with a high degree of absenteeism. Punam worries about the ways in which Rabina’s disability will affect Rabina’s future, and hopes that through education Rabina will be able to find office work where her gait will not be a disadvantage.

Rural to urban migration is also increasing throughout most of the developing world, and Punam can also open discussion on why families migrate. Punam’s family recently migrated from Sindhupalchok district, an area north-east of Bhaktapur where 84 percent of employment is in agriculture. In Bhaktapur, their livelihood is less dependent on land and weather and Punam’s father can make more money. Schooling opportunities for his family are also better. While Sindhupalchok has 41 primary school students for every teacher, in Bhaktapur there are 15 primary school students per teacher. Like 17 percent of primary students in Nepal, Punam attends a private school, and much of the difference in pupil-teacher ratios between these districts reflects the prevalence of private schools in relatively well off urban areas like Bhaktapur. Overall, 17 percent of primary school students go to private schools in Nepal. Perhaps in part because of higher quality schools and better availability, school attendance is also much higher in Bhaktapur: 72 percent of 9-year-old girls attend school in Sindhupalchok, compared to 97 percent in Bhaktapur.

Overall, Lucian Muntean’s film provides a realistic description of the life of a young urban girl in Nepal that is useful to frame a discussion of child labor, addressing the central questions of why children work and why they attend school, as well as a host of related issues that are more subtly portrayed in the film such as schooling, maternal mortality, health care, and migration in low income countries. All of the issues other than child labor are subtle enough within the film that educators need not feel compelled to discuss them along with the central question of why children work and why children attend school.

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**HOW TO PURCHASE:** Punam is available on DVD from 7th Art Releasing. Price is $175.
her husband, but it is clear that her refusal to sacrifice more for her husband’s election does not fit well with the expectations of conservative party members in local LDP support organizations.

The documentary is full of scenes that will help students in classes on Japanese politics, Japanese culture and society, or broader comparative politics classes that include a section on Japan, gain a better understanding of what politics there is really like. I have described sound trucks many times in class and even used slides and photos, but students will develop much more of a feel for what these are once they see Yamauchi go out in one with a bevy of “warblers,” professional young women with cultivated feminine voices who repeat Yamauchi’s name many times as the truck moves through neighborhoods.

The film raises many points that can be discussed with students once they have viewed it, but the central one is raised by Yamauchi himself halfway through the film (scenes 16 to 17) when he visits with several old friends from college and talks to them about what the campaign has been like. He sometimes wonders, he says, about the quality of democracy in Japan. The politics that he’s experienced seem to him to be like politics in a developing country where “tribal chiefs control election results.”

Does democracy elsewhere work better? After watching this film, students will be inspired to reflect not only on the quality of democracy in Japan, but also on the limits of democratic systems in their own societies.

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HOW TO PURCHASE: Campaign will be officially released on DVD in the U.S. in the summer of 2008. It will also be broadcast in the U.S. on PBS’s P.O.V. series in 2008. Please see the film website at www.laboratoryx.us/campaign for up-to-date information.

Related Reading

Curtis, Gerald. 1971. Election Campaigning Japanese Style. New York: Columbia University Press. This book covers an election campaign several decades ago in a much more rural area, but it remains the classic work that gives a feel for campaigning in Japan and could be used with the film to get students to identify continuities and change.