as construction of bridges and schools and scholarship programs for children. Japan’s ODA amounts to 268,002,427 Japanese yen (about 2.5 million Canadian dollars) in total during 1969 to 2004 (Embassy of Japan in Nepal 2006d).¹¹ Japan has become the top donor, accounting 30 to 40 percent of the bilateral assistance to Nepal from 1999 to 2002 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2005).¹² The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan emphasises the role of Japan in providing ODA to Nepal as well as the “friendship” relation:

- Because of the relationships between the Nepali royal family and our imperial family, we have good relations.
- 2006 is the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of Japanese – Nepali diplomatic relations.
- Japan is a major donor of the bilateral assistance to Nepal.
- ... (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2006)

Indeed, the “friendship” diplomacy is embodied by the capitalist devotion to providing enormous assistance in both money and technology to Nepal. The “friendship” policy has been underpinned by the Japanese pride in being the major donor.

At the individual level, how do Japanese people demonstrate their pride in being the major donor in Nepal? I had the chance to talk with Japanese volunteer workers from Japanese ODA. Interestingly, most the volunteer workers I met were women. In a

Japanese restaurant that these volunteer workers often visit, Rie told me how Japanese were seen as privileged in Nepal because of their status as a major donor:

Most Nepalis are Japanophiles because we offer a lot of money in ODA. Our organization is not so well-known to Japanese, but eighty percent of Nepalis know about us. ... Most of the [Nepali] lower class think that Japanese are the only people who give money although the educated upper class know that is not the case.

I asked Rika's coworkers Megumi and Eiko why they joined the volunteer program.

Megumi said, "This is my career path. This is the best system for my career." Eiko told me, "I wanted to test my abilities." They also explained their image of Nepali people:

Megumi: In my view, Nepali people cannot make plans. They are too proud, probably because they don't have anything with which to compare with themselves. So it is hard to work together. They are so spoiled by the habit of being assisted by foreigners. ...

Eiko: They do only what they are ordered to do. They are so spoiled by having much assistance that they cannot change by themselves. But they are good people and innocent. ...

These women described Nepali clients as lazy from the perspective of technical donors. Listening to them, I realized that they had made a lot of effort toward assisting Nepal, so they were very critical of their Nepali clients. At the same time, I was aware that they repeated the term "spoiled" which refers to the unequal relations between a donor and a recipient although Japanese assistance is supposed to be based on the equal relation of "friendship" and could not help feeling that they unconsciously held the elitist idea that they could judge Nepali people despite their temporal positions in Nepal. Japanese students studying international development also criticized the work ethics of Nepali people. Kenji, a Japanese male student, told me that Nepalis should learn not technology but diligent work ethics from the Japanese if they desired to achieve development like Japan. While Kenji talked, Mari, another female student, agreed with Kenji nodding her

head. I wondered how they obtained the privileged positions to judge the work attitude and behaviour of Nepali people.

Harvey proposes that the condition of today's postmodern era is characterized as the flexible processes of internal relations within capitalism as a whole (1989:342). At the present, Japan is situated in a "superior" position to other nations in Asia in the conditions of global capitalism. Iwabuchi argues that "Japan's conception of being 'in but above' or 'similar but superior' to Asia is asserted, displaced, and rearticulated" (2002:199). Indeed, the "friendship" policy of Japan coincides with the idea that Japan is 'similar but superior' to Nepal as "Asia" in the form of ODA just as Japan performed the colonial role of patronizing other Asian nations during the Second World War. Moreover, national pride as a major donor is expressed at an individual level so that the Japanese volunteer workers and students described their "superior" positions by criticizing the work attitude and behaviour of the Nepalis.

The discourse of being "in but above Asia" is also repeated by Japanese female tourists in terms of economic advantage. Makiko explained why she started travelling to Asian countries in terms of materialism, "Asia is cheap and quite safe." Hitomi, a Japanese woman married to a Nepali man, also described why she travelled to Nepal, "One of the reasons is that it is possible for us to travel in Nepal with money we can earn in a just few months." Kiyomi and Yuriko said, "Nepal is a shopping paradise." I too repeated the discourse, "Asia is cheap" when my friends asked me why I like travelling to Asia. Frohlick states "who can be a tourist within a globalizing world should be closely examined" and illustrates the unequal ways in which Nepali mountain climbers negotiate their identities as "locals" in their relations with mobile "First World" tourists (2003:525).

Drawing upon this idea, I am critical of how these “Asian Japanese” women (including myself) described how they enjoyed being “First World” tourists by taking advantage of their economic superiority in Nepal. Yukino, a Japanese female tourist, was very honest with me concerning her upcoming marriage with her Nepali boyfriend and her financial and material expectations, “I want to keep the same living standard as in Japan. ... The dirtiness of India and Nepal is okay for travel. But for living, it does matter.”

The narratives and experiences of these “Asian Japanese” women demonstrate the various ways the vacationsapes of Nepal represent Asia as the intimate Other which Japan situates in the “similar but superior” position in terms of economic development. These narratives also showed me the rich geopolitical context in which “Asian Japanese” women navigate and negotiate their desires for Nepali men in the imaginative landscape of “Asia”.

3.4 “Asian Japanese” and the Feeling of Nostalgia in Nepal

An interesting tension presents itself. While Nepali people are seen as lacking Japan’s “superior” work ethic and thus judged negatively, they are at the same time admired, revered even, for their alleged “innocence” in nostalgic terms. Despite repeating the idea that Nepali people should learn work ethics from Japan, Kenji emphasized that “Nepalis have kept the most important thing that Japanese have lost”. His feeling of lost is explained in terms of “the shallowness of their lives” in Japan and his “concerns for the sacred in primitive society” like Nepal (MacCannell 1973:589-590). While listening to Kenji, I realized that the discourse of sentiment as well was repeated in describing Nepal by many Japanese female tourists. The sentiment “Nepalis have kept what Japanese

have lost” is expressed in terms of nostalgia, as when Yuka said, “Well, nostalgia. I felt something nostalgic here. ... Although I was born in Tokyo, I feel nostalgic seeing this scenery.” Wang suggests that the sentiment of nostalgia is the prominent feature of modern tourists who desire the ideal of authenticity of Other and Self:

The ideal of authenticity can be characterized by either nostalgia or romanticism. It is nostalgic because it idealizes the ways of life in which people are supposed as freer, more innocent, more spontaneous, purer, and truer to themselves than usual (such ways of life are usually supposed to exist in the past or in childhood). (1999:360)

Thus, it is important to examine how Japanese tourists feel the sentiment of nostalgia in the fantasy and desire of seeking the authenticity of Other and Self.

Accordingly, Iwabuchi suggests that nostalgia has become a key term in portraying the postmodern conditions in Japan (2002:173-174). The sentimental imagination of nostalgia generates a spiritual fantasy of “Asian Japanese” who imagine “backward” Asia, in which “the Japanese can find their lost purity, energy and dreams” (Iwabuchi 2002:174). The hierarchy of a pre-modern “backward” Asia and post-modern Japan is considered in terms of imperialism. Nash (1989) argues that global tourism is an imperialistic process in which the metropolitan centres of global capitalism take advantage of “less developed” Others. Rosaldo describes the hierarchy as “imperialist nostalgia”: “a particular kind of nostalgia, often found under imperialism, where people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed” (1989b:108).

Iwabuchi proposes that Japanese nostalgia toward other Asian countries should be called imperialist or more precisely, “capitalist nostalgia”:

Japan was not only an imperial power in the past but also plays a major role in the contemporary global spread of capitalism, one which has violently transformed and exploited many parts of the developing Asian countries. ... In the nostalgic representation of premodern “innocence”, Japan is not engaging in a dialogue with

“Asia” but consuming it for the transient pleasure of recuperation and refreshment. (2002:175)

Iwabuchi’s claim that capitalism is central in Japanese post-modern society is reflected by Harvey’s post-modern theory of space and time that “[c]apitalist hegemony over space puts the aesthetics of place very much back on the agenda” (1989:303). Considering capitalism as a crucial factor in post-modernity, Harvey seeks “to highlight material links between political – economic and cultural processes” (1989:201). Indeed, the fantasy of capitalist nostalgia is produced both in economic and cultural processes of neo-colonialism of global tourism just as many scholars indicate (Kempadoo 1999, Phillips 2002, Thorbek 2002, Richter 1989). Thus, “Asian Japanese” tourists enjoy projecting the fantasy of capitalist nostalgia on other Asian countries in the cultural and economic processes of neo-colonialism.

How is the fantasy of capitalist nostalgia created and circulated among Japanese tourists travelling within Asia? Appadurai contends that mass media reproduces the fantasy of “imagined nostalgia” in postmodern society:

[C]reating experiences of losses that never took place, these [mass media] advertisements create what might be called “imagined nostalgia,” nostalgia for things that never were. This imagined nostalgia thus inverts the temporal logic of fantasy ... and created much deeper wants than simple envy, imitation or greed could by themselves invite. (1997:77).

Just as Ryoko walks along an authentic “Asian” alleyway on the cover of *Asian Japanese*, Japanese tourists come to Nepal in order to discover nostalgic “Asia”. In the most famous Japanese guidebook, *Chikyu no arukikata: Nepāru* (Globe-Trotter Travel Guidebook: Nepal) (Chikyu no Arukikata Henshushitsu 2005) there are many photos and phrases that evoke the fantasy of an authentic “Asia”. First published in 1976, *Chikyū no arukikata* has targeted independent tourists and became the “bible” of Japanese backpackers with a

strong impact on Japanese tourist practices (Diamond-Big Co., Ltd 2005). Following Foucault's idea of power and discourse, the prologue generates the ideology of Japanese tourists travelling to Nepal: it is translated as:

THE SEVEN COLOURS OF NEPAL: The Himalaya, Newari Art, Festivals, Religious, Jungle Safari, Village Life and Bazaars

Beautiful nature, various ethnicities, and rich culture. Travelling to Nepal with sensation and astonishment (Chikyu no Arukikata Henshushitsu 2005:9)

The photo-pages of "Village Life", one of "THE SEVEN COLOURS OF NEPAL", are captioned: "somehow nostalgic - mountain life and village life" with photos of idyllic scenery (Chikyu no Arukikata Henshushitsu 2005:18-19). According to this discourse, it is obvious that Japanese tourists project the "authentic" image of their past onto idyllic Nepalese scenery. The sentiment of nostalgia is the product of imagination because most young Japanese tourists growing up in highly industrialized Japanese society do not share any past of village or mountain lives. Thus, the guidebook caption does not say "nostalgic" but "somehow nostalgic" so that Yuka explained her feeling of nostalgia as something mysterious although she accepted it as a natural matter. The photo-pages represent a Japanese fantasy of capitalist nostalgia because Nepalese people are framed by the photography which represents consumable "mountain life and village life" just as the cover photograph of "ordinary" people and scenery does on the best seller *Asian Japanese*.

Since Foucault explains discourse is itself power (1980:131), it is obvious that the phrase "somehow nostalgic" evokes and represents the powerful fantasy of authentic "Asia" among Japanese tourists travelling Nepal. In fact, 12 Japanese women among 43

clearly described their image of Nepal as “somehow nostalgic” in unstructured interviews.

Here is a sample:

Kumi: Abundant nature. Easygoing people, earthly and rural smell.

Rika: I feel something nostalgic in Nepal. I saw many travelogues that said things like that. Other tourists also tell me the same thing. I want to know why.

Keiko: Nepal is like what Japan used to be decades ago.

Hatsue: Rice terrace, roads, and cows. Something idyllic in the countryside.

Mayo: Nepal is like the countryside in Japan. I am also from the countryside in Japan.

The discourse “somehow nostalgic” is brought up by most Japanese tourists in various ways. For example, Rie praised Nepali people because of what she saw as their strong sense of family love. Ikuyo and Noriko told me that arranged marriages are more common in Nepal in comparison to modern Japan where marriages based on love are popular. Junko explained how she was helped by a Nepali man speaking fluent Japanese and described him as “sincere, kind, and rustic”. The key words of family love, arranged marriage, sincerity, and kindness were translated into “somehow nostalgic” because these Japanese women praised Nepali people and culture in terms of their ideal retrospective image. Thus, the fantasy of discovering an authentic “Asia” in Nepal appears in a form of the fantasy of capitalist nostalgia, which is generated through viewing “Asia” as authentic pre-modern Japan.

It is important to notice that the fantasy of capitalist nostalgia is sustained though the inequality between Japanese and developing “Other Asia” in the era of globalization. Since Japan is part of Asia, it may seem natural for Japanese to claim that we are Asian Japanese. However, the concept of “Asian Japanese” implies unequal power relations

between post-modern Japanese and authentic pre-modern “Asia”. Indeed, many “Asian Japanese” women claim cosmopolitan status by enjoying economic freedom in Nepal while they desire an authentic “Asia” in the vacationscapes of Nepal. However, the “Asian Japanese” fantasy of capitalist nostalgia is not a new form of cosmopolitanism but of Japanese nationalism. Graml (2005) describes how Austrian national identity works out in the tourist spaces of *Sound of Music* in Salzburg. Graml concludes that global tourism offers the imaginative spaces of “the power hierarchies and structural (dis)advantages encountered by those who belong to these imagined places and by those who do not” (2005:207). Thus, the imagination of national identity that seems “local” plays out in the translocal spaces of “global” tourism beyond the binary of global and local. Thus, the “Asian” vacationscapes of Nepal distinctively becomes the space into which the fantasy of Japanese nationalism is projected. This fact represents the global inequality between “Asian Japanese” tourists and authentic “Asian” locals. Kempadoo stresses the transnational inequality between the Caribbean and Western tourists:

[W]e can ... view sex work in the context of international and racialized relations of power, as a (re)source for the sustenance and nurturance of the First World, which supports the refashioning of Western constructions of gender and sexuality, or as a heaven for the replenishment of Western bodies and productive labor. (1999:27)

Although Japanese female tourists desire an authentic Other in the complex logic of “Asian Japanese” which is distinct from their Western counterparts, they actually take advantage of the global inequality as Kempadoo says. Therefore, it is important to examine the unequal processes through which “Asian Japanese” women project their fantasy of capitalist nostalgia on Nepali men from multiple perspectives.

Chapter 4

ASIAN JAPANESE WOMEN FALL IN LOVE WITH NEPALI MEN

4.1 Dreaming that Nepali Boys Will Become Authentic “Asian” Men

How great the trekking experience was! Beautiful scenery, pleasant people. Many things happened in unexpected ways. I was asked to teach English in a small village. I liked Jharkot village so much that I stayed there for two nights. I became sick in Jomson. Then, I talked a lot with Nepali people. I could improve my Nepali a little. Then, then... something happened to me. I came to love the Nepali people so much! (author's travel diary, Pokhara, March 1999)

I remember how excited I was walking under the blue sky and the snowy white Himalayan Mountains, meeting Nepali people along the way. I had long conversations with Nepali male trekking guides and local men who said to me “Namaste!” Encountering Nepali men in trekking, I came to “love the Nepali people” that especially referred to the Nepali men I met. While writing in my diary at the dining garden of a tourist restaurant in Pokhara, I became aware of my feelings of affection for the Nepali people and so I decided to continue travelling in Nepal longer.

As Iwabuchi points out, Japanese project the nostalgic sentiment of premodern innocence onto “backward” Asian countries, which Japanese see as being the true “Asia” (2002:175). As discussed in Chapter 3, Japanese tourists consider Nepal to be part of authentic “Asia” where they can consume the nostalgic landscapes of backwardness and enjoy their cosmopolitan status of “Asian Japanese”. My sense of affection toward the Nepali people that I attempted to describe in my travel diary can now be interpreted as a kind of erotic sentiment arising from this fantasy of capitalist nostalgia. Let me explain.

I observed Nepali men as “pleasant” people who represent the intimate Other, in other words, authentic “Asian” men who are differently “backward” but similarly “Asian”. Feeling that “something happened to me”, I enjoyed becoming an “Asian

Japanese” woman, which I believed to be my true Self. This travel diary shows how Japanese female tourists recreate the transnational imagination of authentic “Asian” masculinity through the unequal fantasy of capitalist nostalgia. Accordingly, Japanese women enjoy seeking their authentic Self which is recognized as the ideal cosmopolitan femininity of “Asian Japanese”. In this chapter, I will discuss how the transnational sexualities of authentic “Asian” men and “Asian Japanese” women are formulated in “Asian” vacationsapes of Nepal from the perspective of Japanese female tourists.

Examining the sexual identity of Japanese as the women in relation to foreign men, Kelsky (1996, 2001) carried out research in the late 1980s and early 1990s with a small group of young Japanese women disparagingly called “yellow cabs”. The term “yellow cabs” is primarily used in the male-dominated Japanese media (Kelsky 1996:174). These Japanese women called “yellow cabs” were characterized as being aggressive in seeking sexual and emotional pleasure with *gaijin* (foreign) men in international places such as Hawai’i, New York City, Bali, and on U.S. military bases in Japan (2001:134). Although the term “yellow cab” disappeared in the late 1990s because it was seen as discriminatory against Japanese women, Kelsky proposes that the so-called “yellow cabs” played a symbolic role in representing other young Japanese women. Indeed, most of the so-called “yellow cab” women came from a group of young women with fewer public and private responsibilities both and thus they enjoyed a larger expendable income (Kelsky 2001:135).

Many young Japanese women employ the same logics of “authentic *gaijin*” as so-called “yellow cab” women used in order to criticize Japanese men. One Japanese woman stated, “Americans know how to enjoy sex! It’s fun, natural, wonderful.

Japanese men treat it like something dirty or bad.” (Kelsky 1996:181) In fact, these women praise *gaijin* males for their sexual and emotional superiority while they criticize Japanese men for their patriarchal behaviour such as lack of kindness and restraints of sexual freedom (Kelsky 1996:180-182). Importantly, the skin colour of foreign men plays a central role in marking *gaijin* men as hyper sexual or gentle objects (Kelsky 2001:135-138). Kelsky points out that “the discourse of the *gaijin* lover is most often a discourse of whiteness” as well as blackness (2001:143). Similarly, Bailey (2005) purports that English conversation schools are characterized as a “wonderland” where Japanese young women can fulfill their Occidentalized longings for white men and of having future careers in patriarchal Japanese society.

While the fantasy of *gaijin* men is discussed in terms of whiteness or blackness, which is bound up with foreign exoticness representing ideal morals, freedom and sexual liberation, the stereotyped physical character of Nepali men also takes an important role in creating the erotic desire of Japanese women. While Kelsey’s research shows that the conspicuous difference of (male) whiteness or blackness attracts Japanese women, my research reveals that Japanese women described the alleged visible similarity of Nepali men as something attractive. When Keiko started talking about her Nepali boyfriends, Dipak and Raju, she mentioned their faces first:

Dipak is a Japanese speaking tour guide. He is a very good-looking guy. I had never imagined there could be such a handsome guy. His face is really beautiful. Not like other Nepalis. ... Raju is working in a guesthouse. Although his face looks Mongoloian differently from Dipak, he has big bright eyes. ... I think many Japanese women like white men, but I could never like them because they are totally different. I cannot accept them.

It is clear that Keiko was attracted by the looks of Dipak and Raju, which she saw somewhat different from the “Mongolian” faces of Japanese. Although I did not meet

Raju who lived outside of Kathmandu, I met Dipak who seemed to come from a Brahman *jāt* (which means both caste and ethnicity in Nepali) because I saw his clear-cut face more “Aryan”. Keiko does not appear to desire white men because she sees them as having a “totally different” appearance from that of Japanese. Accordingly, Keiko emphasized how she resembles the Nepali women who have Japanese-like Mongolian faces. In fact, wearing a wool shawl like a Nepali woman, Keiko exchanged some Nepali phrases with Nepali men in a small tea-stall who teased her saying, “You are Nepali, right?” Keiko answered, “Yes.” It seems that Keiko was enjoying the similarity of “Asian” faces between her and the Nepalis, but which are still somewhat different from each other. Observing Keiko, I remembered the days of trekking when I had been attracted by Nepali men who had the “Asian” face of my type, but which I could not find in Japan.

Other Japanese women also referred to the Japanese-like looks of their Nepali lovers. Ayaka showed me a photo of her Nepali boyfriend Ram who was from a Tibetan Gurung *jāt* and wore a brand name hats and shirts. Ayaka said “Ram has Japanese [fashion] sense. He looks like a Japanese man. He wears clothes that Japanese men wear. That is what I like about him.” Tomoko also showed me a photo of her Nepali boyfriend Dawa who was originally Tibetan:

When I saw Dawa, he was my type. ... Dawa looks Japanese. I love his Japanese-like looks. ... I don't feel anything odd even if we walk together in Japan. ... On the other hand, I am often mistaken for a Nepali. He likes my Nepali-like looks, too. [Tomoko looks happy to say that she resembles a Nepali woman]

The Japanese-like looks of Nepali men invoke in Japanese women some kind of intimate feelings while the women enjoy showing off their Nepali-like faces. On the other hand, these Japanese women emphasized the “good looks” of their Nepali boyfriends, which

they think cannot be found among Japanese men. It is obvious that these Japanese women enjoy seeking authentic “Asian” men who look similar to Japanese, but who are still somewhat different in appearances from Japanese men. Erika, a Japanese female student, described Nepali men as “mysterious” because of their similarity and difference. Importantly, although Nepali people are ethnically different from each other, these Japanese women lumped the variety of Nepali men together as the group of “Asian” men in order to erotically savour the imagined similarities between Nepalis and Japanese. Here, ethnic differences among Nepali men are revered according to their type; at the same time, they are ignored in the fantasy of being “the same-Asian”. Thus, the discourse of authentic “Asian-ness” based on the imagined physical similarity reproduces the erotic desire and fantasy of “Asian Japanese” women for Nepali men.

However, some Japanese women stress the importance of mental character rather than the physical dimension of authentic “Asian-ness”. As Ayaka said, “I like how Ram is inside.” Considering the mental attractiveness of white men, Kelsky contends that most women speak about their desire not primarily for the physical attractiveness of *gaijin* but for their *yasashisa*, “glossed as kindness, gentleness, or chivalrousness” (2001:138). Quoting from a Japanese women’s magazine, one young woman explained the *yasashisa* of *gaijin* men:

When I go to visit a British or Italian guy, they always ... serve food and drinks themselves. But when I go to a Japanese guy’s place ... he tries to make me clean his room and cook his dinner! (Kelsky 2001:138)

Kelsky argues that “perhaps nowhere so much as in the realm of kindness (*yasashisa*) is the Japanese male felt to be deficient” (1996:183). Since *yasashisa* is part of indigenous Japanese morality, young Japanese women say that Japanese men should possess more

yasashisa; in other words, they want Japanese men to be more expressive of their ideals of *yasashisa*. Thus, it is possible to see *yasashisa* as the moralistic criterion to assess masculinity, which young Japanese women take for granted.

By the same token, Japanese female tourists assess their Nepali boyfriends in terms of *yasashisa*. When I asked Ayaka what she loved about Ram, Ayaka answered “*Yasashisa*. Ram has *yasashisa*, which Japanese men do not have. For example, he pulls out my chair for me.” Tomoko explained how Dawa’s *yasashisa* affected her mentally and physically:

Nepali people are *yasashii* [the adjectival form of *yasashisa*]. ... Although I cannot depend on his money, or economic aspects, I count on him emotionally. I have become emotionally stable in Nepal, so I got slim. ... I lost weight after I met him. Because my heart is satisfied with him, I do not have to eat a lot to fill up my heart.

Tomoko showed me a photo of her taken before she met Dawa. In contrast to her image in the photo, Tomoko neatly wore makeup and a black suit. I understood how Tomoko could lose weight by filling her heart instead of her stomach. Just as Kelsky points out, these Japanese women emphasized the emotional factor of *yasashisa*, which they do not see Japanese men as having.

However, Japanese female tourists express the discourse of *yasashisa* in distinctive ways; they sense authentic “Asian-ness” inside Nepali men. Noriko, a Japanese female student, described her Nepali boyfriends: “My ex-boyfriend is *yasashii* and loves children. ... I know that Amrit [her current boyfriend] wants to make his parents happy. I like his affection for his parents.” As Noriko told me, Japanese women praise Nepali men who have *yasashisa* or affection for children and family. Tomoko also talked about *yasashisa* in terms of love of parents:

I like to see how Dawa takes care of his parents, and often phones them. I love this about him. I am sure that he will take care of my parents when he comes to Japan. He and his sisters also told me that Nepali people resemble Japanese because they take care of their families.

Similarly, Yuka described what she likes about her Nepali husband in comparing him with Japanese men: “Well, Nepali men love children much more. Nepali people love any child, whether it is their own or not. I like that.” These Japanese women stressed the idea that *yasashisa* for family and children is part of the indigenous “Asian-ness” which they think both Japanese and Nepali people have in common. However, these Japanese women are attracted by Nepali men because they believe that Nepali men possess more *yasashisa* for family and children than do Japanese men.

Importantly, Japanese female tourists assume that Nepali men possess the “Asian” value of *yasashisa* in the logic of capitalist nostalgia. As discussed in Chapter 3, Japanese tourists try to discover in the nostalgic landscapes of Nepal that which they consider to be lost in “modern” Japan. In the same way, Japanese female tourists seek the rustic dispositions of *yasashisa* that they assume that can be found among Nepali men living in “backward” Asia. The capitalist nostalgia toward *yasashisa* is clearly revealed in the cyber-vacationscape of *Ni Channeru*. In the category regarding international travels of *Ni Channeru* (2005), there is a thread about travels in Nepal:

No. 416 posted by anonymous 05/20/2005

Japanese women and Nepali guys... Can't they be just friends? Do you have any idea how I can have just friendship without sex?

No. 434 posted by anonymous 05/27/2005

During my domestic travels, I am not willing to make friends. But in Nepal, it is very fascinating to meet people. Going to rural places and encountering the *ataakasa* [human kindness] of people, I feel very comfortable. Anyway, I think that Nepal is a country where people are fascinating. But in fact, it is difficult to just be friends. When I talk with Nepali guys, they treat me too much as “a Japanese woman”.

No. 435 posted by anonymous 05/27/2005

It is an illusion for you to believe that you can do in Nepal what you cannot do in Japan, isn't it? Above all, you should find a good life in Japan, right?

No. 436 posted by anonymous 05/28/2005

It is fine even if it is an illusion, isn't it? In fact, it may turn out to be even better, right?

The agenda is how these writers can encounter *ataakasa*, another kind of *yasashisa* that means the disposition of warm-heatedness, by making friends with Nepali men. The discourse is produced through the fantasy of capitalist nostalgia because they fantasize *ataakasa* is not easily found in "modern" Japan, but can be found in the rural places of "backward" Nepal. It is also created through the expectation that they are socially and culturally accepted by Nepali people as their "true friends", in other words, they desire to become just like the Nepalis who they consider as authentic "Asian" friends.

Interestingly, these Japanese women understand that their desire is the product of fantasy, which one writer described as "illusion". However, one Japanese woman justifies her fantasy of *ataakasa* and her expectation of becoming like a Nepali by saying "it may turn out to be even better". Therefore, Japanese women project the fantasy of the authentic "Asian-ness" of *yasashisa* onto Nepali men and desire to become an authentic "Asian" themselves in the fantasy of capitalist nostalgia.

Moreover, the fantasy of capitalist nostalgia is often expressed in terms of another kind of authentic "Asian-ness" – innocence. For instance, Keiko stressed Dipak's innocence although she complained about him asking her to buy a new cell phone for him. Keiko said to me, "But Dipak is now in his village because his mother got sick. ... When he goes home, he has his hair neatly cut out of respect for his parents. On this point, he is innocent." Keiko was critical of Dipak's materialism that represented the modern

fashionable behaviour of Nepali youth as well as Japanese youth. However, Keiko praised Dipak's innocence, which she saw in his respectful behaviour toward his parents. When talking about her boyfriend Amrit, Noriko also repeated that she loves his innocence above all – an innocence which she often mentioned in relation to his treatment of his parents:

Noriko: *Like, love*, and what do you think comes next? Amrit said *believe!*

Chisono: Do Nepali people think *believe* is more important than *love*?

Noriko: Because Amrit is very innocent. Well, let me tell you about him. We cannot decide about our marriage yet because his parents will object. He is from a conservative caste. ... When Amrit talked with his father about marriage with foreign women, his father was surprised, saying "What?" Amrit only answered, "I was just kidding!"

Keiko and Noriko believe that *yasashisa* in respecting parents is connected to the emotional value of innocence that they assume that Japanese and Nepalis share as part of authentic "Asian" values. As a result, Keiko and Noriko stressed the innocence of their Nepali boyfriends, an innocence not demonstrated by Japanese men in contemporary Japan.

There is another way to illustrate the putative innocence of Nepali men. I talked with Erika on the way to the school she was attending because she invited me there to show me the school. Seeing Nepali people pass by, Erika told me why she became attracted to Nepali men:

Most Nepali people are innocent. For example, religious gestures [by showing the gesture of her hands moving to her forehead]. It looks very natural. I like to see they naturally pray at ordinary temples beside the roads. ... Although I have my Japanese boyfriend in Japan, my sense of intimacy is growing toward my Nepali male friend. ... Being with him, I feel comfortable.

Erika explained that the characteristic of innocence has a lot to do with the religious devotion of the Nepali people so she became attracted to her Newar male friend, Suman, who she observed as the most innocent of the Nepali men she knew. Erika always told me, "Suman is cute because he is childlike." Erika's words reminded me of the interview with Ayaka. Ayaka told me how she was captivated by Ram's religious nature although she stressed his Japanese-like modern fashion sense:

Ram is very religious and tells me spiritual stories. For instance, when he crosses a river, he prays. It fascinates me. He says that there are many gods living in rivers. I admire him when he tells this kind of story. I feel sorry for *Kumari* because she does not have any freedom. But he believes that *Kumari* is a living goddess. Listening to his opinion, I understand our ways of seeing the world are different.

Ayaka admitted that Ram's religious views were something different from her worldview so she was attracted by the spirituality that she did not have. Tomoko also mentioned how she was fascinated by Dawa's rituals: "Dawa is very religious. He wears a big Buddhist charm. When I see him throw down his whole body on the ground at temples, it takes my breath away." The reason why these Japanese women admired the religiosity of their Nepali boyfriends is that they see it as the ideal value of innocence, which they believe cannot be found in "modern" Japan. It is also obvious that these Japanese women were patronizing their Nepali boyfriends because they appreciated the fact that these religious practices were still maintained in "backward" Nepal. In fact, these women's comments reminded me that I had been spellbound by the "exotic" aspect of Nepali men who wore their religious ornaments on their skin. Imitating these Nepali men, I had put on Buddhist necklaces as a token of authentic "Asian-ness" which I could share with Nepali men. Thus, these Japanese women felt both exotic and intimate toward the

religiosity of their Nepali boyfriends in the fantasy of authentic “Asian-ness”, which they assume they share with Nepalis, but which “modern” Japanese are alleged to be missing.

Similarly to the idea of innocence, other Japanese women praised their Nepali partners because they possess a relaxed disposition, something that has mental health value. While holding their baby, Rika remembered the time when she met her Nepali husband Arjun:

We started exchanging letters. Arjun does not know how to email. He is an “analog” person [as opposed to digital system]. I am also the “analog” type. I do not like systematic things that stress me. I can feel relaxed here in Nepal.

Rika described how she felt stressed in living in the highly technological society of Japan and described herself as an “analog” type as opposed to digital technology, as represented by email. Rika found that Arjun was also the same type, “analog” so she could be relaxed with him. Mika, a Japanese student, also admired her Tibetan-Nepali husband Mingma because of his “analog” sense of time. Mika smiled saying, “Mingma can judge the time by looking at the sun!” Indeed, the analog sense of Nepali time is “like a flowing river” so that “[i]n Nepal there is no sense of wasting time, as in other industrially advanced countries of the world” (Bista 2001:84). Yoshiko also commented on her Brahman husband Ran Bahadur in the same way:

Japanese life is full of stress, busy. I wanted to relax. ... I met Ran Bahadur in a meditation centre. He is a meditation-facilitator. ... Because he practices meditation and yoga, he is mentally very stable. ... He is mentally older than I am even though I am actually older.

Showing a genial smile, Yoshiko told me in a soft voice how she felt happy about her pregnancy. Later, Yoshiko emailed me to share with me that she used to be a nervous person because of the hard work in Japan. Remembering her gentle smile, I could not believe that Yoshiko had experienced such stress before. Just as Rika constructed Arjun

in terms of “analog”, it is clear that Yoshiko respected Ran Bahadur as a spiritual guru who could help her escape from the busy and stressful life in Japan. Rika and Yoshiko praised their Nepali partners because of their “analog” and “stress-free” characters that they believe that are rare acquired in contemporary Japanese society.

Indeed, Nepali men’s alleged dispositions of *yasashisa*, innocence, and relaxed nature are underscored because many Japanese women are very conscious that these authentic “Asian” characteristics are fading among Japanese people of their generation. In order to examine this point, I recall here how the image of my Nepali male subjects changed in the process of my “discovering” their authentic “Asian” values. For example, I had praised the *yasashisa* exhibited by my Nepali male subjects just as I have shown in the exemplary conversation I had with my Newar friend Nirmal. Nirmal, speaking fluent Japanese, was good at putting his Japanese clients and friends like me into a good mood. Nirmal arranged various dishes and local wine for me and tried to make me laugh with his funny jokes. I came to trust Nirmal after only a few hours conversation in a local bar. In the same way, Krishna, a male trekking guide from a Rai *jāt*, made me feel comfortable. In my diary, I described the day we had lunch together in a local restaurant:

Soon after we entered the restaurant, Krishna ordered food for me. There was local cold water in my glass. Krishna told a waiter to replace it with hot water. Krishna said, “It is safer for your health.” Krishna also ordered some snacks by saying, “These dishes contain less oil so you don’t have to worry about stomach ache.” Krishna took care of me without me telling him anything. I felt great!

While I felt comfortable with Nirmal and Krishna, I was telling myself, “Japanese men do not take care of me like they do!” I quickly felt close to Nirmal and Krishna after a few hours’ conversation. I realized how I had been attracted to Nirmal and Krishna’s chivalrous *yasashisa*. I also found my patronizing feeling that I am a Japanese woman to

be served by them. Moreover, I was attributing these behaviours such as pouring the rice wine and arranging for healthy food to the highly valued Japanese trait of *yasashisa* rather than to a variety of other interpretations I could have made including their entrepreneurial and cosmopolitan skills such as their language ability. While I sensed that the Nepali men were behaving according to the authentic “Asian” virtue of *yasashisa*, which I assumed Japanese men would not act according to, I did view these enactments of *yasashisa* in these particular men as sexually attractive.

I also recall here how my image of Nima, a Sherpa male tour guide, had changed during my conversation with him, from a platonic to a more eroticised one. Nima talked to me speaking fluent Japanese:

I have to think about my future, and that of my three sisters, too. ... My mother works in a restaurant to take care of my sisters’ tuition and I work to pay for our room rent. So, I do not buy any new clothes. My jeans have many holes, but I wear them. ... I do not go shopping more than once a year.

Initially, Nima’s timid behaviour and his youth (23 years old) led me to believe that he was more emotionally vulnerable than I was. However, Nima looked different to me when I heard about his efforts on behalf of his family. At the same time, I felt ashamed of myself because I had not been loyal to my parents like Nima. My changing impression of Nima shows how I had regarded consideration for family and strong connection with family, which opposes to the Western ideal of independence, as an authentic “Asian” virtue that I was losing, but that Nima had maintained. To me, Nima’s love and efforts for his family represent the authentic “Asian-ness” of *yasashisa* and innocence. As a result, I constructed Nima in terms of mature “manhood” despite my first impression of his youthful vulnerability. Indeed, our conversation about his familial obligations was the

moment when Nima changed before my eyes from a Nepali boy to a sexually mature Nepali man.

Appadurai argues that the imagination of fantasy and desire plays out everywhere in translocal space: “The image, the imagined, the imaginary – these are all terms that direct us to something critical and new in global cultural process: *the imagination as a social process*”(2002:49). Urry also discusses how imagination takes on a central role in constructing the tourist gaze: “It is rather that they [tourists] seek to experience ‘in reality’ the pleasurable dramas they have already experienced in their imagination (2002:13). Pritchard and Morgan (2000) discuss how the imagination of Others plays out as gendered tourist gaze. For example, “Asia” is called a man’s “paradise” in which young attractive Asian women can be found (Pritchard and Morgan 2000:896). All landscapes are imagined as gendered to some degree; there are no gender-neutral images in any landscape whether the landscape is local, national or transnational. I have tried to show here how the Japanese women who participated in my study illustrated their eroticised landscapes of Nepal in terms of their own capitalist nostalgia and the discovery of an authentic “Asian” masculinity. In other words, the Japanese women’s desire to view Nepali boys as becoming authentic “Asian” Nepali men through the men’s enactments of “innocence” and “*yasashisa*” facilitated the women’s construction of the Nepali men as sexually attractive in terms of their “domestic” gender ideology.

Kelsky proposes that the phenomenon of “yellow cabs” is not based on internationalization, but old racism in a new guise because it emphasizes the “domestic” agenda of gender ideology with the notion of whiteness (1996:187). Just as Kelsky sees the desire for white masculinity held by Japanese women in terms of racism, the fantasy

of seeking an authentic “Asian” masculinity is seen as a new form of Japanese nationalism. Japanese women project their own ideals of “Asian” masculinity onto Nepali men in the same logic of capitalist nostalgia: “backward” Nepalis maintain authentic “Asian-ness” that “modern” Japanese people have lost. Japanese women recreate the fantasy of transnational masculinity of authentic “Asian” men, which is in fact the projection of their ideals of Japanese masculinity – *yasashisa*, innocence, and relaxation. Consequently, the discourse of ideal masculinity revealed in comments such as “Nepali men are so innocent” circulated among Japanese female tourists because they fantasize that Nepali men possess the ideal “Asian” masculinity by living in “backward” Asia. In this regard, Japanese women reproduce the fantasy of an authentic “Asian” masculinity through the discourse of Nepali men’s character.

The authentic “Asian” masculinity projected onto Nepali men is the transnational sexuality that transcends the national borders between Japan and Nepal. However, the transnational sexuality of “Asian” men is the product of Japanese domestic fantasy because it reflects Japanese ideals. It is also a trans-ethnic sexuality because Japanese women circulate the discourse of ideal “Asian” men beyond the difference of *jāt*, which means both caste and ethnicity; for instance, the discourse of *yasashisa* and innocence is similarly used to describe Nepali men from various *jāt* such as Gurung, Newar, Tibetan, and Brahman who have different appearances and dispositions. Japanese women’s fantasies of an authentic “Asian” masculinity transcend the national and ethnic boundaries while it remains within the domestic framework of Japanese virtue. Importantly, the fantasy of a transnational “Asian” masculinity is reproduced through the nostalgic discourse of Japanese women who have privileged mobility and the economic

resources to easily transcend the national borders between “modern” Japan and “backward” Nepal. Japanese women’s sentiments of capitalist nostalgia unequally recreate the fantasy of an authentic “Asian” masculinity in the eroticised vacationsapes of Nepal. Indeed, it is the exploitative fantasy of Japanese women who are welcomed as “First World” tourists in the era of globalized capitalism. Thus, Japanese women desire the exploitative fantasy that “innocent” Nepali boys become authentic “Asian” heroes who are sexually ideal for Japanese women in the “Asian” vacationsapes of Nepal.

4.2 Japanese Girls Growing into “Asian Japanese” Women

Trekking, meeting people... Everything is like a dream. ... What do I do with him? What is happening to me? I still don’t know anything about what is going on. Days are passing in unexpected ways. Really. Where am I going? (author’s travel diary, Pokhara, March 1999)

I wrote this diary entry because I realized that I was attracted to a Nepali man I met while trekking. In a literal sort of way, I was “dreaming” the fantasy of authentic “Asian” men in the gendered landscape of Nepal – “Everything is like a dream.” However, I did not only “dream” this fantasy of “Asian” men, but I experienced my sexual desire changing in unexpected ways. On another day, I wrote about a very real sense of my gender identity in my diary, “I realized that I am a woman”. According to Butler, gender categories are not the group of concrete subjects, but the effects of regulatory practices within social and cultural structures (1990:16). De Beauvoir says that “[o]ne is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (1974: 301). Quoting de Beauvoir, Butler suggests that “women itself is a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end ” (1990:33). It was true that I was aware of my gender as a woman in Japan; however, my gender identity was re-constructed through my new sexual

desire for authentic “Asian” men in Nepal. I felt that I became a “real” woman through the fantasy of discovering “authentic” Other and Self in the eroticised vacationscares of Nepal.

Significantly, my sense of becoming a “real” woman is only possible when I had attained the privileged status of being globally mobile. The activity of trekking is a metaphor for my mobile cosmopolitan status. For many Japanese female tourists, the fantasy of searching for an authentic “Asian” masculinity among Nepali men plays out in equally tangible ways. Linked to their fantasy of the more authentic “Asian” masculinity embodied in Nepali men, Japanese female tourists re-work their own sexual desires and dream of discovering an “authentic Asian” Self which is not seemingly available in Japan. My diary recounts how I enjoyed recognizing my “real” sexuality during trekking in the authentic “Asian” landscape of Nepal.

I remembered clearly this entry in my travel diary when I met Keiko at a guesthouse in Thamel. On the morning I checked out the guesthouse because the music was too loud in the restaurants, I saw Keiko looking into a mirror in a shady shared bathroom. I noticed that Keiko wore gold pierced earrings like Nepali women. Keiko was brushing her hair in a languid manner. I felt awkward speaking to her because she looked like a much-traveled backpacker who keeps a distance from other tourists. I timidly said to her, “Hello, would you like to have a tea with me?” From that moment, our friendship grew.

We went to a small tea stall behind the street just across the guesthouse, which I had not noticed until Keiko took me there. One Nepali man asked her, “*Sancai* (Are you fine)?” and Keiko answered, “*Sancai chu* (I am fine).” Other Nepali men also called her,

“*Didi* (elder sister)!” and joked with her. Amazed to see Keiko speaking Nepali, I asked her, “Why did you come to Nepal?” Drinking milk tea, Keiko started to tell me her life story:

I am 28 years old. I went to India two months ago; from Varanasi to Sunauli, and to Kathmandu [by bus]. I stayed in India only for a week. I hated it. I came to Nepal by chance. In Japan, I had bought some pants which were made in Nepal. Until then, I had known nothing about Nepal. So, I thought it would be nice to travel to Nepal. ... I felt stuck in Japanese society before this trip. I dwelled on various things. After graduating from senior high school, I left home and worked in a city. Three years ago, my boyfriend died in a bike accident after our two-year relationship. That was when I understood that everyone is mortal. My old friends were so worried about me that they called me often, but I did not talk with them. I wanted to be alone. I was thinking about so many things. I thought I should do what I wanted to do if I were going to die one day. I came to realize that appearance does not matter even though I was working in a boutique. No matter what other people say to me, it does not matter. I should do what I want to do. But I could not make up my mind even though I wanted to travel, so I was just kept working in a factory. Then, the contract finished and I applied for another job, but they did not hire me. I saw this as a sign that I should start travelling. ... I wanted to travel to a place where nobody knew me. ... In fact, my ex-boyfriend had had an affair with someone else, and then he died without telling me anything. I knew it, but I could not talk to him about it. I was dwelling on so many things like how others see me, how I should behave, and how I should not say what I was thinking. ... But I can speak up for myself now. I have changed because of this trip. I am very happy to be travelling. I am enjoying myself. I have opened up.

I saw Keiko’s eyes sparkle while talking about her excitement about this trip. Keiko’s narrative overlapped my feelings of oppression in Japan and open-ness in Nepal. It is true that the feeling of frustration toward modern Japanese society and the moral pressure to be loyal to men motivate Japanese women to escape from Japan in order to seek liberation. As Keiko got to know Nepal through pants, these Japanese women see “Asia” as commodities to heal their stress and acquire freedom in terms of self-renewal as becoming opened up.

Projecting my old-self onto her, I saw several Nepali men pass by and speak to Keiko, "Hello, *didi!*" Answering them cheerfully, Keiko ordered another tea. So did I. She started to talk again:

Well, a sense of intimacy grows quickly with Nepalis, right? Like becoming too friendly. A lot has happened with Nepali men. When I was talking with a Nepali man who was 24 years old in the guesthouse, he seduced me. The first day, I did not go with him because I thought it was risky, but the next day I went out with him. ... Later, I met Dipak at a travel agency. Dipak is a Japanese-speaking tour guide. He is a very good-looking guy. I had never imagined there could be such a handsome guy. His face is really beautiful. Not like other Nepalis. I met him through my Japanese male friend here. While walking in the street, Dipak spoke to me. I thought Dipak was a playboy, so I could play with him like a game. Dipak said he had had relationships with 12 women! ... When I went to Pokhara, I met Raju. Raju was working at a guesthouse in a small city away from Pokhara. Although his face looks Mongoloid, he has big bright eyes. We walked down a straight road watching the beautiful sunset. We walked into the woods, and then Raju kissed me. Other Nepalis always say only, "I am poor" but Raju explained me how the Nepali government has made them poor. Raju is intelligent and different from other Nepalis. Dipak is my playmate, but Raju is different. We chat on-line everyday. I might go to Pokhara to meet Raju again. ... I said that appearance does not matter, but it is also important.

I was so surprised that Keiko told me about her romances even though I had not asked. I told her about my research and confessed, "In my twenties, I also had a Nepali boyfriend." Keiko said, "Well, this is my first time to speak about my romance. Okay, I can talk a lot. But I can speak about my romance because I am serious with Raju not like with Dipak."

After that meeting, I met Keiko almost everyday. We often met in a small tea stall near her guesthouse and enjoyed chatting and having local snacks – milk tea and doughnuts, both Keiko's favourites. Whenever Nepali people passed by, they said to Keiko, "Namaste, *didi!*" Keiko told me about them saying things such as "He has Nepali and Japanese girlfriends," "His life is tough because his parents died when he was a child," and "She just came to Thamel from her village to find a job." I was surprised at

how much she knew about these Nepali people. I thought to myself, “Keiko is more like an anthropologist than I am.” One day, Keiko visited my room and we had tea on the terrace. The sunshine was very strong even though it was December. Keiko talked about

Dipak:

I started travelling in order to be alone, but I cannot let myself be alone. If somebody responds to me, I am glad. The day after I stay with a guy, I realize that I cannot be alone. I want to be always with someone. When Dipak slept with his back toward me or when he said “bye” right after sex, I became disillusioned even though I know it is just a game. Dipak is too experienced. But I go out with Dipak because I feel like he is chasing me. I feel glad to be chased as if a dog is after me. I feel sad if the dog looks away defiantly. It is because I used to chase someone, not be chased by someone. ... These experiences here mirror my whole life. I am always passive and do not take action by myself. Even though I tried to keep a distance from him, Dipak kept after me saying “Why don’t you come to my office?” ... Well, I am very friendly to everyone here, so they call me *didi*. When I was regretting that I had had sex with him after the first time, Dipak asked me “Are you angry?” I wondered if Dipak did really love me. I talked about this with the manager of my guesthouse. He said “It is because you are very frank.” I am the kind of person who can be easily approached. It is the same with having sex. I sometime wonder if I am thinking too much [about my romance and life]. What am I doing now? It is difficult [to answer]. Many people ask me if I am angry because I always lower my eyebrows when I am thinking too much.

Keiko looked very serious when she was talking about her relationship with Dipak even though she said she was playing a game with him. Keiko’s words “What am I doing now?” reminded me of the day I wrote in my travel diary, “Where am I going?” Keiko’s narrative overlapped with my own narrative seven years ago. Remembering my old self, I thought that Keiko was deeply immersed in the erotic landscape of Thamel where Nepali men and foreign women solicit each other. Later, Keiko told me how she was fully involved in the erotic geopolitics of Thamel:

Today, Dipak came back from trekking. ... He invited me for dinner in a restaurant and took me to the second floor. It is like a normal hotel room for having sex. In the end, I spent one night with him there. I asked, “You have other girlfriends, right?” Dipak told me that he was too busy at his work to make girlfriends. Is it true? Is he a serious man? I am tired of thinking so much. ... But I told myself to

forget it after all. While refusing to have sex with Dipak, I wondered what I was doing. I thought that it was okay as long as he used a condom. These kinds of things happen one right after the other here, not like in Japan.

Keiko seemed to be confused by this situation in which she was approached by many Nepali men including Dipak. Accordingly, Keiko's sexual behaviour changed dramatically to the point that she was engaging in casual sex.

It is the case that these days, it is considered socially permissive for young single Japanese women to have casual sex. For instance, Japanese people enjoy many television programs and novels in which the Japanese heroines are engaged in casual sexual affairs in their daily lives. Noriko told me, "Casual sex is mostly okay in Japan today. If a Japanese guy were to say that he could only marry a virgin, he'd be laughed out of town, right?" However, casual sex is not seen as morally acceptable and often becomes the target of social criticism. The term "yellow cabs" is in fact a slur of social criticism that is cast on young Japanese women who violate Japanese sexual norms with foreign men. Travelling abroad, Japanese women can freely interact with foreign men outside the Japanese moralistic gaze by appreciating casual sex as socially acceptable behaviour; however, they may still carry a sense of guilt for breaking the domestic norms of Japanese sexuality. In this regard, transnational vacations become a chaotic space in which Japanese women can mix with the dichotomy between their "international" sexual liberation and the "domestic" suppression of Japanese sexual norms. That is why Keiko stated, "As is often said, I become sexually loose in foreign countries. Travelling alone, I have to get a grip on myself." Thus, Keiko told me that except for me, she could not confide in her Japanese friends about her experimentation with casual sex. In line with Japanese morality, Keiko tried to see these casual sexual affairs with Nepali men as

serious romance despite her words, “This is just a game.” Due to these complex struggles, Keiko’s emotional state looked worse day by day.

One day, with a sad face, Keiko talked about Raju who she believed truly loved her. Keiko revealed her emotional conflicts to me:

I received an email from Raju. We decided to meet in Pokhara, but I am not sure... He said he was not sure when he would go there. Because I saw his faithless attitude in emails, I wonder if this is just a temporary relationship... It is like “Et tu Brutus!” Does he too? I don’t know. I don’t know. I am shocked to see his faithless attitude. I want him to honestly tell me “It is just a game” if he thinks so...

Two days later Keiko left a message at my guesthouse asking if we could have dinner together. I went to her economy guesthouse in the afternoon and Keiko let me into her room, which was dark and cold. Suddenly, she burst into tears on the bed. I sat beside her and stroked her back asking, “What happened?” Keiko sobbed:

I had dinner with Dipak yesterday even though I had decided to ignore him. Dipak told me that he has a Japanese girlfriend living in Japan. Why didn’t he tell me the truth from the beginning if he was just playing a game with me? Why did he tell me it now? If so, I wish he had not let me know anything about it. But he pushed me and I could not escape from him. I spent last night with him again. Now that I have just started to believe him, I am shocked to hear this from him. Why? Why? I am disgusted with myself. What am I doing? Men are all alike. Was my ex Japanese boyfriend like this, too? I cannot trust men anymore. It is shameful...¹³

Keiko continued weeping. I thought I knew how Keiko felt because I had gone through that kind of emotional conflict before. However, all I could only say to her was, “I understand that this is hard for you. It was for me. It is hard.” I felt like I was watching myself through Keiko. Keiko gradually calmed down and I said, “Okay, let’s go out for tea!” We went to a café near the guesthouse. I made a lot of jokes and so did Keiko. We burst out laughing, laughing and laughing. We had dinner together in a tourist restaurant where we ate platefuls of *dal bhat*, the typical Nepali food of lentil curry and rice. Keiko told me, “I think it is just a waste of time to have taken it seriously. I feel like going

shopping now.” Five days later, I met Keiko in the street. Keiko said that she was leaving Kathmandu for Bangkok in that afternoon:

I went to a travel agency with my male Japanese friends the day before yesterday. I had met them at an India-Nepal border. They were going to Bangkok, so I thought I should go with them. I found a seat by chance. I was thinking about moving and then this happened. I feel sad at leaving Kathmandu. Seeing the guy in the tea stall as usual, I feel like coming back here. Dipak saw me off. He shook hands with me and said, “Good bye.” I feel like coming back here after Bangkok.

I was surprised at her sudden departure. But I was happy to see her bright face.

As she said, Keiko came back to Kathmandu after a few weeks. She hung around with Dipak again, had dinner with him, and spent nights with him although she knew that he was a playboy. She told me, “The responsibility is mine after all. It doesn’t matter. I will do this.” Keiko looked more attractive day by day. Whenever I was with her in the tea-stall, I saw not only Nepali but also Japanese men approach her in a familiar way. She replied to their jokes in a friendly tone. One male Japanese backpacker in particular, Shin, always chatted with her intensely. It seemed that Shin was becoming attached to Keiko while she was busy dating Dipak. Nepali children gathered around Keiko saying, “Let’s play like yesterday!” It seemed that Keiko was famous in the street. I thought to myself, “Wow, everyone loves Keiko!” After two weeks’ stay in Thamel, Keiko left for Japan and sent me email messages:

I am at home now. I am thinking about so many things about Nepal and myself again. Well, after coming back to Japan, I feel like this is “reality”. But I can think about things in more simply than before the trip. I have become much stronger in a lot of ways. Well, I need to go to Nepal again. Otherwise, this will not sit well with me. Yes, I will go again! Bye.

After I coming back to Japan, I have not laughed a lot like in Nepal. I am overwhelmed by the power of this reality here. But I will get my license to drive a motorcycle soon. I want to start my new hobby of taking pictures! There are many things to do. All these ideas occurred to me while I was in Nepal. I thought I would forget these ideas, but I am really excited to do these new things now. I have seen

some of my friends I met in Nepal. Some of them have already left for travelling. I envy them. Well, I have become so greedy to pursue new hobbies... Talk to you later.

I thought that Keiko had overcome the death of her ex-boyfriend through travelling to Nepal. She often told me that she had been too passive and awkward to do things on her own before the trip but that she became more active after the trip. I remember how different Keiko looked when she left Kathmandu for Tokyo. Her cheerful face was full of confidence. She seemed to have grown stronger even though she struggled in her complex romance with her ideal "Asian" men.

Indeed, Keiko's experiences revealed to me the drama of how she changed sexually and developed a positive manner which she could not achieve in the "reality" of Japan. In this sense, Keiko's behaviour is the embodiment of her transnational sexuality which transgresses the borders of Japanese morals. Keiko's transnational sexuality can be seen through her casual sexual encounters, which are frowned upon in Japan but allowable in the transnational vacationscapes of Nepal. However, the transnational sexuality of Japanese women is still bound up with Japanese sexual norms. Thus, I would say that Keiko tried to believe in the serious love of Dipak and Raju partly because of the sincerity of her personality, but mainly because she needed to lighten the guilt of breaking Japanese sexual norms – the burden of immoral "game playing" with Nepali men. Keiko's narratives reveal how she desired to become an "Asian Japanese" woman, the embodiment of her transnational sexuality. Recognizing her transnational sexuality, Keiko discovered the existential authenticity of Self, which is not the actual existence of the true Self but the special "feeling" of true Self (Wang 1999:359-360). Indeed, Keiko showed me the complex processes through which she played out her transnational

sexuality as an “Asian Japanese” woman, which is the fantasy of the true Self, in the erotised vacationscapes of Nepal.

Keiko showed me how her sexuality changed in crossing borders. From Japan to India to Nepal, her sexual behaviour had become casual and freed from Japanese morals. This fluidity is not always the case, however. In contrast to Keiko, Noriko demonstrated her unchangeable attitude when I asked whether her romance with Nepali men was different from that with Japanese men:

It is the same. I phone my boyfriend everyday in Nepal just like when I was in Japan. ... I told my Japanese friends that I had new Nepali boyfriends and they responded, “You are doing in Nepal just what we expected you to do in Japan!”

I met Noriko typing Japanese on a computer at an Internet café in Thamel. I heard her mobile phone ring and she talked in fluent Nepali. I introduced myself to Noriko who wore a short skirt and shoes with very high heels, clothes which I had rarely seen in Nepal but which are common in Japan. We left the internet café together. While walking with her in the streets of Thamel, I realized that many Nepali men looked back at her. We entered a restaurant at the edge of Thamel and ordered a bottle of beer. Noriko started to share with me her long love story, so I opened my fieldnotes on the table:

I am 28 years old. I joined a volunteer program in Nepal during my college summer break. It was my first time to visit Nepal. After that, I came to Nepal every year. I felt like I was an Indian in a previous life. Well, I had a dream in which I wore a sari. I guess that I am linked by fate to India, so I decided to do some volunteering in India. But there are cheaper and longer programs in Nepal, so I decided to visit Nepal. It was a two-week program to help at a camp for teen prostitution. I was interested in volunteering, but I got tired of it and quit it soon. ... Well, whenever I arrive at the Kathmandu airport, I feel like I have come back home. ... My first Nepali boyfriend was the son of the volunteer program leader. He was 18 years old while I was 22 years old. He liked the music of Bob Marley. He was from a lower caste, but his parents have a factory, so they are rich. Okay, I call him Bob now. He is kind and loves children though he does not look serious. On my second visit to Nepal, he kissed me when we went to his friend’s house. It was just a moment while his friend left the room. One week later, he dumped his Nepali girlfriend. But

his brother started to approach me. Bob's brother worked at a tourist café in Thamel and he is famous as a playboy who has had many Western girlfriends. ... One month later, Bob's mother found out our relationship and she liked me. In the last year, I started to do volunteer work in an office, but I was tired of the Nepali staff because they always gossiped. So, I went back to Japan. While I was in Japan, Bob phoned me from Nepal and Europe where he was visiting his sister. We were madly in love. Then, I came here this year in order to learn Nepali because my Nepali was poor. I want to do some business related to Nepal one day. Well, but I don't have any ideas and did not start anything yet. ... Bob did not have a job. He just hung around in Kathmandu with his friends. Because his brother loves me, we could not marry. Then, he tried to run off with me to India this summer, but came back before we got there because he did not have an Indian visa.¹⁴ ... Eventually, he went back to his Nepali girlfriend. He is very loose although he said to me "I love you." ... One month before, when I felt like getting rid of Bob, I met Amrit at a party. He is 23 years old from the same caste as Bob. We discussed our partners. Amrit talked about his Nepali girlfriend and so I did about Bob. We were disappointed that they did not care about us. ... He called me "Madam", but gradually got close. We emailed each other via cell phone. ... Several days later, I went to Amrit's birthday party. It was too late to go back home, so I stayed at his parents' house. While his family were sleeping, Amrit kissed me and we started our love relationship. ... Two years before, I had had a Japanese boyfriend who was married. He was my co-worker. I often fall in love in the same workplace because I love men close to me. But finally, he chose his wife, not me. My Japanese friends often say that I have bad taste in men. My parents were worried about me. I got so stressed about the affair that I lost 15 kg. ... I got involved in Nepal but everything was half done here. So, I decided to come here to learn Nepali this year. I love learning languages. I learned Chinese, Spanish, and many languages at university, but I couldn't continue... I always have a boyfriend, even in Japan. But I don't have a good eye for men, so I cannot keep a relationship for long. I came to Nepal to find out what I want to do. I told my Japanese boyfriend that I would return soon. But I chose Bob, so I went back to Japan and broke up with my Japanese boyfriend. [After that, Noriko left Bob and found Amrit.]

Noriko did not stop talking about her love story nor did she stop smoking cigarettes. I could not stop writing her long story on my fieldnote. I finished the bottle of beer by myself because Noriko was too busy talking to drink it. I was amazed to know how many Japanese and Nepali boyfriends Noriko had had. But I understood that it was in part because her looks were attractive according to both Japanese and Nepali standards of beauty – big eyes, white skin, and feminine clothes that showed off her sexy body, and a prestigious career as an engineer. I said to myself "I wish I were like her!" However,

Noriko was not satisfied with what she had and was looking for something in Nepal that she could not find in Japan. I asked why Noriko chose not her Japanese but her Nepali boyfriend. She answered:

I feel more relaxed with Nepali men. Also, I can easily communicate in Nepali now. I am too proud to be honest toward men. I always want to know if I am being loved. I always ask, "Do you love me?" Japanese men don't like to answer that question, but Nepali men always answer it kindly.

Comparing Japanese men, Noriko appreciated Nepali men's explicit ways of expressing love. Interestingly, the difference between Japanese men and Nepali men made her feel close rather than distant, just as Asuka said, "They are different, but closely interlocking."

After that evening, I sometime met her in the streets of Thamel and we went to a tourist café. Noriko never stopped talking about Amrit. So I asked, "What percent of your life is occupied by your romance?" Noriko answered while praising Nepali men's ways of showing love again:

At the moment, 100 percent. When I go to the school, it might be 90 percent. But I often skip school to go seeing Amrit in his shop. Someone said, "While men love with their little fingers, women do so with their whole bodies." But Nepali men love women not with their fingers, but with their whole bodies. ...I feel like I will stay in Nepal for several more years. But it can be hard to live in this Nepali society which has two sides. I am not a tourist, but a temporary resident. I can do what I like. I did not come here to find men, but I do not have anything special to do here. So, when I find a boyfriend, I run straight toward him. ... I used to take cultural studies classes at school, but I forgot it all. I prefer studying languages. But when I start reading language books, I feel bored. ... I am a stranger here, so I feel safe with my boyfriend. I can depend on him. I don't know much about Nepali customs, for example, I wonder if I am allowed to smoke or not in some places. But I can learn them from him. I cannot behave freely alone.

A week later, I saw Noriko walking in the streets of Thamel. She looked tired because she kept her eyes on the ground. She said that she came to Thamel to visit an Internet

café. Noriko invited me to have tea together and she started talking about Amrit like a sweeping torrent:

Amrit went back to his village. Although he had phoned me everyday before, I haven't received either phone call or emails recently. I didn't know why. But I understand it now. When I took a holiday and went to Japan a few weeks ago, I met his brother who was working in Japan. Amrit asked me to pass something to his brother, so I met his brother. On that day, it was too late for me to go back home. Amrit's brother told me to stay at the hotel with him. I assumed that he would not do anything because he knew that I am Amrit's girlfriend. But he pushed me. He is a man who is stronger than a woman. Finally, we had sex... ... I guess that Amrit knows about it from his brother and got angry with me.

I asked why she stayed with Amrit's brother. Noriko answered:

It was after 1 a.m. [This reason doesn't make sense to Chisono because she could take taxi at least, so Chisono was waiting for another answer from her.] Because he is Nepali. I thought Nepali men never have sex with women who are their brother's girlfriends. If he were Japanese, I would have stayed on guard and never stay together.

Noriko was looking down at the table, holding a cigarette. I said, "You are thinking a lot about Amrit." Noriko answered, "I think of him all day. He also used to say that he was thinking of me 25 hours a day. But he does not reply to me now." Like Keiko, Noriko was deeply involved in erotic relationships with Nepali men. Noriko projected her ideal masculinity of "Asian" men who "love women with their whole bodies" onto Nepali men, so she allowed Amrit's brother to have sex with her "because he is Nepali." However, her insatiable interest in Nepali men as good lovers turned out to be a fantasy. On another day, I saw Noriko walking in the streets of Thamel. She seemed more tired and thinner than before. Noriko said, "I lost my appetite and can eat only one meal a day because Amrit is angry with me." Indeed, her multiple encounters and exchanges with many Nepali men – and one in particular – ended in a way Noriko did not expect.

When Noriko visited my guesthouse, we read a poster on the wall “Internet free only to tourists!” Looking at the poster, Noriko told me:

Well, I am not a tourist. ... I don't like to be seen as a tourist. Sure, it is okay to be seen as Japanese, but I want to be seen as Nepali. ... I am learning the Nepali language. When I speak Nepali, I am happy if people believe that I am Nepali. But I still have Japanese accent in my Nepali. ... I will tell you why I stay with a Nepali family and share my room with the schoolgirls there. I used to rent an apartment, but I was withdrawn in the room. But I can learn about the behaviour of young Nepali girls there. They wash their face with one hand whereas we use both hands. They study by reading books loudly while we usually keep silent. It is very interesting to learn Nepali culture there.

Whenever I listened to her, I felt that Noriko looked like an anthropologist who tries to learn more about her subjects just as I felt seeing Keiko. At the same time, I understood that Noriko was very serious about seeking what she needed do for her fantasy of becoming like a Nepali. I wondered if I was doing the same as Noriko. It is true that I started studying anthropology to know more about Nepal and myself. Although Noriko's sexual behaviour seems to be the same as in Japan, she stays in Nepal in order to foster aspects of herself, including her erotic sexual subjectivity and her intellectual ability to learn about other cultures that she assumed that she could not discover in Japan. To explore the possibilities, she decided to choose her Nepali boyfriend and learn Nepali.

Similar to Keiko, Noriko was enjoying the fantasy of becoming a cosmopolitan “Asian Japanese” woman who finds the new aspects of herself through the complex romances with her Nepali boyfriends. Their fantasies are possible only when they take advantage of their mobile positions in global tourism. Indeed, they dream of their ideal “Asian” men and the existential authenticity of the true Self by employing their “cosmopolitan” positions in the vacationsapes of “backward” Nepal. The “Asian” vacationsapes of Nepal are the special spaces for these “Asian Japanese” women to

become wealthy, educated, and independent heroines who can search for their possibilities such as sexual liberation, the intellectual adventure of learning Nepali culture, and changing identities to “become like a Nepali”. By means of their privileged cosmopolitan status, Japanese women desire to see their transnational sexuality – changing sexual identities from the Japanese girls they were in Japan into the cosmopolitan sexual identities of “Asian Japanese” women that they see as their true Self. The transnational sexuality of “Asian Japanese” femininity is embodied in intimate relations with Nepali men through leaving the boundary of Japanese norms and entering the chaotic free-zone of the vacationsapes of Nepal. Thus, I said in my diary “I realized that I am a woman” because it was the moment when my sexual identity had transnationally changed into that of an “Asian Japanese” woman.

The fantasy of becoming “Asian Japanese” is, in fact, the exploitative global process by which Japanese women play out their “modern” and “cosmopolitan” sexual fantasies in the vacationsapes of “backward” Nepal. However, the vacationsapes of Nepal are not completely moral-free zones, but the chaotic spaces of transnationalism where Japanese sexual norms are cheerfully ignored as well as obsessively recognized by these Japanese women. Therefore, these Japanese women fantasize about embodying the transnational sexuality of “Asian Japanese” in the vacationsapes of “backward” Asia through playing with the chaotic competition between “international” freedom and “domestic” restrictions of morals.

4.3 The Tears and Smiles of “Asian Japanese” Women

Just as Stoler describes how the politics of imperial desire of sexuality unfold in a cyclic way, the erotic fantasies and desires of Japanese female tourists are reproduced through multiple discourses, such as *yasashisa*, innocence, and relaxation. However, the process of reproducing the erotic fantasy and desire of Japanese women travelling in Nepal is not maintained by the “absolute” difference of the Other observed especially between the West and the Orient, but in the intimate difference among “the same-Asian”, Japanese and Nepalis. In the feeling of shared “Asian-ness”, Japanese women reproduce their desire and fantasy of “authentic” Asian sexualities – “Asian” masculinity and “Asian Japanese” femininity. Indeed, many of the Japanese women that I spoke with believe that Nepali men embody their ideal masculinity of “Asian-ness” which should be shared by Japanese men. At the same time, these Japanese women enjoy becoming the cosmopolitan subject of “Asian Japanese” in the nostalgic landscape of “backward” Asia.

The fantasy and desire of “Asian-ness” is uniquely reproduced through this “shared” feeling of “Asian-ness”. It is capitalist nostalgia that motivates these Japanese women to search for authentic “Asian-ness” in Nepal. It is the unequal and exploitative processes of global tourism in which Japanese women seek the paradise of “backward” Nepal where they can escape from the moral constraints and social frustration in “modern” Japan and discover their ideals of Other and Self. Keiko told me about her sense of inequality: “We tourists hang around without doing any job for months although we are using what we earned by ourselves. We feel sorry for local people here.” Although there are different ways to express self-change narratives like those of Keiko and Noriko, indeed, it is the exploitative processes in which Japanese women take

advantage of their wealthy, mobile status in global tourism. Keiko left Kathmandu partly because she decided to keep a distance from Nepali men including Dipak. Noriko made the decision to wait for Amrit although she was interfering with the cultural norms of Amrit's family. However, Dipak could not leave Nepal for Japan to meet Keiko. Amrit did not have means to become involved in Noriko's family as Noriko did in his.

Similarly, I left Nepal seven years ago and visited again as I liked while my Nepali friends lamented the difficulty of obtaining a Japanese visa. Thus, it is more accurate to say that Japanese women exploit Nepali men to fulfill their "egoistic" fantasy of nostalgia and "selfishly" move between the national borders of "modern" Japan and "backward" Nepal.

However, Rika was very critical of the idea of these unequal processes including capitalist nostalgia – the exploitative sentiment of "backward" Nepal and "modern" Japan. She asked me to show her some of the articles to which I referred. I showed her part of Iwabuchi's book, which discusses capitalist nostalgia. Rika sent an email to me:

After reading some parts of the article, hmm, I feel like it is something different. I don't know how much his social background influenced me to love my Nepali husband. At the moment, my answer is that I love him because he is the most faithful man to me in the world. I don't know much about the cultural contexts that caused me to love him, but I want to be honest with him at all times.

Rika's email reminded me of her words when I interviewed her:

Your topic is about romance, right? Can you research such a thing? Because love is a matter between individuals. I married him [my husband] not because he is Nepali. It is difficult to put it into words why I love him. I love him because it is him that I love, not because he is Nepali. The same is true of romance between Japanese.

I agreed with Rika to some degree. There are various reasons why people fall in love, which cannot be reduced to specific economic or social-cultural factors. People are involved in intimate relations with others because they are attracted as individuals. There

is no simple rule that establishes intimate relationships between Japanese women and Nepali men in a certain way.

I have tried to demonstrate the unequal fantasy of “Asian Japanese” as a strong element in the cultural background of why Japanese women are attracted by Nepali men. However, the fantasy of “Asian Japanese” does not work in the unilineal formula of the binary relationship of advantageous Japanese and disadvantageous Nepali. Japanese women often feel vulnerable despite their privileged status. I wrote about my vulnerable position with my Nepali boyfriend in my travel diary:

He went back to his village. I am waiting for him. ... I am expecting too much. I am very weak. My emotion should be my problem, but I cannot solve it by myself. I am suffering. I should not expect too much. (author's travel diary, Kathmandu, June 1999)

I felt that I was very weak despite my advantageous status of “Asian Japanese” in “backward” Asia. It is true that “Asian Japanese” women live within complex power dynamics where they often feel vulnerable despite their “privileged” status in the vacationsapes of Nepal.

In discussing the fantasy of capitalist nostalgia between Japanese women and Nepali men, it is important to note that the politics of power operates beyond the concept of capitalism in the “Asian” vacationsapes of Nepal. Massey argues, “It is capitalism and its developments which are argued to determine our understanding and our experience of space. But surely this is insufficient. Among the many other things which clearly influence that experience, there are, for instance, ‘race’ and gender” (1994:147). My Japanese subjects become vulnerable when they face the irresistible force of “race” and gender of their Nepali boyfriends just as Massey says. For instance, the discourse of *yasashisa* is circulated because Japanese women are engulfed by the “Asian-ness” of

Nepali men. Keiko could not resist Dipak's physical and mental attractiveness although she knew that he was a playboy who had other Japanese girlfriends. Noriko lost her appetite because she did not receive a reply from Amrit although she emailed him many messages. Erika was shocked when she found out that Suman had a Newar wife – a woman Erika had believed was Suman's sister. Additionally, Keiko and Noriko could not escape from the masculine power of Nepali men who tried to have sex with them.

Many other Japanese women told me how they felt vulnerable in relations with their Nepali boyfriends just as Keiko, Noriko, Erika and I had. In observing these Japanese women, it seems that the Nepali boyfriends are more adept at controlling their intimate relationships. It also seems that these Nepali men savoured their cosmopolitan skills in flirting with Japanese women by transgressing Nepali sexual norms in the transnational enclaves of global tourism. That is why my Japanese female subjects showed me their tears, smiles, anger, and worries in their relations with Nepali men despite their "privileged" status within global capitalism. Graham contends that there is not only one true story but various narratives to describe the power formation within the contemporary capitalist system: "existing theories of Fordism and Post-Fordism offer a 'totalizing' rendition of capitalist development which fails to acknowledge multiplicity and difference in social life" (1991:53). Thus, illustrating the politics of power between Japanese women and Nepali men in terms of the simple binary of advantageous and disadvantageous subjects is insufficient. Indeed, it is dynamic and changing in multiple ways.

The power relations between Japanese women and Nepali men shift in various ways and reproduce new networks between them. Foucault suggests that "[power] needs

to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression" (1980:119). It is true that the fantasy and desire of becoming "Asian Japanese" reproduce the reality of global inequality at a local level in the form of capitalist nostalgia – "backward" Asia and "modern" Japan. However, the fantasy of "Asian Japanese" also reproduces a new network in which Japanese women learn to appreciate the cultural differences between Nepal and Japan.

For example, Keiko was so honest with Nepali people that she looked like an anthropologist who tried to understand their lives. She seriously listened to her Nepali girlfriend who asked her to get an entry visa for Japan while I was wondering if the Nepali woman was just exploiting Keiko as her visa sponsor. Indeed, I wore the coloured glasses of bias while Keiko saw her Nepali girlfriend on equal footing. I often saw Keiko demonstrate this kind of endearing attitude toward her Nepali friends. It proves that Keiko was faithful to Nepali people through a struggle with her "serious" romance with Dipak and Raju. Noriko told me that she was so eager to learn Nepali customs that she decided to live with Nepali schoolgirls even though they were often too noisy that she could not sleep just as if anthropologists enter fields that are not always comfortable. Noriko showed me some photos of her roommates and explained them to me. I cannot forget how happy Noriko looked talking about her Nepali roommates. Rika exchanged Nepali jokes fluently with her neighbours who were smiling at her baby. Rika's figure and behaviour harmoniously fitted in with her Nepali neighbours. I thought that Rika tried very hard to learn Nepali culture through her marriage with a Nepali man because I found many books written about Nepali culture in her room. Although she was shocked

to know that Suman was not single, Erika appreciated his honest confession and decided to continue a lifelong friendship with his whole family. There are more examples to illustrate how many “Asian Japanese” women try to create the new productive networks for a better understanding of Nepali culture while being engaged in complex relationships with their Nepali partners. Frankly speaking, I wish I could be part of it. Although I had visited Nepal once, my travel memories of my Nepali friends attracted me for six years and it finally moved me toward my anthropological research on Nepal.

Thus, the new network in “Asian” vacationscapes might be the positive relation of the power of love – “love has no borders” as Kiyomi said. This idea might be too optimistic to describe the intimate relations between “Asian Japanese” women and Nepali men in vacationscapes of Nepal. However, I saw many Japanese women learn to respect Nepali culture through their struggle in romance, love, and sex with Nepali men. What does seem sure is that some “Asian Japanese” women are very faithful toward Nepali people in order to become their “equal” partners through their complex relations of romance, love, and sex despite the fact that they utilize their “cosmopolitan” status and project the “unequal” fantasy of capitalist nostalgia onto Nepali people. Although this idea might be too positive, I hope that the sincere attitude of “Asian Japanese” women will provide a new possibility to make up the unequal relations of globalization in the future; or, as Rika said, I want to be honest with Nepali people at all times.

Chapter 5

MODERN NEPALI MEN FALL IN LOVE WITH JAPANESE WOMEN

5.1 Chinese Food, English Life, American Money, Japanese Wife

Nima: I don't have any girlfriend. I wonder how I could find one. Can you introduce any Japanese women to me? ... It is easy to make friends with Japanese not only because I speak good Japanese. ... I don't understand what other tourists like Europeans are thinking, but I feel something common with Japanese people. ... The Japanese are so friendly that they talk a lot with me in comparison to other tourists.

Ravi: The Japanese have good hearts. They are friendly. They are warmer than the French and Chinese. The Japanese kindly respond to me whenever I speak to them.

Nima and Ravi were Nepali male freelance-guides who spoke fluent Japanese and they told me their images of Japanese tourists. I was not sure if it is true that Japanese tourists are kinder or friendlier than other tourists as they explained. However, it is clear that these Nepali men have special feelings for Japanese tourists in comparison to tourists from other nationalities. I wonder what made Nima and Ravi feel more intimate with Japanese tourists. As Nima said, it is not only their language ability. Moreover, it seems that Nepali men have specific kinds of erotic imagination for Japanese women since Nima was looking for a girlfriend, especially a Japanese one. In this chapter, I will examine how Nepali men reproduce the fantasy of Japanese women through the discourse of ideal Asian femininity and their desire to become ideal Nepali men through taking advantage of their cosmopolitan skills to attract foreigners.

Discussing the politics of transnational sexuality in colonial Southeast Asia, Stoler argues that the European discourse on sexuality is better understood in terms of race bound up with the privileged status of the middle-class and suggests that the concepts of race and class are inseparable (1997:46). Kaplan also contends that

“[t]ransnationalization has altered but not undermined middle-class dominance globally” (1996:156). Historically, Nepal was populated by indigenous caste- and ethnicity-based groups; however, contemporary Nepali society is undergoing rapid transformation under the new ideology of class mobility. In order to understand the ways in which sexuality plays out transnationally through the discourses of Nepali men, it is necessary to examine how caste, ethnicity, and the middle class take on a significant role in the transformation of sexualities in vacationsapes of Nepal. Since Nepal is comprised of a wide range of ethnic groups, the Hindu term *caste* has been incorporated into the Nepalese word *jāt*. The Nepali term *jāt* has the basic meaning of “species” or “kind” which means that Nepalese ideology of caste carries the notion of ethnicity as well as occupational distinctions (Guneratne 2002:1-2, 130). The Nepali caste ideology of *jāt* was conceptualized in the legal code, the *Mulki Ain* in 1854 (Höfer 1979:37). Although caste was outlawed in the 1955 Civil Liberties Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, caste and ethnicity, caste ideology still persists in contemporary Nepal. However, the traditional ideology of *jāt* has been transformed under the new ideology of the middle-class. Liechty explains the contemporary changes in Nepal:

[F]or urban Nepalis, core social and religious values (often manifest in terms of caste and kin affiliations) are engulfed – and sometimes overwhelmed – by a transformed sociocultural context adrift in new transnational currents: new labor and economic relations, a new universe of material goods, new arenas of public display, and new ideologies of education, progress, and modernity. (Liechty 2003:5)

Rankin illustrates how this social change has transformed the landscape of Sankhu, an indigenous Newar society in Kathmandu; for example, some low-caste men constructed more luxurious multi-floor, modern cement houses than those of high caste families (2004:175). Despite being ranked lower in the *Mulki Ain*, many Sherpas also contest the

caste hierarchy through their economic gains in mountain tourism. In the Everest region, Steven reports that Sirdars, the Sherpa leaders of mountaineering expeditions, often earn 10 times more income than the national average and popular Sherpa lodges can earn more than 10,000 US dollars a year (1993:414-416). Thus, Nepali people are living in the new era of the middle-class since the emergence of an urban middle-class played a significant role in constructing contemporary Nepali culture (Liechty 2003:4-5).

The history of class-based society started in 1951 when King Tribhuvan established a new democratic government and an open door policy. Consequently, there was a dramatic increase in international aid flowing into Nepal, and the concept of *bikas* (Nepali word for development) penetrated Nepali society in terms of the linkage with the West (Pigg 1992:497). For example, Japan participated economic development programs of Nepal in 1954 and Japanese grant and loan aid started in 1968 (Embassy of Japan in Nepal 2006c). The national project of economic development (*bikas*) promotes an image of national development which transcends differences of gender, caste and ethnicity. As a result, the project effectively created a dichotomy between the village seen as underdeveloped and the city seen as developed or *bikas* (Pigg 1992:499). For example, a picture in a Nepali eighth grade civic textbook juxtaposes two drawings of a girl and a boy. The first one shows the children who carry baskets barefoot. The second one is a picture of the children neatly attired studying at a desk or jumping rope (Pigg 1992:500). Another picture from the same book shows a Hindu high-caste man in the foreground and other ethnic people in the background with the caption “Descendants all of the same land, among kin who can be distant or close? All have the same red blood, whether rich or poor” (Pigg 2001:501). Pigg points out that these images are formed by urban-based

High-caste Hindus and Newaris and re-inscribed by their representative, the Nepali state (2001:505). However, the image of *bikas* is not simply imposed by the dominant castes or the state; it is incorporated into the ways Nepalis see themselves and create their relations to other Nepalis (1992:507). Pigg proposes that “the ideology of modernization becomes hegemonic to the extent that the social map it draws serves as a guide in orienting people in all sectors of Nepalese society” (1992:510). Thus, the ideology of *bikas* has become hegemonic in contemporary Nepal.

Corresponding to the hegemony of *bikas*, the globalized ideology of the free market began to dominate the Nepali economy during the 1970s and 1980s (Khadka 1998). Government centralization, trade, education, and tourism led to the growth of tertiary activities in the mid-1980s so that a new middle class has dramatically grown in Kathmandu (Liechty 2003:47). The expansion of capitalism gives rise not only to the transformation of labour structures, but also to the emergence of consumer society (Wolf 1982:382-383). Rankin contends that “the mid-1980s marked a ... turning point in the deepening and expanding of Nepal’s integration with regional and global economies, characterized by an ideological shift toward economic liberalization and market-led approaches to development” (2004:167-168). The ideological shift is best embodied in the transformation from the old caste-based hierarchy to a class-based order led by the new consumerism. Rankin explains how the caste-based hierarchy is transforming into a class-based order in the accumulation of material and social capital:

Today caste and class are becoming increasingly distinct idioms of social life, as an emerging commoditized regime of value presents an alternative to the old caste-based regime as a basis for the accumulation of material and social capital. Low castes even enjoy an advantage within the social logic of commodity consumption: because they have fewer social obligations than dominant and high castes (as a

result of their ritually defiling condition), relatively less of their material wealth gets tied up in costly social investments (Rankin 2004:174-175).

Similarly, Guneratne agrees that new economic chances have changed caste ideology into economic and educational basis of ranking in the social and economic contexts around high-caste Brahmans (2001:539). Since the class-based order is much more fluid than the caste hierarchy, urban Nepali people inevitably engage in battles over social honour and economic advantage as Weber notes:

[There are] all sorts of circles setting themselves apart by means of many other characteristics and badges ... all these elements usurp 'status' honor. The development of status is essentially a question of stratification resting upon usurpation. ... But the road from this purely conventional situation to legal privilege, positive or negative, is easily traveled as soon as a certain stratification of the social order has in fact been 'lived in' and has achieved stability by virtue of a stable distribution of economic power. (Weber 1946:188)

The fluidity of status and the usurpation of honour are clearly observed among Nepali tourism workers in vacationscapes. Jivan, a Nepali male freelance guide, explained in Japanese the conflicts over wealth and fame among the freelance tour guide community:

We see each other a lot. There is a kind of a community of freelance guides. But people don't trust each other because they often feel jealousy over other's success. ... We see people who go to Japan and find good jobs in Japan. These people are considered to be big men. ... There is a big man who is from Newar. He earned a lot of money by *hunting* foreign women. He called himself a businessman and got girls drunk with *chayang*. ... A Japanese woman came to Nepal in order to meet this Newari guy, but at that time, he was in Europe to meet a European girlfriend. The Japanese woman was crying. Another guy from Gurung saw the Japanese woman cry and comforted her in order to gain her love. Then, the Japanese woman fell in love with him. If the Gurung guy stayed in Nepal, he would be punished for his stealing the woman, so they escaped to Japan. Now, he earns a big monthly income in Japan. People see these guys and envy them. So, many Nepali guys do "*hunting*" foreign women here. Suresh is a friend of these big men. [Suresh is from Chetri *jāt* and has a Japanese girlfriend now]. ... I live with my brothers because it is difficult to survive by myself. It is very difficult especially in June when there are few tourists. But Suresh lives at a nice place by himself! He has a huge room with a big refrigerator. But it is not his money. He gets money from his Japanese girlfriend. ... Everybody says that Suresh is smart. But, I don't think so.

It is significant to note that these “big men” were not from the predominant groups of Brahman and Chetri. They are from either the Newar or Gurung groups which are ranked below the Chetri groups, according to the *Mulki Ain* (Höfer 1979:7); however, they were followed by their Chetri friend, Suresh. As Rankin contends (2004:174-175), the old caste-based hierarchy is contested by the new consumer practices introduced through global capitalism including international tourism. Nepali guides envy the “big men” because they were skilful in *hunting* foreign women and gained the opportunity to make “big money” outside Nepal. The English term “hunting” was developed into the Nepali term “*hunting*” that is widely used in describing Nepali men’s “skilful” seduction of foreign women. As Jivan used it in the context of economic gain, the Nepali notion of *hunting* implied their “cosmopolitan” ability to acquire money through flirting with foreign women in tourist spots. The cosmopolitan skill of attracting foreigners as well as money is considered to be the ladder for climbing to the middle class. Material gains such as a refrigerator are seen as the token of the middle class in Nepal society (Liechty 2003:100-101). Thus, Suresh became the object of envy because he was seen to be achieving the higher status among the guide community through his economic gains from his Japanese girlfriend.

In addition to the “cosmopolitan” skill, many Nepali men take advantage of the indigenous character of their ethnic identities. For instance, for being seen as having the toughness of professional climbing guides, Sherpa men are encouraged to show a kind of Western machismo, which is not common in their traditional culture (Ortner 1996:206). Adams points out that some Sherpas feel that they should remain authentic “traditional Sherpas” in some ways while achieving Western standards in other ways in order to

become “ideal Sherpas” for Westerners (Adams 1996:109). Adams illustrates how one young Sherpa man insisted on “dressing for success” by showing off modern clothing whereas he asked Adams to be his sponsor by asking help with religious or cultural events (Adams 1996:113). Interestingly, for Sherpas, being modern and yet remaining “traditional” are both employed in attracting foreign Others (Adams 1996:113,118). This is not only true of the Sherpas. Surya, from an Indo-Aryan ethnic group, was very proud of his “Latin like” appearance saying in English, “I do not know why so many girls are crazy for me! ... When I went to Europe, I met a Japanese girl at a club. She said, ‘You look Italian.’” Indeed, Surya’s hair and beard were roughly cut like Western popular stars and his fashion style obviously looked like that of a young Latin man. Flirting with a Japanese woman, Nabil also showed off his casual clothing and dreadlocks. Nabil said in English, “Yes, I am like a Bob Marley, right? Many tourists said so. ... It is because I am a ‘cocktail’. My mother and father are of different ethnicities.” Just like the Sherpa men, these Nepali men utilized their ethnic characters and became like Western idols in order to succeed in *hunting* foreign women to be their economic sponsors.

However, why are these Nepali tourism workers displaced from the global economy and try to exploit foreign women instead of earning money by themselves? In Nepal, about forty five percent of the total population, or more than nine million people lives below the poverty line (ADB 1999:2). In February 2005, King Gyanendra dismissed the parliament. The ensuing state of emergency was ended by the democratic movements in May 2006. However, continued civil strife, such as Maoist attacks and general strikes orchestrated by the political parties, are still damaging Nepal’s economy including tourism. The Asian Development Bank reports “[t]he economic outlook is

rendered uncertain by recent worsening of the insurgency; political instability; and the growing polarization between the Government, on the one hand, and the insurgents and the political parties, which have reached an accord, on the other” (2006:173). In this difficult situation, Nepal has been heavily dependent on foreign aid. Bhatt (2006), an Nepali development officer comments, “Contribution of foreign aid in Nepal’s development can be debatable, however, the reality is that Nepal still relies much on aid. Around 70 percent of the development budget is financed by aid and it accounts for over 10 percent of country’s GDP.”¹⁵ To survive these difficult times at an individual level, Nepali people look for help from foreign tourists. In fact, many Nepali men asked me to become their Japanese-visa sponsor, lamenting the unstable situation of Nepal. Bista (2001) analyzes that the national characteristic of fatalism is a strong factor in Nepal’s heavy dependency on foreign aid. Bista explains Nepali fatalism as the strong belief formed though the dominant Hindu religion in Nepal that means “one has no personal control over one’s life circumstances, which are determined through a divine or powerful external agency” (Bista 2001:4). Bista connects Nepali fatalism and their dependency:

[Fatalism] undermines the possibility of instrumental social action, without which economic success cannot be realized. It substitutes instead the perception that power and responsibility are qualities invested only in powerful others and, in the case of Nepal’s dependence on foreign aid, those powerful others are the foreign aid donors. (2001:146)

It is understandable that the fatalistic, dependent attitudes of Nepali people make Japanese tourists and volunteer workers see them as lazy, relaxed, religious, innocent. However, Nepali tourism workers are, in fact, struggling under intense competition to survive in the unstable economy of Nepal and move up to the status of the wealthy in the new market-based consumer society. Just as the state of Nepal has a heavy dependency

on foreign aid, Nepali tourism workers seek the international help of powerful others and some of them see *hunting* tourist women as the only way to obtain big money.

In addition, morality takes an important role in formulating Nepali people's behaviour in relation to foreigners. Liechty contends that morality is the sociocultural token that distinguishes middle-class members from others (Liechty 2003:72). In particular, the moral concept of *ijjat* is central in accumulating social capital to maintain a higher status. The Nepali term, *ijjat* is "usually translated as 'prestige,' 'dignity,' 'respectability,' or 'honor'" (Liechty 2003:83). Durga, a Brahman male manager of a trekking agency, explained to me via email in English:

Prestige, character, reputation, and personality are the meaning of *ijjat*. We can use the word *ijjat* in place of these words and we may use this word *ijjat* (or its synonyms) in appropriate terms and condition (in writing and speaking). And somebody sometime misuses it; for example they are the members of rich family and the members from the power. I mean that if they are too proud of their wealth or property, they may misuse the implication of *ijjat*.

Bibek, a Newar male student, provided me with another answer in his English email:

Ijjat is prestige and popularity. There can be also other meanings like women's *ijjat* which refers to their behaviour and characters. If a girl is without *ijjat*, it means that her character is not good. She may be prostitute. If someone does good things in society, he or she is increasing *ijjat*. The general meaning is human character. *Ijjat* work is generally used in gossiping, appreciating someone, and etc...

As these informants explained, people move up and down between social classes according to *ijjat*. Any woman can go down to the "lower" status of prostitute if she loses *ijjat* by her bad reputation. Liechty suggests that "encompassing both moral and material elements, *ijjat* is a crucial domain in which people claim and test the boundaries of class of new consumer practices and consumer goods" (2003:86). Thus, tour guides feel jealous of the "big men" and Suresh who achieved a higher status through material gains gotten from foreigners. On the one hand, behaviour such as *hunting* foreign women

is seen as immoral and causes the loss of *ijjat*. In fact, Jivan was from a group ranked under Chetri group in the *Mulki Ain*, but he contested the caste hierarchy by criticizing Suresh's behaviour due to his losing *ijjat* and disagreeing with the idea that Suresh was smart. I often heard this kind of criticism from my Nepali subjects whose groups were ranked under Brahman and Chetri in Nepali caste ideology.

Moreover, a tourist space itself is seen a site of impurity and miscegenation so that Nepali men with foreign female tourists in such tourist spaces are seen as losing *ijjat*. For example, Liechty reports that local Nepali men visit Thamel in order to purchase the bodies of local sex workers and suggest that the tourist spaces like Thamel become the site of transgressing the traditional sexual norms (2005:11,16). Some Nepali informants told me that many Nepali men go to massage parlours in Thamel to have sex with prostitutes. Just as Bibek referred to the lower position of women who lost *ijjat* as "prostitutes," foreign female tourists in tourist spaces are assumed to be "impure" like prostitutes. As a result, Nepali men flirting with these foreign women are also seen as losing *ijjat*. However, there is a way to maintain *ijjat* so that these "big men" and Suresh are seen as the object of envy despite having a bad reputation for *hunting* foreign women in tourist areas; it is the acquisition of ideal morality holders such as having a Japanese wife. The ideal life is described by a Nepali phrase that provides the elements in what is seen as the ideal life, "Chinese food, English life, American money, Japanese wife".¹⁶

I repeatedly heard that phrase seven years ago, and I often encountered this discourse during this fieldwork as well. When I was walking around the public square, a Newar tour guide Anil said to me, "Are you Japanese?" Speaking quickly in English, Anil asked me to hire him as a one-hour tour guide for 100 rupees. I agreed. Taking me

to several places, Anil quickly explained the history of the square. I invited him to have tea and explained my research. Anil said, "Okay, I will help your research. I have many things to tell you." Anil ordered two glasses of milk tea at a tea stall in the corner of the square and continued speaking in English:

Many Nepali men marry Japanese women and go to Japan to make money. It is like a fake love. Even though they have Nepali wives, they do it for money. Life in Nepal is very difficult here, and so many Nepali guides do like this. Going somewhere, doing trekking and make relationship easily.

I asked, "Why Japanese? Not other tourists?" Anil answered with distant look:

It is difficult with other tourists. We are the same-Asian, you know? ...I had a Japanese girlfriend 15 years ago. I am now 34 years old. It is a long time ago. She was a tourist with her Indian boyfriend. I helped them to show around. Nepali people said many bad words to the Indian guy because they are just jealous of them, you know? So, the Indian boyfriend left Nepal soon. Then, just after he left, our relationship started. It was so quick. Just on that day. She sent me a lot of letters. She wanted to take me to India, but I was not secured, you know? I do not have any money so that I had to depend on her. So I did not go. I was just 20 years old while she was 5 years older than I was. She wanted me to marry her. She had a lot of expectations. I was too young to manage, and our communication stopped. ... I also had a German girlfriend. It was four-year relationship. She sent me a lot of letters. She wanted me to visit Germany for marriage and making a baby. But what can I do? If I go there, I do not have any money. I have to make money first, like going to Dubai for work. She visited Nepal every four months, and we stayed together. But it was difficult to continue. I also had a Malaysian girlfriend, but it broke up soon.

Anil's friends came toward us, saying "Namaste!" We started talking together in Nepali.

One of his friends said, "Nepali and Japanese, we have the same Asian culture, right?"

Anil started talking in English and Nepali:

Yes, as often said, "Chinese food, English life, American money, Japanese wife". Japanese women are very loyal to their family. They are sincere. Uum, what was the old Japanese TV program? Ah, it is *Oshin*. It is an old Japanese story. But now it [the life of Japanese women] has changed. More modern. It is an old story like 100 or 50 years ago, right?

Oshin was a popular Japanese television program broadcast in the early 1980s. The heroine, Oshin, was born into a poor rural family in the late nineteenth century and endured many hardships while maintaining a loyal attitude toward her family. This program has been broadcast in many Asian countries and the character Oshin became the symbol of loyal, long-suffering Japanese women. Anil knew that *Oshin* does not represent the life of Japanese women today, but assumed that the Oshin's character was still found in Japanese women. That is why he explained his ideals in terms of the Nepali proverb, "Chinese food, English life, American money, Japanese wife". I heard this proverb again on that day. While I was browsing through woollen caps at a handicraft shop in Thamel, the Brahman shop owner, Uttan, spoke to me, "Are you Japanese?" I said I was researching Nepali and Japanese couples. He said, "Chinese food, American money, and Japanese wife, do you know?" I asked, "Why Japanese wife?" He answered, "Japanese women love one person very much, not like other women including Nepali women who flirt with many men."

The discourse shows the utopia for Nepali men – eating delicious Chinese food, being rich with money from America, and living an elegant life in England. It also reveals their fantasy that Japanese women are ideal wives who follow the Nepali values of loyalty to family and sincerity, just as Anil referred to the Japanese heroine Oshin. The fantasy of "Japanese wife" is sustained through the discourse that "we are the same-Asian", which was often repeated by my Nepali subjects. Hepburn suggests that Nepali people use the word "tourist" to refer to wealthy white people in terms of colour and moral behaviour (2002:625). Japanese people do not fit into the category of "tourists" in

the Nepali sense. Instead, Nepali people perceive Japanese tourists as belonging to the distinct category of a toured population with which they believe to share Asian-ness.

Moreover, I argue that the feeling of being “the same-Asian” is caused by the similarity between Japanese and Nepali values. Researching Japanese prewar generations, Benedict contends that Japanese feel indebted to everything, which is not only for the past but also the present, and behave on any occasion with “*on*” a sense of obligation (1946:99). Accordingly, if Japanese fail to repay *on*, they feel “the dilemma of virtue”, called *haji* (Benedict 1946:195). It seems that Japanese value of *haji* and Nepali concept of *ijjat* has something common in the feeling of life-long debts although these notions are indigenously different. Benedict points out that people in the oriental nations are “debtor[s] to the ages and the world” (1946:98). I think that the similarity is one of the reasons *Oshin* became popular in Nepal. On this point, “Asia” does not mean the general sense of Asia to Nepali people, but refers to an imagined community that they assume is shared with Japanese.

Thus, Nepali men consider Japanese women to be “the same-Asian” who naturally maintain the purported Asian values of loyalty and sincerity, which actually come from Nepali domestic norms. Nepali men believe that Japanese women are ideal “Asian” women who follow Nepali morality even more than Nepali women, as Uttan comments. Consequently, Nepali men assume that they can maintain the social prestige of *ijjat* through having Japanese wives who are seen as maintaining their shared values of “Asian-ness”. Therefore, Nepali tourism workers, such as Suresh and the “big men”, became objects of envy despite their immoral behaviour of *hunting* foreign women.

Interestingly, some Nepali men project the fantasy of the “Japanese wife” onto Japanese women just as some Japanese women cast the fantasy of authentic Asian men onto Nepali men. However, while Japanese women dream about authentic “Asian-ness” in order to escape from “modern” Japan, Nepali men reproduce the fantasy of ideal femininity of Japanese women in terms of modernity – more precisely, the indigenous Nepali concept of development, *bikas*. The ideology of *bikas* generates the perception that foreign aid donors are the powerful Others that Nepal can depend on (Bista 2001:146). Pigg argues that the conception of *bikas* refers to the notion of development associated with the influence and foreign aid from the powerful Other, the West (1992:497). However, besides Western countries, the Japanese government has played a major role in reproducing the ideology of *bikas* in the form of economic assistance to Nepal after it started economic development programs in 1954, and grant and loan aid in 1968 (Embassy of Japan in Nepal 2006c). Although Western donors are perceived as the powerful absolute-Other, Nepali people see Japanese donors in a distinctive way. Shiva, a male teen-age shopkeeper from a Tamang *jāt*, explained in Nepali his image of Japan:

Japanese thinking is good. I met one elderly Japanese man. He told me, “Japan used to be poor 50 years ago. But we worked so hard that we are developed now. It is the same as Nepal. Although the situation is not good in Nepal, *bikas* will come after your hard work. Please continue your hard work.” I like his thinking and agree with him a lot. This kind of thinking is similar to Nepali thinking. Japanese people are very friendly and built schools for us. One Japanese lady made a school in my village.

Indeed, Japan is perceived as the powerful Other who is the top foreign donor in Nepal. Many Nepali informants including Shiva repeated this discourse saying that “Japan is helping Nepal” in terms of foreign aid projects, especially constructing schools in villages. In fact, 5,500 classrooms were built by Japan’s ODA from 1994 to 2002

(Embassy of Japan in Nepal 2006c). However, Japan is considered to be the powerful Asian Other that Nepal can follow in order to achieve *bikas*, in the same way that Japanese tourists belong to the distinct category of an “Asian” toured population that is not “Tourist”. Discussing the development of Nepal, Bista stresses the idea that Nepal shares the social ethics of collectivism and diligence with Japan, which are the key factors for Nepal to attain economic development like Japan (2001:159).

Accordingly, Japanese women become the ideal “Asian” women for Nepali men because they think Japanese women are the embodiment of the “Asian” value of *ijjat* as well as the “Asian” development of *bikas*. Nirmal told me, “I am married [to his Nepali wife], but otherwise I would want to marry a Japanese. Japanese women are frank and educated, so I could learn a lot from them.” Krishna also said, “Japanese women stand on their own feet, while Nepali people get money from their parents.” Pigg points out that the professional careers and higher education of urban Nepalis represent the ideology of modernity and become the token of *bikas* in comparison to “backward” village lives (1992:502). In like manner, Japanese women represent the Asian development of *bikas* that Nepal people consider that should be similarly achieved as in Japan; as a result, Japanese women represent the ideal femininity of “Asian” values which Nepali men desire in their wives so that they can maintain their *ijjat*.

However, the “Asian” modernity of Japanese women can interfere with Nepali norms even though Japanese women are assumed to maintain the “Asian” ideals of loyalty and sincerity. Bibek was a Newar male student who worked in a travel agency. While we were walking in the maze-like back streets where Newari wooden houses stood side by side, Bibek talked in fluent Japanese about his “modern” Japanese girlfriend:

I am 25 years old and my girlfriend Kaori is 24. I am a grad student studying business. ... I had a Newari girlfriend, but we broke up one month before I met Kaori. Kaori stayed with a Nepali family when she joined a volunteer program. The family members are my relatives. But after we started our relationship, Kaori moved into a guesthouse in Thamel. It was easier to meet and I could stay with her. ... [Chisono then asked about the difference between Newari and Japanese girlfriends.] Well, Newari women hold back while Japanese women speak about anything like their past and their ex-boyfriends. It is sometimes good, and sometimes bad. I discussed much with Kaori because she disclosed a lot. Japanese are foreigners, very free. It is okay if we spend the night together. Newari couples are absolutely not allowed stay overnight together anywhere. I went to many cities outside Kathmandu with Kaori. We traveled together and stayed together in many places. ... She is now working at a big company in Japan. She used to study in Europe and she speaks fluent English. She is very intelligent. So, we speak in English. [Chisono asked, "Do you use English even though you speak good Japanese?"] Yes, I use English talking with her.

Bibek and Kaori could travel together freely and stay overnight together because Kaori was considered to be free from sexual norms. However, Nepali men see Japanese women as ideal Asian women – the “Japanese wife” as someone naturally follows Nepali domestic morals including sexual norms. I assume that Bibek’s idea, “Japanese are foreigners, very free” has a particular meaning. I analyze that Bibek said Japanese were very free not only because they were mobile tourists who are free from social responsibilities. Importantly, he emphasized Kaori’s “modern” background by mentioning her career and education including English skills. I suppose that Bibek strongly believed that Kaori was a “modern” foreign tourist who was free because she was not troubled by “traditional” sexual norms in transnational tourist spaces; at the same time, he thought that she still maintained the “Asian” values of sincerity and loyalty. Consequently, I assume that some Nepali men like Bibek transgress the moral boundaries of their sexual norms by behaving in the same way as their modern “Asian” Japanese girlfriends do.

The “modernity” of Japanese women is often expressed in terms of their sexual openness. I met Krishna, a Nepali male tour guide, and his client Shihoko, a young Japanese woman, in a tourist bus. I saw Krishna keep his arm around her all along the way. When the tourist bus stopped for a tea break, I approached their table, explained my research, and asked Krishna if she was his girlfriend. They kept silent and intimately looked at each other. This silence and their physical contact made me think that they had a sexual relationship. I could join them only for a short tea break, so I visited Krishna’s office another day. Krishna invited me for a drink and took me to the local restaurant off the main streets in Thamel in the evening. Serving me healthy non-oily dishes and ordering *tongba* [local hot rice wine] at a local restaurant in Thamel, Krishna said in fluent Japanese:

Well, I married a Nepali woman at a young age. I have two children. I have two Japanese female clients who visit me every year. They asked me to sleep but I said no because they were my clients. I don’t receive emails from them these days. I wonder if they are angry about that. ... Some Japanese female clients came to Nepal at the age of 40s or 50s after they divorced. They said that they used to prepare dinner and a hot bath and wait for their husbands who worked till late night. But they did nothing at night. Their husbands were too busy to do anything affectionate for them. My clients who were Japanese women told me this kind of story and cried a lot in front of me. So, I try not to talk about such things. I try to talk about something else. ... European people are very open. I saw [Western] porno CDs with my friends. How about in Japan? I saw Japanese sex magazines. There are a lot of sex shops and love hotels in Japan, right? I heard that my Japanese male clients often go to these places.

By stressing the similarities between the Western and Japanese sex industries, Krishna seemed to believe that many Japanese women are sexually free due to the Westernized “development” of sex business in Japan, but also think that they are so sexually frustrated in the industrial “modern” society of Japan that they must visit Nepal in order to find relaxation. Similarly to Krishna, many Nepali male subjects told me how Japanese

women aggressively seduced them to get the Nepali men to sleep with them. They also implied that they actually broke with Nepali sexual norms by having physical contact with Japanese women in transnational spaces, such as on tourist buses. These Nepali men take advantage of Japanese women who demonstrate their “modern” sexual aggressiveness just like other “open” Western tourists in order to enjoy sexual freedom in the transnational vacations of Nepal.

Interestingly, the sexual aggressiveness of “modern” Japanese women is connected to the concept of promiscuity, which contrasts with the image of the “Japanese wife”. Krishna did not obviously criticize the promiscuity of Japanese women in front of me because they were his clients. However, it seemed that he was condemning the immorality of Japanese women by distinguishing himself as a faithful Nepali husband from his Japanese clients he saw as promiscuous wives. Indeed, Surya overtly expressed his criticism in English and Nepali while describing his Japanese girlfriend Rumi and other Japanese women:

When I met her [Rumi], she was with another Nepali guy. Honestly, she had sex with him. She had many Nepali boyfriends, but they were in just sexual relationships. ... I know many Japanese tourists. When they go back home, there is no time to make boyfriends. I saw older, ugly women with younger, nice Nepali boyfriends! [Surya acted like he was like vomiting,] Ick! They are looking for guys for sexual purposes. There are many kinds of Japanese. But, for me, Japanese women are hot! Sexually hot!

Surya expressed discomfort with the sexual aggressiveness of Japanese women. His observation confirmed Keiko’s perception that Japanese women become sexually loose in foreign countries. Surya recognized the “immoral” side of Rumi, seeing her as a promiscuous woman. However, he believed that Rumi was emotionally loyal to him only saying, “But she is not like other Japanese women. I love her so much.” His words

remind me of Uttan's words that Japanese women love one person very much. Here, Nepali men hold complex images of Japanese women: Japanese women are observed as "modern" Asian women who are immoral and promiscuous; at the same time, they are also believed to fit the image of "Japanese wives" who are loyal and sincere. I assume that these Nepali men want to share the "moral-free" transnational vacations with "Asian" tourists in order to enjoy becoming like the "modern" Asian tourists who are free to seek casual sex outside the boundaries of domestic morality and social criticism. In this regard, Japanese women become a special group of foreign female tourists for these Nepali men because Japanese women are seen as "modern" Asian tourists who can enjoy freedom in transnational spaces, but also as "Japanese wives" who maintain the purported "Asian" values of loyalty and sincerity despite the "modern" aspects of immorality.

The discourse, "Chinese food, English life, American money, Japanese wife," reinforces the desire of Nepali men for Japanese women and reproduces the fantasy of the transnational femininity of "Asian" women who hold domestic Nepali values such as loyalty and sincerity. Japanese women are also perceived as the embodiment of "Asian" modernity just as Nepali people see the major "Asian" donor country, Japan, as the embodiment of *bikas*. By staying with Japanese women, Nepali men believe that they can maintain their *ijjat* in the fantasy of having a "Japanese wife". Some Nepali men transgress the moral boundaries of domestic sexual norms by becoming like "modern" Asian tourists who enjoy sexual freedom in transnational spaces of Nepal. This transgression had been made possible under the guise of "modernity" associated with Japanese women, who can be seen as less modern than Nepali women in many ways. Thus, these Nepali men are afraid of becoming the object of social criticism because they

are, in fact, transgressing Nepali norms. That is why Jivan was very critical of Suresh's *hunting* Japanese women; Krishna firmly refused to sleep with Japanese women; and many Nepali men took me for drinks to restaurants off main streets in order to escape observation. Consequently, Japanese women are seen as immoral "Asian" women; however, they are still believed to be moral "Japanese wives". These contradictions suggest that the Asian "modernity" and "morality" of Japanese women is not an actual aspect of Japanese women but actually a fantasy – the embodiment of Nepali men's desire. Thus, the fantasy of the "modern Japanese wife" as pure and wealthy, but also sexually aggressive, comes from a combination of transnational femininity reproduced through the discourse of "Japanese wife" and Nepali men's performing the role of "modern" Asian tourists in the transnational vacationsapes of Nepal.

5.2 The Frustration of Men from the Country of Mt. Everest

The ideal image of transnational femininity is projected onto Japanese women in the form of fantasy – the "modern Japanese wife". The fantasy of the "modern Japanese wife" is reinforced through discourse and the performance of Nepali men playing around the vacationsapes of Nepal. However, as it is an imaginary product of Nepali men's desire, many Nepali men encounter another aspect of the "modern Japanese wife" in relation the actual Japanese female tourists they meet. In this regard, Japanese women are perceived to be immoral "Asian" women, who enjoy casual sex and drinking with Nepali men, and yet they are seen as less modern than Nepali women in some ways. Similarly, the fantasy of ideal transnational masculinity is also generated through discourse and the performance of Nepali men. Nepali male tourism workers want to see themselves as

“modern” men by entering work places – transnational urban spaces, such as Thamel. Desiring to attract international tourists, they also reinforce the “traditional” image of Nepali-ness, – the fantasy of “authentic” Nepali masculinity embodied in the global men of Mt. Everest. Though the narratives of Nepali male tourism workers, I discuss how the fantasy of “modern” and “authentic” Nepali masculinity is reproduced and reinforced in multiple ways.

One day, I met Surya in a public square because my Japanese friend told me that he had a Japanese girlfriend named Rumi. Surya was riding a motorcycle and wore fashionable T-shirts and jeans. He told me he was busy at that time because he had to meet his friends at a pub. He told me to come to a tourist restaurant if I wanted to listen to the story about his Japanese girlfriend. I waited for Surya for half an hour in the restaurant. Then, he appeared with his friend. His eyes looked so bloodshot that I realized that he was quite drunk. Surya started talking in English, so I opened my fieldnotes on the table:

Sorry, I was late because I drank a lot at a tourist bar with Spanish people. I do not know why so many girls are crazy for me! Everybody is jealous of me. ... I don't want to just work and work for many hours. I like freedom. So I sold everything and went to India for a month, especially Goa. I saw many Japanese women with tattoos there. I do not know why so many Japanese girls became crazy for me. “Oh, you are nice”, they said to me in Goa, too. ... When I went to Europe, I met a Japanese girl at a club. She said, “You look Italian”, but I said, “No, No, I am Nepali. Do you know Nepal? I am from the country of Mt. Everest.” I just played with her and left her. ... Other Nepali people think that Rumi is just a girlfriend for a holiday. But she is not. I love her so much. ... I know that she had sex with other Nepali men, but I don't care. ... You know, I went to many countries. It was for my business. ...

I asked Surya how he obtained these visas because many Nepali informants lamented the difficulty of obtaining visas. Surya said by banging a plate down on the table:

Visa... fucking shit! It is nothing for me, you know? I will not tell you about the detail of visas because I don't know you. I just met you today. ... I love Rumi so much. I also love my friends. There are many kinds of love. Oh, my friend is also looking for a Japanese girlfriend.

I asked his friend why he wanted to have a Japanese girlfriend. He said that Europeans were not true lovers. Surya was nodding his head and continued talking:

I am a pub boy, ha ha ha! We drink many days. Not everyday, but almost. Twenty or thirty bottles of beer. Rumi tried to stop me from drinking a lot. She punched me when I drank too much. But I also stopped her from smoking [cigarettes]. I don't like smoking cigarettes. But I am a pub boy, ha ha ha! ... Today is today. Nobody knows tomorrow. My destination of my life is to have a party for my future daughters and invite people from many countries. ... I drink much and get crazy. I am happy in drinking. I want to make a documentary film. It is about my life. I do not have a good education. But I have an education from the streets.

I asked when Surya came to Kathmandu. He answered:

I was nine years old. I was working in a restaurant. I do not have a father. My mother lives in my village. It is far away from here. I have a younger brother. I do not go back to my village, but call her to come here. ... Going to Japan is bullshit! For me, going to other countries is nothing!

Although I tried to stop him, Surya ordered another large bottle of beer. Surya suddenly transformed from angry to cheerful. I was puzzled over his fickle emotions and loud voice. However, I understood that it was partly because he was too drunk, but mainly because by telling his story to me he was facing the unstable situation of the battle over money and fame in the urban tourist spaces. By acquiring foreign women, Surya received economic advantages and global mobility. Doing so, Surya believed that he could become a “modern” Nepali man who could rise above other urban Nepalis with better education than his education “from the streets”.

Although he did not use the term “modern” in his own narrative, I interpreted his story in this framework because he emphasized how he looked like a “modern” Western man by calling himself a “pub boy”. I think that for Surya, a “pub boy” means a young

Western male tourist who wears fashionable clothing and flirts with foreign women at pubs in transnational spaces. In fact, Surya's hairstyle and clothes looked like those of Western models in popular magazines. It seemed that Surya was living the fantasy of modernity of the social, fashionable Western men he saw in international places such as Kathmandu, Goa, and Europe; as a result, he wanted to embody this fantasy of ideal masculinity as a "modern" global man by dressing like Western models as well as playing and drinking with "modern" international tourists, especially women. Thus, Surya incorporated the ways he saw Western men behave into the reproduction of his masculine identity by becoming a modern "pub boy" that enjoys the aura of transnational vacationsapes.

In addition to the modern aspect of ideal masculinity, Surya stressed his "authentic" Nepali-ness by saying "I am Nepali. Do you know Nepal? I am from the country of Mt. Everest." Adams (1996) discusses how Sherpas deal with the imagination of "authentic" Sherpa-ness and "modernity" in order to recreate their own identity in relation to Western tourists. Adams explains that for Sherpas, modernity means not only the adaptation of Western practices, but also the creation of new needs, which is based on the desire for becoming "ideal Sherpas" for Westerners (1996:109). In order to attract foreign Others, Sherpas think that they should remain authentic "traditional Sherpas" in some ways while achieving Western standards of modernity in other ways (Adams 1996:109). In like manner, Surya showed me his pride in becoming "modern" as well as being an "authentic" Nepali by connecting his identity to the indigenous Nepali landscape of Mt. Everest, which attracts mountaineers and trekkers from around the globe.

Frohlick notes, “Everest embodies the very symbol of achievement and will always be the mountain to climb” (2003:531). In this sense, Mt. Everest symbolizes “authentic” Nepali-ness in the form of rough, tough, global masculinity which foreign women are eager to approach but find difficult to conquer. Actually, this image of “authentic” Nepali machismo is not a traditional aspect of Nepali men, but the imaginative product of foreign tourists who want to explore Nepal as the “exotic” Other (Adams 1996, Fisher 2004, Frohlick 2003, Ortner 1996). The fantasy of “authentic” Nepali men of Mt. Everest causes Nepali men to observe themselves and recreate the sexuality of Nepali men in transnational ways. I think that Surya had belligerent attitude in the tourist restaurant because he wanted to stress the “authentic” Nepali masculinity of toughness and prove that he was a man of Mt. Everest.

Significantly, I sensed that Surya felt frustrated in the chaotic situation of tourist spaces because of his unstable emotions and alcohol habit. It seemed that he was trying to forget his insecurity by drinking as well as by showing off his prestigious status as a global man of Mt. Everest who won foreign girlfriends. I sensed this feeling of frustration in many Nepali tourism workers, especially in Kumar. I met Kumar at a tourist café in Pokhara. It was a beautiful morning and the Annapurna Mountains were clearly visible. I introduced myself and talked about my research. Kumar refused to tell his love story by saying in English, “It is a private matter. I don’t know much about you, so I can’t tell you.” However, after I told about my love story, Kumar’s flippant face became serious and suddenly he said, “Well, I had a Japanese girlfriend before.” Kumar continued in English:

When I was 17 years old, I met a Japanese female tourist who was 30 years old. I was working in a restaurant and we met there. Then we stayed together for two

years. She was my first love and best love. I did not know anything [about love]. She taught me everything. ... Well, our hearts are the most important. Life is pain, you know? ... Let's go to see a movie this afternoon, okay?

In the place where we agreed to meet I easily spotted Kumar whose clothes were "different" from other Nepalis. Kumar looked like a "modern" Western tourist in his colourful T-shirt and sneakers just as Surya's clothes had made him look like a young Latin man. Kumar and Surya both repeated, "I am different from other Nepalis." Kumar took me to many places such as a music shop, an ice cream parlour, and a movie theatre. I guessed that Kumar was remembering the days when he had dated with his Japanese ex-girlfriend. I asked, "You came here with your ex, right?" Kumar answered, "I don't want to talk about and think of her." Instead of watching a movie, we decided to walk along the river. When we saw an elderly man walking along the wall, Kumar said, "There is no security in Nepal, not like in other countries." Although his face looked sad, he changed his mood by cheerfully singing a Bob Marley song, "'Everything's gonna be all right', isn't it?" We sat down on the riverbank. Kumar continued talking:

I need someone who can live my whole life together. I am always looking for something in my life. I am looking for my life partner. Searching, searching, and searching. But I could not find one. Nobody is immortal. Nobody has insurance [not to die]. Everybody will die on one day. Japanese people are computer-minded. Japanese people have security, but we have no security. Japan is a developed society. Nepal is a hard society. No tourists understand this hard life here. They just enjoy it here. What you understand is no understanding. You don't suffer because of hunger. You have a good life.

I was writing his words in my fieldnotes. Kumar lit a cigarette. He looked at my fieldnotes and asked if I was researching him. I asked him again if I could use his words for my research and he answered, "Up to you." Kumar resumed sharing his life story with me:

Sex is not a problem. The heart is a problem. Respect is important. Life is always a struggle. It is pain. Romance between Nepalis and Japanese? There are various individuals, so why do you research such a thing? It depends on the individuals. Your five fingers are the same fingers, but different from each other. But I am looking for something – the best one in my life. I talked much about life with my ex Japanese girlfriend. But she left me and never came back to Nepal. So, I spent hard days. I drank a lot and behaved badly. Everything was like crazy. But I don't do these things anymore. ... I cannot trust women at all. Bitch! Japanese bitch! Not every Japanese, though. If you need to research the real lives of Nepalis, you should go to the mountains. You should see the lives in mountains. Go to places where there are no tourists and see the real pain of our lives. ... Here, people are always gossiping behind closed doors. People gossip without knowing the truth. They gossip like; he is rich because he has a Japanese girlfriend. Not good. Not right. They don't know anything true. ... People always run after money because there is no security here. Only money. But it is wrong to think that money is all. When I was eight years old, I came to Pokhara from my village and started working for 100 rupees [about two Canadian dollars] for a month. This is the life of Nepalis. That is why people become addicted to drugs.

Listening to Kumar, I saw the peaceful scenery of the riverside turn into the painful landscape of people's suffering. I was afraid if Kumar saw me as a Japanese bitch just as Palestinian street-merchants feel tremendous resentment toward foreign customers calling them "fucking tourists" (Bowman 1989:83-84). I felt like escaping from there and said to myself, "I wish I were just a 'happy' tourist and didn't have to listen to this 'reality'." Kumar continued talking, "Saying something is easy, but doing something is not easy. That is why life means struggle. I am learning the meaning of life from my struggle and experience." Kumar's words stuck in my heart.

The entire time we walking on the road beside the river, Kumar never stopped talking to me, "Tourists think that Nepali people enjoy a wonderful life here. But there are a lot of misunderstandings. Tourists, especially Western girls don't understand. They don't see the real things here." I asked, "Why Western girls?" Kumar answered, "Nepal and Japan have a similar history. Japanese women traditionally respect their husbands even though I know that this tradition is eroding and people run after fashion today. It is

the same situation as in Nepal.” Talking about female tourists, got Kumar very agitated and he suddenly said in a furious tone, “All people die out on one day. Everything gets blasted! The world is going to blow up! Everybody is selfish!” I said to myself, “What am I doing? What am I researching? How can I help to decrease the pain of his life? Am I a researcher or tourist or his friend?”

We reached the inner-city roads and saw Western tourists pass by. Kumar continued, “Western people are free. Japanese are different. You are open-minded. You should live in Nepal. You are different from other Japanese. You are a good Japanese. You are trying to see our real lives.” It was a hot, sunny day. We entered a shady local restaurant near a college. Drinking water, we watched the college students. Kumar said, “These students are not learning what life means. They should listen to me! ... I want to write a book about my life. But I don’t have an education. I cannot write and read properly, so I can’t do it.” Realizing that he was opening his heart to me, I felt like claiming that I was not a good but rather a “selfish” Japanese person because I was listening to him for own gain as a university student in the West. I also became ashamed of myself by allowing myself to feel “powerless” to help Kumar in some ways. I wondered if there was a solution – rather than languishing in my sense of powerless, my duty would be listening to Kumar and describing his words into texts. Becoming confused and questioning myself, I said “thank you” to Kumar and, under the dazzling evening sun, got on a local bus going near my guesthouse.

Kumar’s story taught me a lot of things. He had lamented the insecurity of the future in terms of the binary contrast between “backward” Nepal and “developed” Japan. Kumar also expressed a clear distinction between the city, Pokhara, and mountain

villages. According to Kumar, the tourist area of Pokhara is the space of gossip and jealousy where people do not see the truth; on the other hand, mountain villages are the spaces where I can see the “truth” of Nepali lives that are painful. As Pigg points out, the binary image of city (modern)-village (backward) is reproduced under the hegemonic ideology of *bikas* (1992:499). Kumar felt frustrated especially because he had long been in the front-line of sensing the dichotomy of *bikas*, where “backward” Nepalis encounter “modern” tourist in their daily life. I thought about how much Kumar had wished to break away from the “backwardness” of Nepal while working in the vacationscape of Pokhara. Escaping from his image of “backward” Nepal, I assume that Kumar wanted to become like a “modern” tourist by wearing clothes and behaving like tourists in the same way as Surya.

In contrast to Kumar’s perspective, Japanese tourists see the binary image of backwardness and modernity from another angle. In projecting the fantasy of nostalgia onto Nepal, Japanese tourists visit Nepal to search out “backwardness”. It seems that Kumar criticized this fact that these tourists were looking at the fantasy of backwardness in tourist places like Pokhara, not the real “backward” lives in Nepali villages. That is why I felt like the peaceful touristic landscape was transforming into a painful scene before my eyes as I was hearing Kumar’s words. Here, Kumar and I mapped the imagined landscapes of backwardness and modernity by seeing Nepali villages as the sites of authentic backwardness, Nepali tourist places as the modern spaces of inauthentic backwardness, and Japan as the country of authentic modernity.

Although he pointed out his sense that tourists don’t see the truth but rather a fantasy of Nepali lives, I think that Kumar was also having his own fantasy about tourists,

especially Japanese women. Comparing them with Western women, Kumar saw Japanese women as his ideal “Asian” women who follow their husbands. I assume that he saw Japanese women as Asian women of “modernity” who could provide him with security in life as his best life partner. However, he had a painful memories of Japanese women, especially his first girlfriend so that he shouted, “Japanese bitch!” This ambivalence shows that Kumar held onto a fantasy of his ideal of femininity found in Japanese women, but at the same time, he knew the “reality” that these Japanese women could betray his expectations and exploit him as a romantic object. I suppose that Kumar projected the fantasy of the ideal “Asian” women onto me, a Japanese woman, and that is why he told me that I was a good Japanese.

Furthermore, I also interpret Kumar’s words “you are a good Japanese” from another perspective. I realized that Kumar wanted to hear from me, “You are a good Nepali”; in other words, Kumar wanted to be seen as an “authentic” Nepali in some ways. Kumar claimed that the non-touristic or “innocent” life in mountain villages is the “real” life of Nepali people. Listening to these men, I felt that they were projecting their ideal image of Nepali Self onto mountain villagers just as Japanese tourists dream the fantasy of “Asian” innocence and nostalgia in the landscape of Nepal. Accordingly, they stressed that they possessed the ideal national character of innocence; in other words, they displayed themselves as “authentic” Nepalis by saying, “I am different from other Nepalis”. Actually, Kumar repeated that he had been struggling with the pain of life just as other “innocent” Nepali villagers do in mountain lives. It seems that Kumar wanted to prove that they were “authentic” Nepali men. As Surya described himself as an “authentic” Nepali man of Mt. Everest, I assume that Kumar incorporated the fantasy of

foreign tourists, who desire to see “innocent” Nepalis lives in the exotic and harsh Himalayan environment, into the ways he observed himself. In fact, when I asked him if he was mistaken for a foreign tourist, Kumar proudly answered, “I am Nepali!” Thus, I assume that Kumar’s words “Life is always a struggle” implies his desire to become an “authentic” innocent Nepali man of Mt. Everest in order to attract foreign tourists like me.

Like Surya, Kumar impressed upon me that Nepali men experience a strong sense of frustration working and playing in the transnational vacationsapes of Nepal. I suggest that their feelings of frustration can be partially attributed to their unstable circumstances that involve conflict, transgression, and fluidity. Indeed, the vacationsapes of Nepal are battlefields for Nepali men to win the prestige of money, modernity, and morality. Accordingly, Nepali men see Japanese women as objects to manipulate into providing these trophies. By utilizing their cosmopolitan demeanours and skills to attract Japanese women, Nepali men perform their own version of “modern” Nepali men who win social and economic prestige. Thus, Nepali men feel frustrated and uneasy about the future and often become addicted to drinking. Kunwar demonstrates the drinking habits of Nepali male tour guides in Chitwan National Park and says that it is because they are in the “process of transformation” (2002:110). Liechty also illustrates how a Nepali man became addicted to drugs by encountering tourists in Thamel. This man describes his feelings of frustration in the form of hopelessness and placeless-ness, which Liechty observes as the dark side of the modernity of contemporary Nepal (2003:245).

The feeling of frustration has been expressed not only at an individual level but also at a political level in the Nepal-Maoist movement. Since the insurgence of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M) began in February 1996, Maoist attacks

have been a constant presence in the Nepali news. The ideological emphasis of the CPN-M is the revolutionary ideal of the rise of the rural poor and gender equality in opposition to the hegemony of *bikas* (development) (Santina 2001:36). According to the BBC report, one member of the party, a nineteen year old Nepali young man, commented, “I joined because a corrupt 5% of the people rule over the 95%, who have no access to development” (Haviland 2005). Many Nepali informants, including members of CPN-M, explained the movements of CPN-M in relation to their frustration toward the growing inequality in the contemporary society of Nepal. Shiva told me in Nepali:

Only urban people become richer and richer, while villagers remain poor these days. What can we do? I am not a Maoist, but I have Maoist friends in my village. It is not good that Maoists kill people, but you should know that the Maoists are good people. They help poor villagers and build schools. Otherwise, who can help?

Thus, the rise of Maoism is considered a reaction to the frustration caused by the unequal social changes of development.

Becoming “modern” and “authentic” Nepali men is the transnational sexuality produced in Nepali men’s fantasy of seeing themselves in relation to foreign female tourists; it is the trans-moral sexuality by which Nepali men want to transgress the domestic norms with these “modern” tourists; and it is also the trans-class sexuality with which Nepali men want to rise to a higher status thorough the economic gains and global mobility gotten from these foreign tourists. However, the contact zone of vacationsapes becomes a harsh battlefield where Nepali men compete for the social prestige of money, morality, and modernity. It is also the location for Nepali men to resist “First World” tourists by taking pride in their globally prestigious position – as the “top” men from the country of Mt. Everest. Thus, the vacationsapes of Nepal are the gendered and eroticised spaces for these Nepali men to embody the ideal masculinity of “modern” and

“authentic” Nepali men through their performance and the discourse of becoming like “modern” tourists as well as being “authentic” Nepali men. Also, they are salient spaces for realizing how these Nepali men bear the feeling of frustration under local and global inequality.

5.3 The Power of Love in Modern Nepali Men’s Lives

Kumar stressed the idea that life is a struggle because of his painful romance with a Japanese woman. However, free love often is portrayed as having the potential to overcome the difficulties of life. Ahearn suggests that Nepali youth come to believe that fate is no longer the final arbiter that determines a person’s life; it is lovers themselves (2001:189). For instance, one Nepali man, Ashok, submitted to his fate of an arranged marriage by following the strong belief of Nepali fatalism. However, Ashok resisted his fate by separating from his Nepali wife while longing for a love marriage with a Japanese woman. Ashok seemed to believe that love marriage means success in his life, such as fostering true love, working together in Japan and buying land in Nepal. Kumar also implied that he wanted to find his ideal partner through romance with a Japanese woman despite his painful memories. Researching the relationships between Arab boys and Western female tourists, Cohen argues, “the tourists help to create new and essentially false hopes for these boys who are trapped in a situation from which, under the present circumstances, there is no way out” (1971:229). As Ahearn’s informant describes, many Nepali men believe that “the ‘main’ meaning of love is ‘life success’” (2001:3). Thus, Japanese women become the symbol of life success in these Nepali men’s fantasies.

The linkage between love and life success can be clearly observed in my

conversation with Bimal, a manager of a handicraft shop in Thamel. After I explained my research, Bimal showed me many photos of his Japanese wife and baby living in Japan. Bimal told me how he met his wife Aki speaking multiple languages – Japanese, Nepali and English:

I am now 25 years old while she is 28. I had not had any girlfriends before I met Aki. She was my first girlfriend. Aki had a Japanese boyfriend, but he had a few other girlfriends. So, she left him. Aki visited my shop everyday and tried to learn more about me. She had planned to stay in Nepal only for a month, but she extended her stay for three months. Yes, because of me. Aki told me to stay with her at her guesthouse and so I did. ... She phoned to her parents in Japan saying, "I have a boyfriend here!" ... I have been very busy with going to the college and working in this shop. Many people are just playing around here, but I am different from them. For our marriage, a Nepali officer asked me to give him a bribe to expedite the marriage process. But I refused saying, "Why?" It is illegal. I know it because I have an education. ... This love is the destination of my life. I had no girlfriends before I met her. This is love. Other Nepalis care about the nationality of their girlfriends, like they love their girlfriends because she is American or Japanese. But we are different. Because our Nepali life is good! We have a rich life here. The system [of facilities] is not good. Even if we don't work in the daytime, we can eat dinner in the evening! It is not hard to get food in Nepal. ... I went to Japan last year. Japanese people don't know who lives in the neighbourhood. Nepali communities are good because we are all friends. Japanese people gather only with their relatives. In Japan, if someone visits someone else's home, they just give a greeting. There is no time to drink tea together. In Nepal, we say, "Please come in" and offer tea. Nepal has a relaxing life. So I want to live in Nepal after I stay in Japan for a few years. I might start an exporting business to Japan. I don't know now. It might be difficult, but I will try.

In contrast to Kumar illustrating Nepali lives as struggle and pain, Bimal described another side of Nepali lives that includes the richness of good food, friendships, and stress-free living. Bimal repeated the expression, "even if we don't work in the daytime, we can eat dinner in the evening," that I often heard from other Nepali subjects. Bista explains, "Nepal has historically been self-sufficient.... Nepal may be poor by international standards, but Nepali peasants are self-sufficient and largely content"

(2001:133). Since he experienced life in Japan, Bimal realized the fact that Japan is not the utopia of modernity that Kumar observed in contrast to “backward” Nepal.

Bimal said that he used to work as a shopkeeper so that he could meet Aki at his shop. But he was promoted to manager and had his own office in another place. So, I could meet Bimal only in the evening when he came to check his shop. Whenever I met him, Bimal called his best friend, Dorjee and invited us for *tongba*. We went to a local restaurant near where Dorjee lived. On the way to the restaurant, Bimal told me in Nepali:

Aki also speaks good Nepali like you. When she did not understand a Nepali word, she looked it up in a dictionary. She studied hard. Because we love each other, we are learning about each other’s culture. The reason Aki speaks Nepali is “power of love”. So, I am learning Japanese as well. Learning culture is possible through “the power of love”, right?

We reached the restaurant and saw several Nepali men drink *tongba* at the back. Bimal said, “Dorjee is my best friend. I was so sad in Japan because I could not meet Dorjee.” Dorjee was nodding his head. Dorjee called his children on his mobile phone and his sons soon came into the restaurant. Bimal said in Nepali, “See, they are very handsome like their father. I want my daughter to marry one of them.” One Nepali man started to sing a Nepali song and his friends started dancing. We also sang the song and danced together. We drank and laughed. Bimal looked happy saying in Japanese, “It is wonderful. It is not possible in Japan, right?”

On another day, I visited Bimal’s shop. Bimal looked so tired. He ordered milk tea for me and started to talk about his life in Japanese:

I go to a Japanese language school every early morning. Then, I have to go to many places for my business. I am very busy. But I don’t feel like going back to Japan. I like the life in Nepal. ... Well, Chisono-*didi*, let’s do some exporting business. You can live half in Nepal and half in Japan. It is nice, isn’t it? I have some plans like

an on-line business. I learned many things from my Japanese friends. Please consider this plan. ... By the way, I go back to my village soon. Would you like to come with me? I go back there twice a month. I have to deliver big furniture to my village. ...

Whenever I listened to him, I felt a sense of stability. In fact, Bimal was achieving a level of success in life that many other Nepali men would only dream about and envy. Bimal went to Japan and found many possibilities to start new business just like Ashok had dreamed of doing. Bimal also could distinguish himself from other Nepalis by receiving a good education and by taking business and Japanese language courses in school, while Kumar wanted to but couldn't. Bimal went to his natal village quite often and he has close ties to his relatives even though Surya cut his tie to his natal village. Bimal thought that he had attained success in life through his efforts of study, work, and most importantly, "the power of love". Bimal stressed the idea, "This love is the destination of my life." It seems that Bimal is now achieving success through his love for Aki.

Although I illustrated the vacationsapes of Nepal as the spaces of inequality and frustration, I would like to stress the fact that it is also the space of hope where Nepali men like Bimal can discover "the power of love" in the romance with foreign women. For instance, although he had flirted with other foreign women, Surya dreamed of the day when he and Rumi would make a happy family through their sincere love. I assumed that Surya had hope in "the power of love" for success in his life, despite his current disorderly life as a pub boy. While dreaming of a love marriage with a Japanese woman, Ashok learned Japanese without going to school and was expanding his idea that he would start a new business with Japanese tourists. Kumar told me how he was betrayed by "the power of love" in the romance with his Japanese ex-girlfriend. However, Kumar

can be considered to have life experience through his painful love. It seems to me that he was, in fact, proceeding to make a success of his life in a certain way. Kumar became upset when remembering his pain, but soon cheerfully changed his mood, singing the Bob Marley song, "Everything's gonna be all right." This shows that Kumar has the skills to overcome difficulties even though his memories with a Japanese woman were still very painful. For me, Kumar is not a victim exploited by foreign tourists.

Remembering his song, I believe that Kumar is strong enough to find success in life through his painful experience of love.

These different perspectives of frustration, pride, hope affected my observations of Nepali people in the vacationsapes of Nepal. To illustrate, I will show how I saw a large sign in Thamel, "Tourists are honoured guests". Reading the sign, I thought that I was a "privileged" tourist in Nepal. However, after I listened to many Nepali subjects like Surya, Kumar, and Bimal, I came to realize that the sign does not mean the status of global tourists, but it actually refers to the "privileged" status of Nepalis themselves. I translated the sign as "We are honoured hosts", just as I analyzed that Nepali men projected the ideal image of global and modern tourists on themselves. I thought the sign, in fact, points to Nepali pride in being the people from the country of Mt. Everest, just as Surya described his pride in being an "authentic" Nepali. My changing impression shows that I had been so obsessed with my "privileged" position as a global tourist that I did not recognize the fact that Nepali people are more "privileged" in some ways and many Nepalis actually take a pride of their identity as being global and modern.

The vacationsapes of Nepal are the gendered, eroticised spaces where Nepali men desire the ideal "Asian" femininity of Japanese women and the cosmopolitan

masculinity of “modern” Nepali men. They are the spaces of global inequality in which Nepalis encounter – “modern” tourists who exploit them as romantic objects. They are the harsh battlefields of domestic inequality where Nepali men compete over money and fame with each other. Thus, these vacationsapes of Nepal are sites of frustration for Nepali men so that some Nepali men become alcoholics while others rebel against the global inequality by exploiting foreign women. However, they are also the sites of hope where Nepali men can find a way to succeed in life and come to a mutual cultural understanding with foreign visitors. Indeed, the vacationsapes of Nepal are chaotic spaces in which Nepali men exploit and are exploited and experience feelings of frustration, hope, pride in chaotic, dramatic, and dynamic ways. They are the fluid spaces where Nepali men obtain the global and local mobility to “physically and imaginarily” transgress the boundaries of national borders, domestic morality, sexual norms, *jāt*, classes, and economic limitations. Accordingly, the vacationsapes of Nepal are the embodiment of all the social and cultural changes in contemporary Nepal. In looking at the dynamic relations between Nepali men and Japanese women, I believe that we can understand the ways in which Nepali people take active roles in the process of globalization and analyze how Nepali society is dynamically transforming in specific ways at global and local levels.

Chapter 6 WE DEPART FOR HOPE

6.1 Steering the Airplane of Globalization to Our Future

You have the whole world. Don't think too much about stupid things. You can go ahead in another wonderful world. This is just a tiny world. Don't be worried about tiny things. Just try to see your exciting dreams. (author's diary, Nagano in Japan, July 2000)

I came back to Japan after a few years of backpacking and started a temporary job while dreaming about my next trip to Asia. I felt that the reality of my everyday life had changed to some degree after the trip. I believed that I could find a new aspect of Self through my "romantic" relationships with the people I had met in the vacationscapes of Asia.

However, in fact, I was able to drift around those Asian countries because I took advantage of the "privileged" status of Japanese women, who have global mobility due to their economic freedom under the global capitalist system, and fewer social and familial responsibilities in Japan. My feelings toward travel in Asia represents how Japanese tourists desire to search for the nostalgic landscape of "backward" Asia that they assume has been lost in "modern" Japan. Dreaming this exploitative fantasy of capitalist nostalgia in the vacationscapes of Asia, I felt spiritual renewal in discovering my authentic Self as a cosmopolitan woman when I wrote, "You have the whole world". Thus, my backpacking experience illustrates how Japanese tourists hold the fantasy of seeking a new identity as "Asian Japanese".

The exploration of nostalgic "Asia" was experienced not only geographically but also sexually. "Asian Japanese" women seek the authentic masculinity of *yasashisa*, innocence, and relaxation that they think cannot be found in Japanese men. The sexual

desire creates the fantasy of authentic “Asian” men, which Japanese women project onto Nepali men. The fantasy of “Asian” men generates the discourse of *yasashisa*, innocence, and relaxation, which is circulated by “Asian Japanese” women and reinforces the desire for authentic “Asian” men. Thus, the fantasy of and desire for authentic “Asian” men are reproduced in a cyclic way (Stoler 1997). Through the fantasy and desire of authentic “Asian” men, Japanese women enjoy discovering a new aspect of their transnational sexuality as cosmopolitan heroines in the romantic vacationscapes of Asia – as “Asian Japanese” women. That is why I recognized my sexuality which I described in my diary saying, “I realized that I am a woman.”

The politics of sexual desire and fantasy is not only limited to “Asian Japanese” women because it is a mutual process. Nepali men are also engaged in the process of generating certain kinds of Asian sexuality. Nepali men desire to meet virtuous “modern” Japanese women in the same way that Nepali people project their ideal image of development (*bikas*) onto their Asian donor, Japan. The sexual desire reinforces the fantasy and discourse of an ideal Asian femininity, the “Japanese wife” in a cyclic process. In order to attract foreign women, Nepali men try to embody their fantasy of authentic Nepali masculinity as modern, global, and indigenous Nepali men – “men from the country of Mt. Everest”.

On this point, the notion of “Asian-ness” plays a significant role in recreating the sexual identities of Japanese women and Nepali men. It evokes a special kind of intimacy for these subjects, who consider each other as being “Asian” but who are still different from each other. The mutual feeling of “Asian-ness” uniquely generates the sexual fantasy and desire to find the intimate Other, a phenomenon not fully discussed

in studies of the intimate relations between white female tourists and local men of colour who see each other as the exotic Other. Japanese women articulate their sense of “Asian-ness” in order to revive the dominant values of “Japanese-ness” in the fantasy of the intimate Other as “Asian” Nepali men; however, the vacationsapes of Asia become a transnational “morally-free” zone for them to enjoy sexual liberation and discovering their true Selves as “Asian Japanese”. Nepali men circulate the discourse of their sexual desire through their ideal sexuality of “Asian-ness” located in the intimate Other (the “Japanese wife”) by employing their new identity of an authentic Self (men from the country of Mt. Everest). In this regard, the vacationsapes of Nepal are transnational sites where the local identities of Japanese-ness, Nepali-ness, and Asian-ness are negotiated, as well as a global space where transnational Asian sexualities are recreated.

The narratives and emotions of my Asian subjects vividly portrayed their struggles to re-formulate their sexual identities in a transnational way. The fluidity and chaos of the Asian vacationsapes of Nepal show the various processes in which transnational Asian sexualities are embodied at individual levels (Povinelli and Chauncey 1999). Kaplan explains “location does not simply *reflect* identity: identities are formed through the mediating activities of places, locations, and positions”, which are constructed “in relation to cultural and social formations” (1996:185). Indeed, the Asian vacationsapes of Nepal reflect the multiple mediating activities, which are socially and culturally constructed by Asian subjects in the physical and imaginary spaces of “Asia”. Through the narratives of Japanese women, I could understand how Japanese people have become confused in modern Japanese industrial society and why

they seek the new form of a Japanese Self in the fantasy of spiritual renewal in true “Asia”. Listening to Nepali men, I realized how Nepali people seek the indigenous modernity of Nepali-ness even though they are frustrated with the rapid changes in contemporary Nepal. The vacationsapes of Nepal become the site of chaos where Asian subjects savour freedom and, at the same time, rebel against the contradictions between their traditional norms and new values. It also becomes the space for generating new ideals and reinforcing domestic ideology and morality. Massey explains that “the chaos of the spatial results from the happenstance juxtapositions, the accidental separations, the often paradoxical nature of the spatial arrangements which result from the operation of all these causalities” (1994:266).

Here, I need to go back to the theoretical question: are Japanese female tourists sex tourists or romance tourists? In this theoretical debate, I see it problematic to label female tourists as a certain type of sex-romance tourists on the continuum of the sex-romance binary. As Massey suggests, I found that the transnational vacationsapes of Nepal are the sites of chaos where the concepts of romance, love, and sex are juxtaposed, contested, and recreated with Japanese domestic notions of sexuality as well as Nepali local sexual norms. For example, Keiko described her serious love for Dipak partly because of the Japanese moral pressure while she enjoyed playing a game with him in the transactional moral-free tourist spaces. Noriko engaged in passionate romance with Amrit although she had casual sex with Amrit’s brother because of the logic that he was Nepali. In this regard, these Japanese female tourists cannot be categorized into a certain type of sex-romance tourists; rather, they are the flexible actors to become sex or romance tourists or both or neither according to time and

circumstances. Going beyond the Western framework of the sex-romance binary, I propose that these female tourists are the specific tourist population of “Asian Japanese women” who play with the multiple meanings and ambivalent feelings of romance, love, and sex through their fantasies of authentic Asia-ness, Japan-ness, and Nepal-ness.

I see that transnational Asian sexualities as the embodiment of socio-cultural changes in contemporary Nepal, Japan, and the whole Asian world. It is true that global tourism involving romance, love, and sex is considered as a neo-colonial phenomenon of economic exchange in which “First World” female tourists exploit local men (Kempadoo 2001, Phillips 1999, Sánchez Taylor 2001); however, I found that it is a space where the socio-cultural processes of new identity formation and social changes take place on the both sides. Thus, through exploring the dynamic processes of the reformulation of Asian sexualities in global tourism, I think we can examine how the contemporary societies of Asia are transforming in the era of globalization.

I also pose the question, “Where are we going?” Japanese women exploit Nepali men by romanticizing Nepali men as the objects of their nostalgic desire through their privileged global mobility. Nepali men take advantage of their “cosmopolitan” skills of attracting Japanese women in order to acquire money, morality, and modernity from them. That is why my subjects showed me their tears, jealousy, frustration, anxiousness, and anger while lamenting these unequal relations of romance, love, and sex. In particular, I cannot forget Kumar’s anger (“Japanese bitch!”) and his sorrow (“Life is pain”), or Keiko’s tears (“Why didn’t he tell me the truth from the beginning if he was just playing a game with me?”) Observing these emotions, I saw the vacationsapes of Asia as the site of egoistic desire and selfish

fantasy. I have often thought that the processes of Asian internationalization would drastically increase the feelings of hatred between Asian subjects. Seeing myself as one of the actors in globalization, I felt depressed and desperate, especially when I realized the process of global tourism would have sizable negative impact on our future.

However, I saw the smiles and sparkling eyes of my Asian subjects in building intimate relations with Asian Others. Despite criticizing Japanese women, Kumar kindly told me with a smile, “You are a good Japanese.” Surya behaved roughly and got extremely drunk in a transnational tourist place, but he repeated from his heart, “I love Rumi very much.” Keiko wept over Dipak’s infidelity, but she left Nepal with a bright face saying, “I will definitely come back to Nepal.” Noriko felt depressed waiting for her Nepali boyfriend, but she looked happy talking about her interest in learning about Nepali culture. Rika told me about her relationships with her Nepali husband, “I want to be honest with him at all times.” Bimal looked happy saying, “Learning culture is possible through the power of love, right?” Although I felt overwhelmed by the negative emotions of my subjects, I could also see their positive expression of “the power of love”.

Indeed, the transnational vacationsapes are the site of egoism and selfishness on the one hand; however, they are the space of hope for the future on the other.¹⁷ The reason I stress these positive aspects is that transnational relationships in global tourism are mostly discussed from the perspective of international mutual exploitation. Rather than stereotyping these relationships as the sample of negative effects of globalization, I wanted to show how various people are actively engaged in creating better relationships with Others through their sincere efforts in transnational intimacy.

Through my research on transnational sexualities and global tourism, I hope I can become part of these actors to create a better understanding among Asian people and other people around the world in the context of globalization.

I remember the day the day I was standing at the departure gate at Kathmandu Tribhuvan Airport. I saw many foreign tourists including Japanese women like me as well as Nepali people get on and off international flights. They were international passengers, in other words, the actors of social change who play in transnational spaces. I felt that it was not the airplanes that transported them to other locations, but rather, it was the passengers that controlled their transnational journeys. I recall my words at the airport, "Next time when I come back to Nepal, I will be a 'researcher' or someone who tries to understand more about you, Nepal." In this sense, international flights are the vehicle of global socio-cultural changes; and we are the actors taking the airplane of globalization in this rapidly shifting world. I have continued asking myself, "What is the destination?" Now that I have encountered the smiles of my subjects in this research, I would like to answer, "We are steering the airplane of globalization toward a future of hope."

Notes

- ¹ All translations in this thesis are by the author unless otherwise stated.
- ² The top five countries are the United States, China, South Korea, Thailand, and Hong Kong (Ministry of Land Infrastructure and Transport of Japan 2006)
- ³ I will use quotation marks around the word Asia whenever it refers to something other than a geographic region, despite the fact that even that region is a constructed notion, and especially when it refers to a cultural construct based on imaginations to see relations between Self and Others.
- ⁴ Many anthropologists today believe that the term “race” is culturally constructed and has little to do with biological meanings (Peoples and Bailey 2003:3)
- ⁵ As in the case of the word “Asia”, I will use quotation marks around the word Asian when it refers to the imagined identity of being Asian the meaning of which differs depending on individuals and groups.
- ⁶ I use the term “intimacy” to describe the ambiguous feelings of closeness and affection in relationships between Japanese women and Nepali men. This is only the cursory definition used in this thesis. There is more to be discussed for the definition; however, I will leave the discussion for my future study.
- ⁷ *Ni Channeru* is the largest community-based Internet forum established since 1999. It attracts 5.4 million Japanese every month and offers a space to expose their emotions, which are hidden in their daily lives (Onishi 2004).
- ⁸ I showed Rika the articles, Iwabuchi (2002) and Rosaldo (1989b).
- ⁹ There are a number of scholars who describe the dynamic processes of formulating transnational sexualities. Puar (2001) researched a queer carnival in Trinidad and discusses the complex circuits of transnational sexuality formulation through both indigenous local and globalized discourses and practices. Blackwood (2005) reveals how the transnational notion of homosexuality is articulated in particular localities in post-colonial Western Sumatra, Indonesia. Brennan (2004) collected gossip about Dominican female tourist-oriented sex workers in Sosúa and illustrates how Dominican gender ideology is being transformed in a globalized economy. Cabezas (2004) discusses international sex tourism in Cuba and the Dominican Republic from the multiple perspectives of nation-states, global economy and the gender ideologies of locals. These scholars suggest that constructing transnational sexualities is not a homogenous process of Westernization but reflects the specific sociocultural problems of local societies.
- ¹⁰ Food and drink are the medium for Japanese tourists to embody their imagination for the local identities of Nepali-ness as well as Asian-ness.

¹¹ Among the total amount, grant assistance counts 165,615,427 Japanese yen, technical cooperation counts 51,498,000 Japanese yen, and loan assistance counts 63,889,000 Japanese yen (Embassy of Japan in Nepal 2006d).

¹² Japan's assistance accounted 32.0 percent of the whole bilateral assistance to Nepal in 1999, 43.2 percent in 2000, 31.2 percent in 2001, and 34.9 percent in 2002 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2005).

¹³ Keiko gave me the permission to write all her narratives by using false names. However, this narrative might be outside the fieldwork because it is clear that I was allowed to enter Keiko's room not as a researcher but as a friend. I think that this narrative is significant in describing the inner conflicts over her transnational sexuality. I have emailed this passage (the original in English with Japanese translation) to Keiko and confirmed that I could include it in this thesis.

¹⁴ Since Nepali citizens are not required to obtain Indian visas (Indian Horizons 2006), I doubt if Bob seriously wanted to elope with Noriko.

¹⁵ In the fiscal year 2005 to 2006, GDP is estimated at 487,734 million Nepali rupees, foreign grant at 18,687 million Nepali rupees, and foreign loan at 14,532 million Nepali rupees (National Planning Commission Secretariat 2005).

¹⁶ Nepali people rhyme this phrase in English.

¹⁷ Cohen (1971) researched relationships between young Arab boys and foreign tourist girls (largely Canadian and Scandinavian) in the mixed city of Israel in 1966. Cohen describes the triple predicament of Arab youths in a Jewish State: "identity, occupational career and sexuality" (1971:231). Cohen suggests that foreign tourists provide these young Arabs with a transient hope, – that is a "window to the wide world" to escape from these problems (1971:224). In contrast to Cohen's argument about romantic fantasies of Arab boys, Bowman (1989) describes the relationships with foreign girls as "fucking tourists". Bowman researched the tourist market of Palestinian owners in Acre in the 1980s, which is, unlike the traditional market, "to a rather brutal degree, a buyer's market" (1989:82). Because they seduce customers who are often reluctant to buy, Palestinian merchants feel tremendous resentment toward tourists (1989:83). This resentment of "fucking tourists" leads to "the actual game of 'fucking' tourists", in which Palestinian men are able to celebrate their power and superiority over wealthy female tourists in order to make up for their unequal economic relations (1989:84,87). Thus, the difference between hope and antagonism toward tourists appears in the different disguise of the same unequal relationship in the global and local contexts.

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