

# COMPARING MEDICAL, NEWS, AND MAGAZINE DISCOURSES ON MALE PROSTITUTES IN OCCUPIED JAPAN, 1945-1952

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## Abstract

What can media representations of male prostitutes in Japan during the Allied Occupation (1945-1952) tell historians about the postwar period? This paper explores male sex workers in the wake of Japan's World War II defeat to revise male-female centered historiographies of this seven-year period. While the population of male prostitutes remained stable—if not decreased—from before to after 1945, they became subjects of psychiatric case studies and popular magazine articles as unique symbols of postwar societal chaos.<sup>1</sup> Though Japanese lives changed dramatically after August 15, 1945, journalists and psychiatrists projected society's "emasculatation" and collapsing social norms onto male sex workers who had been part of society long before World War II began. This paper argues that postwar Japan lingered between tensions of real and perceived social instability, where psychiatrists and journalists alike wrote disorder, emasculatation, and chaos into their depictions of male sex workers' bodies.

## Paper contents, and a note on terminology

This piece begins with a review of secondary literature on postwar Japan by John Dower and Mark McLelland, which is followed by a section on the historical background of male-male sexual relations in Japan. The first half of the occupation (1945-1948) will be examined through medical journal articles by psychiatrist Minami Takao and low-brow pulp magazines of the *kasutori* ("scooping the dregs") genre.<sup>2</sup> In analyzing newspaper articles from 1948 to 1952, the Ueno Park Incident of November 1948 will be examined as a turning point in media rhetoric from "emasculated" male prostitutes to "violent" paragons of postwar disorder.

As a note on typologies of male prostitutes in postwar Japan, the term *danshō* refers to male sex workers and includes both "male"-presenting prostitutes (*dansō danshō* 男装男娼) and men cross-dressed as women (*josō danshō* 女装男娼). Meanwhile, "cock-suck boy" (*kakusaku bōi* カクサクボーイ) refers to male minors who sold sex. However, what complicates the term "male prostitute" is that some

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<sup>1</sup> Mark McLelland, *Love, Sex, and Democracy in Japan During the American Occupation* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 156.

<sup>2</sup> According to Dower, "Kasutori culture" refers to media including magazine articles depicting "alcoholism, drug addiction, and violent as well as non-violent crimes." The term "kasutori" originates in *Kasutori shōchū*, a cheap liquor often made from dangerous ingredients including methyl alcohol. See John Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999), 107-08.

danshō, particularly those who cross-dressed as women (*josō danshō* 女装男娼), did not identify as male.<sup>3</sup>

### **Literature Review: Male prostitutes in works by Dower and McLelland**

Although male prostitutes frequently appeared as subjects of newspaper comics and *kasutori* magazines in Occupied Japan, English sources including John Dower's *Embracing Defeat* overwhelmingly focus on female sex workers, sometimes referred to as *panpan* girls, catering to occupying forces. While Dower acknowledges that male prostitutes existed and "cater[ed] to the GI trade," he contentiously claims that male prostitutes "failed to capture the public imagination."<sup>4</sup> Responding to Dower, McLelland notes that this is true "only in relation to [male prostitutes'] interaction with GIs." In other words, SCAP regulated print media depicting "inter-racial relations" between American and Japanese people but left publications depicting inter-Japanese relations untouched. McLelland points specifically to genres of fictional documentary reports called *ryōki* (猟奇 "curiosity hunting"), which describe "strange" sexual activities including male-male sex acts, and *kasutori* magazines that disseminated stories of male prostitutes cross-dressed as women.<sup>5</sup> He observes a link made by Japanese media between "the loosening of "feudal" structures" regarding bodily behavior between men and women, and ideas of "democratization" carried into Japan by American occupiers.

However, without denying McLelland's claim that Japanese media made such conceptual links, "democracy" as a concept was also an ideological site of tension and contradictions: ironically in the name of democracy, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) censored media deemed critical of the Allied powers and regulated portrayals of soldiers and GIs.<sup>6</sup> Magazines depicting "perverse" sexual acts became visible to the Japanese, not because the Allied powers encouraged liberal notions of sex, but because occupying forces under the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) largely overlooked these magazines.<sup>7</sup> And although male-female sexual relations may have been linked with "democratization," the primary sources used in this paper focus on media depictions linking male prostitutes' "perverse" and "distorted" sexual acts with Japanese society's economic, political, and physical disarray in the ashes of war.

### **Background: Male-Male eroticism in Japan leading up to 1945**

The practice of male sex work after 1945, as well as its stigma in medical and popular discourse, must be understood within the context of earlier periods. Sexual relations between men, and by extension male sex workers, were in no way new to

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<sup>3</sup> Further discussion of labels and typologies of male prostitutes can be found in Matsuda Saori, "Shō kaisetsu," in *Senryōki seikatsu yasoshi shiryō II: Fūzoku to ryūkō*, ed. Yamamoto Taketoshi (Tokyo: Shinyōsha, 2015), 20-21.

<sup>4</sup> John Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 132.

<sup>5</sup> McLelland, *Love, Sex, and Democracy*, 6, 10, 148.

<sup>6</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 405-440.

<sup>7</sup> McLelland himself suggests that SCAP censors were more concerned with media depicting "interracial relations" between American and Japanese people, rather than relations between Japanese people. McLelland, *Love, Sex, and Democracy*, 148.

postwar Japan. Texts from as early as the fifteenth century describe adult men's sexual desires for younger males, or *nyakudō* and *shudō*. During the Tokugawa period (1600-1867), the poet Ihara Saikaku celebrated and explored male-male eroticism, while male Kabuki actors known as *onnagata* took on female roles and formed romantic and sexual relationships with other men. But amid a new regime's efforts to centralize and modernize Japan after the Meiji Restoration (1868), legal attitudes towards male-male sexual relations became more punitive. As part of a wider shift toward "Western" notions of sexual norms, the national government passed penal codes including the Kaitei *ritsuryō* (改訂律令) (1873) which sentenced those "engaging in [consensual] anal intercourse" to ninety days of imprisonment. Although regulations fluctuated between tighter and looser punishments, legal texts nonetheless proscribed male-male sexual relations as "obscene" and "uncivilized."<sup>8</sup>

Changes in legal and medical discourse coincided with negative public opinion toward male-male sexual acts in popular media, as writers and cultural theorists debated the morality and respectability of male-male sexuality to establish "civilized" national norms. Male-male erotic themes began to disappear from *senryū* literature, and other writers critiqued male-male sexual acts through mythical characters like kappa who became associated with anal sex.<sup>9</sup> State policies limited the circulation of erotic literature, as the Home Ministry's censorship guidelines designated male-male sexuality as a threat to "public morals."<sup>10</sup> While authors like Mori Ōgai openly portrayed sex between male adolescents in his novel *Vita Sexualis* (1909), Kawaoka Chōfū framed the pursuit of "beautiful boys" as an obstacle to "intellectual and moral growth" in a magazine article published that same year.<sup>11</sup>

### Selling Sex in Ueno Park, 1945-48

One would be mistaken to assume that SCAP somehow unleashed society from "feudal" or restrictive sexual desires. Despite facing legal and societal pressures against their trade, male prostitutes solicited customers in urban areas including Tokyo prior to and during the war. In fact, the number of male prostitutes may have decreased before and after 1945. McLelland suggests that the *danshō* population in Osaka and Kobe may have numbered upwards of three hundred in the 1930s. But by 1947, one report alleges that these numbers dropped to "small pockets of five or six *danshō*" across Osaka.<sup>12</sup>

If the number of male prostitutes decreased, then, why did media reports on *danshō* suddenly increase after the war? A plausible reason is that both male and female sex workers became more publicly visible, as they were no longer confined to special districts. The early years following the collapse of Japan's military regime saw a rise in unregulated street prostitution, as sex work was no longer limited to "a few

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<sup>8</sup> Gregory Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600-1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 159, 192.

<sup>9</sup> Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 198.

<sup>10</sup> Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 200.

<sup>11</sup> Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 229. Kawaoka Chōfū, "Gakusei no anmen ni wadakamareru nanshoku no ichidai akufū o tsūba su," *Bōkon sekai* (August 1909), 75-78. quoted in Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 229.

<sup>12</sup> Mark McLelland, *Love, Sex, and Democracy*, 156.

closely regulated areas.”<sup>13</sup> Though their numbers remained unchanged, sex workers were no longer hidden. They were now visible to social critics and journalists alike who could comment on the male sex worker, at times in women’s attire, as a unique *après guerre* (French for “post-war”) phenomenon symbolic of disorder.

While subjected to public scrutiny and pathological evaluations by medical researchers, male sex workers remained legally unregulated immediately after the war. Several prefectures passed ordinances against prostitution beginning in 1948, but many, including the law passed in Tokyo in May of 1949, defined a sex worker as “female.” This loophole prevented male sex workers, including those who assaulted a police chief in Ueno in November of 1948, from being charged for selling their bodies. Laws continued to regulate female sex workers exclusively well after the occupation, despite efforts by some lawmakers to expand the definition of prostitution.<sup>14</sup>

### Medical discourse: Josō Danshō as symbols of postwar defeat

Amid male prostitutes’ increasing public visibility, sexologists and psychiatrists, including Minami, framed male prostitutes as a unique *après guerre* social ill. Beginning at the latest in December of 1947, Tokyo Public Welfare Bureau led a round-up of those loitering around the Ueno Park with “abnormal psychological conditions” (*suitei seishin ijyōsha* 推定精神異常者), including “paraphiliacs” and male sex workers.<sup>15</sup> The Sakuragaoka Sanatorium cooperated with the Welfare Bureau in rounding up and institutionalizing these sex workers, who were “hospitalized” (*nyūin* 入院) if not forcibly housed in the sanatorium’s facilities. As a psychiatrist on-site, Minami observed and collected data on upwards of twenty “case studies” of these sex workers in December 1947 before publishing his findings in July 1948. Minami continues a trend stemming from the Meiji period by describing homosexuality as a “disease” and social ill.<sup>16</sup> But in addition to pathologizing male prostitutes as psychologically abnormal, Minami describes male prostitutes as a unique postwar phenomenon, borne of Japan’s “wholistic instability” (*fuantei* 不安定) in the face of ideological, economic, and material collapse.<sup>17</sup>

Pflugfelder notes that Minami erroneously links male-male sex with postwar instability, as male-male eroticism “stretches backward” in Japan over centuries.<sup>18</sup> But Minami’s comments, though ahistorical, reflect a conceptual link made by psychiatrists and later by mass media between the humiliation of losing a war and sexually submissive, disempowered men. Wartime defeat disturbed Japanese national identity and ethnic pride, while images of the Imperial soldier-turned-beggar watching panpan girls arm-in-arm with American GIs undermined Japanese men’s

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<sup>13</sup> McLelland, *Love, Sex, and Democracy*, 156.

<sup>14</sup> Kovner, *Occupying Power*, 107, 195n31.

<sup>15</sup> Minami does not provide a precise date for when these roundups begin, or how long they last. However, Minami notes that he had been “observing” (*kansatsu chū*, 観察中) hospitalized *danshō* since December of 1947, implying that roundups began prior to this date. See Minami Takao, “Danshō ni Kansuru Ni, San no Seishin Igakuteki Kōsatsu.” In *Senryōki seikatsu yosōshi shiryō II: Fūzoku to ryūkō* (Tokyo: Shinyōsha, 2015), 65-75.

<sup>16</sup> Minami, “Dansho ni kansuru,” 65, 66.

<sup>17</sup> Minami, “Dansho ni kansuru,” 65.

<sup>18</sup> Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 333.

entitlement to women's sexual services. Considering their own soldiers' "brute behavior" toward other Asian women, Japanese statesmen organized comfort women for Allied soldiers as a "security" measure, mediating sexual and political passivity through a sacrificial female corpus under the pretenses of defending the nation's purity.<sup>19</sup> Though male-male eroticism had existed before, public visibility of male prostitutes in effeminate attire linked wartime defeat and emasculated men with passive, submissive expressions of sexuality. Minami extends this passive disposition beyond sexual terms to moral fiber and character to conceptually expand from individual, sexual malaise to a wider lethargy pervading over Japanese society. He describes his first case study, labeled by the initials T.T., as "shy, sluggish (*mukiryoku* 無気力), and selfish with poor grades in elementary school." He similarly describes his second patient's personality traits as capricious, soft (*nyūjaku* 柔弱), and academically inept. Moreover, both are notably described by Minami as having "effeminate" facial features and body language, with a tendency to use feminine Japanese speech.<sup>20</sup> Though crude, Minami links these male prostitutes' homosexual desires and effeminate qualities to a perceived "lack" of moral fiber and deviance from male-female social norms, and he projects the "effeminate" male prostitute's body onto a defeated and "emasculated" nation.

Observing how street prostitutes increased in Ueno around 1946, Minami further links male prostitution to postwar disorder and makes an explicit reference to "postwar" changes that enable deviant expressions of sexuality. His claims contradict the men's testimonies in his own article, as men in these cases express interest in cross-dressing from their childhood preceding World War II. Nonetheless, Minami asserts that exposure to cross-dressers in Ueno after 1945 further "stimulated" their sexual fantasies. He claims it is "easier" for men to crossdress and have sexual encounters with other men after 1945 because "postwar societal changes" (*shūsengo no seijō no hen'i* 終戦後の世情の変異) made their sexual tastes and lifestyles more accessible. Minami does not specify what "changes" affected *danshō* lifestyles, and his observations conflict with claims that male prostitutes decreased in number after 1945.<sup>21</sup> But his contentious views reflect Japan's larger postwar anxieties of collapsing social norms and a loss of morale among the ruins of air raids. By linking a perceived "increase" in cross-dressers to postwar change, he expands on his earlier remarks that abnormal expressions of sexuality result from unique postwar conditions of "ideological, economic, and material instability" (*shisōteki keizaitteki busshin ryōmen no fuantei*<sup>22</sup> 思想的経済的物心両面の不安定). In his moralizing gaze, the very sight of men in effeminate attire reflected instability and social deviance, a crude reflection of Japanese men's physical, sexual, and emotional collapse in the face of wartime destruction and surrender. If Minami's pathologizing remarks about the moral degradation of gay prostitutes speaks to a wider critique of a defeated and humiliated Japanese society, then this (mis)diagnosis of institutionalized male prostitutes reflects his own anxieties of male humiliation in a defeated and occupied Japan.

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<sup>19</sup> Takeuchi Michiko, "Pan-Pan Girls' Performing and Resisting Neocolonialism(s) in the Pacific Theater: U.S. Military Prostitution in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952," in *Over There: Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War II to the Present*, edited by Maria Hohn and Seungsook Moon (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 78-108.

<sup>20</sup> Minami, "Dansho ni kansuru," 66-69.

<sup>21</sup> Mark McLelland, *Love, Sex, and Democracy*, 156.

<sup>22</sup> Minami, "Dansho ni kansuru," 65.

### Interview transcripts of Minami's patients

As male prostitutes under Minami's gaze were suspended between binaries of masculinity and emasculation, interviews of two patients in Minami's article further inscribed their varying sexual tastes to a common label of "sexual perversion." In one interview transcript, a man states that he desires a stable and monogamous relationship with another man, while another patient enjoys "catching" (*sunadoru* 漁る) one partner after another.<sup>23</sup> Their sexual desires are affirmed within a narrow scope of a medical journal that diagnoses their sexual tastes, while varieties in the patients' preferred partners are also inscribed within the confines of sexual illness or *seibyō*. Moreover, it is unclear whether these interviews accurately render the exact words of the patients, such that the alleged sexual "pervert" speaks but is also spoken of by the editor of his testimony. The transcript ascribes sexological terms of German import to the patients' testimonies to align with German-language medical literature, such that the case study is heard only through the filter of a pathologizing medical discourse. Minami's article suggests that one patient used German words such as "*geschlechtsverkehr*" (sexual intercourse), "[z]wischen den [o]berschenkeln" (between the thighs) and "*erigieren*" (erection). But the patient's alleged familiarity with German sexual terms contradicts the article's earlier claims that this same patient allegedly has poor "memory, arithmetic abilities, decision-making skills, or societal knowledge."<sup>24</sup> Minami's transcription, then, can at best be viewed as an effort to align the language of sexological research with an international research community rather than an accurate, precise representation of the patient's original words or his subjectivity as a person. The words, then, ascribed to the patient in the case study's interview occupy an ambiguous space between two speakers, namely the interviewer and the interviewee's filter.

In light of the ambiguity around interview transcripts being truthful to the speaker or filtered through Minami's pen, medical journals blurred a line between making *danshō* "heard" or visible on one hand, and imposing a pathologizing gaze that confirms male-female sex as a norm on the other. It is unclear whether the patient himself claimed his "penis" will not "*erigieren*"—that he is incapable of an erection—or whether Minami inscribed these German terms onto his original words as if to align "*homosexualität*" with weak libido. It is also unclear whether the patient himself claims he "talks like a woman" or whether Minami once again imposes this language onto him.<sup>25</sup> Voices of patient and scribe melt into one another, such that a language normalizing male-female sexual relations emerges from this transcript. One can say that male prostitutes linger somewhere between objectivity and subjectivity, as they speak but are also spoken of by sexologists. Reduced to case studies, the male prostitutes are pathologized through a medical lens as overly "feminine" (and thus insufficiently "masculine") social deviants.

Pflugfelder suggests that early twentieth-century medical journals framed male-male sexual relations as undesirable "perversions" while also affirming their

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<sup>23</sup> Minami, "Dansho ni kansuru," 70.

<sup>24</sup> Minami, "Dansho ni kansuru," 67-68.

<sup>25</sup> Minami, "Dansho ni kansuru," 68.

existence as a result of human biology and physiology.<sup>26</sup> However, Takami's article affirms homosexuality only in a narrow scope, such that existence does not equate to tolerance or normality. According to his publications, homosexuality is something to be diagnosed, treated, and cured. And though Pflugfelder suggests that sexological journals allowed readers to "hear the 'pervert' speaking in his own voice," Minami also diagnoses the "pervert" as ill, diseased, and an "unfortunate" product of postwar collapse and humiliation.<sup>27</sup>

### The "Cock-Suck Boy" in Kasutori Magazines

Perhaps no other publications captured Japanese postwar sentiments of exhaustion, inebriation, and societal collapse better than kasutori magazines, whose subculture derives its name from a cheap, dangerous liquor. While Minami clinically linked male prostitutes in cross-dressed attire to Japanese society's wounded masculine pride, popular magazines of this kasutori genre inscribed stories of male prostitution into a print subculture associated with alcoholism, drug addiction, and criminal activity.<sup>28</sup> Issues of the pulp magazine *Hanzai Yomimono*, typically featuring nude illustrations, described sensational stories of violent crime and illicit sexual encounters, be they heterosexual or otherwise. While the truthfulness of these stories is debatable, the fact that these pieces were published and distributed speaks to a popular audience craving scandals, crimes, and tales of social deviance. What is more, depictions of teenagers selling their bodies in issues of *Hanzai* link the sex trade to wartime defeat and even pity for minors as vulnerable members of society, still emerging from war's ashes.

One section of an October 1947 issue of the *Hanzai Yomimono* is labeled "Journal of Abnormal Behavior: A tale about cock-suck boys" (変態調書:カクサクボーイの巻 *Hentai Chōsho: Kakusaku Bōi no Maki*). The first-person narrator and alleged author is Yamane Yoshio, a 16-year old boy orphaned by the war. Referring to himself as a *kakusaku bōi* (カクサクボーイ a Japanese pronunciation of "cock-suck boy"), Yamane describes his first sexual encounter with a man. He claims he was originally a proprietor for pan-pan girls. One night, a gentleman requested Yamane for a pan-pan girl, but no women were available. The man then requested a *kakusaku bōi*, of which there were none. The man then demanded that Yamane perform fellatio and countered Yamane's refusals by offering a 100-yen bill. "I finished the deed as my friends and peers taught me too," Yamane says. "But after doing this for 30 minutes to an hour, I thought, 'a hundred yen is not a bad deal.' So after that I began exclusively making money as a *kakusaku bōi*."<sup>29</sup> This story may invite pity from male readers, as Yamane sold his body to materially compensate for his economically vulnerable position after being orphaned by wartime violence. His performance of fellatio serves as a paragon of postwar dysfunction, inscribing the

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<sup>26</sup> Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 296.

<sup>27</sup> Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire*, 297.

<sup>28</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 107-08.

<sup>29</sup> Yamane Yoshio, "Hentai chōsho: Kakusaku bōi no maki: Satsu no miryoku." *Hanzai yominono*, vol. 1 no. 3, October 1947, *Hanzai kagaku sha*, Tokyo, H242. in *Senryōki seikatsu yosōshi shiryō II: Fuzoku to Ryūkō*, ed. Yamamoto Taketoshi (Tokyo: Shinyōsha, 2015), 80.

prostituted, corporal, male body to postwar narratives of a defeated and sold national body.

### 1948-52: Newspapers and male sex workers' "hidden masculinity"

However, the Ueno Park incident of 1948 could be considered a turning point in media depictions from emasculated and vulnerable symbols of postwar defeat to aggressive and violent paragons of *après guerre* social disorder. While psychiatrists such as Minami pathologized the "emasculated" and "effeminate" cross-dressed male prostitute, newspapers and magazines in the wake of this 1948 incident varied in their representations of male prostitutes from grim social commentary to comic relief, both of which reinforced sexual norms that privilege male-female relations. Unlike Minami's descriptions of *danshō* as emasculated social outcasts or the Hanzai article's pity toward a vulnerable teenage prostitute, newspapers and magazines from the 1948 brawl and onwards alternate between humorous illustrations of *danshō* on one hand, and descriptions of masculine violence on the other. What underlies these wide-ranging perceptions, be they "effeminate," "violent," or entertaining and amusing, is a curious and at times fearful gaze toward male prostitutes in the wake of wartime defeat.

On the evening of November 22nd, a police general went to Ueno Park to enforce a curfew intended to prevent streetwalkers and prostitutes from soliciting customers. He also brought photographers from *San-nyūsu* magazine, who began taking flash photos of the male prostitutes unannounced. A group of over ten prostitutes, angered at being photographed without permission and intruded upon their work by police, proceeded to "jump" the cameramen (*tobikakari* 飛びかかり) and beat them.

The author of the article added with a humorous tone that the prostitutes, though dressed like women, "unleashed their innate male essence" (*dansei no honsei wo bakkei shite* 男性の本性を發揮して) in attacking the cameramen. He details the injuries inflicted on a disempowered police force: Police General Tanaka was punched; Chief Saito was hit in the head three to four times; and several photographers had their cameras broken to pieces. The police neutralized the cross-dressed male prostitutes only after reinforcements arrived, as six male prostitutes were arrested that same night.<sup>30</sup>

McLelland frames the infamous Ueno Park incident as one that inspired humorous cartoons where *danshō* are mistaken for real women by their unsuspecting clients. For example, one comic "depicts a cross-dressed female robber hoping to target real women"—only to keep running into cross-dressed men before getting arrested.<sup>31</sup> But without negating the legacy of the Ueno Park incident in inspiring popular media, comic writers and illustrators invoked visual puns on male prostitutes' hidden masculinity well before the Ueno Park incident as well. One comic from the *Gekkan Jitsuwa* (literally "monthly true stories") published six months before the incident features a prostitute, dressed in feminine clothing,

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<sup>30</sup> "Yoru no otoko no shūdan bōkō: keishi sōkan nagurareru," *Mainichi Shinbun*, November 23, 1948. *Maisaku*.

<sup>31</sup> McLelland, *Love, Sex, and Democracy*, 157.



suddenly urinating behind a bush while standing and thus betraying her/his identity as a biological man.<sup>32</sup>

### The “man of the night” after the occupation

News articles in the late and post-occupation years continued to betray suspicion and distrust of male prostitutes, not only as weak sexual deviants but as potential aggressors. Many clients did not know these “women” were in fact men, and male prostitutes did not always disclose their biological sex during transactions. When clients found out, altercations turned violent. Two articles from a 1953 issue of the *Mainichi Newspaper* follow the stabbing of American GI John T. Pierce by a “man of the night” (*yoru no otoko* 夜の男). Pierce solicited Shimura Kōichi, who went by the feminine name “Suzuko,” and invited him into his car thinking Suzuko was a woman. But as the pair drove past Zojōji Temple Pierce in a car, Pierce realized Suzuko was a man and proceeded to punch Suzuko, before Suzuko stabbed Pierce with a hidden knife.<sup>33</sup>

Like Minami’s medical article and the Hanzai article which linked male prostitutes to postwar social disorder, the news press continued to link violent crimes by male prostitutes with the phrase *après guerre* to express social disorder. But instead of focusing on the prostitutes’ “effeminacy” or “passivity” in performing the woman, these articles expanded upon the ways their “masculine” energies of violence and aggression coincided with “perverse” sexual desires. Another *Mainichi* article from April of 1953 reports the murder of Shiraki Eiichi by his male lover Hiyoshi Shōshiro. Shiraki befriended male prostitutes during his life, one of whom grieves Shiraki’s murder in an interview, and frequented them with Hiyoshi before being murdered. The article’s subheading, “An apure posse with distorted sexual tastes” (*yuganda ‘sei’ no apure zoku* 歪んだ「性」のアプレ属) alludes to *après-guerre* and relates postwar disorder to both the victim and perpetrator’s alleged sexual disorder. Notable here is the term “distorted” (*yuganda* 歪んだ), a term that may be used in contrast with what is “correct,” “upright,” or “proper.” This notion, therefore, of “improper” sexual tastes is linked in the article to conditions of *après guerre* chaos.<sup>34</sup>

From 1948 to 1953, these articles reporting violence by gay men and prostitutes describe *danshō* not simply as effeminate or emasculated men, but violent and aggressive outcasts who harbor an “innate” masculine aggression. On one hand, one can acknowledge that some male prostitutes withheld information about their biological sex, and this lack of information leads to considerations of improper consent and potential rape by the prostitute. Considering how many (though not all) cross-dressed *danshō* refused to disclose their biological sex, the *danshō* sex trade raises ethical questions about informed consent between the client and servicer of sexual acts. At the same time, this does not minimize how *danshō* during the Allied Occupation were a popular symbol of post-war chaos. Although American and

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<sup>32</sup> Kojima Teiji, “Kagama to shōben,” *Gekkan Jitsuwa*, volume 2, April 1948, Jitsuwa Shinbunsha, Tokyo, G184, in *Senryōki seikatsu yosōshi shiryō II: Fūzoku to Ryūkō*, ed. Taketoshi Yamamoto (Tokyo: Shinyōsha, 2015), 79.

<sup>33</sup> “Beijin, Sensōji de sasareru,” *Mainichi Shinbun*, November 12 1953, *Maisaku*. “Yoru no otoko ‘Suzuko’ wo taiho: Miyaburare tsui ni sasu,” *Mainichi Shinbun*, November 13 1953, *Maisaku*.

<sup>34</sup> “Kawaigarareta noni korosu: yuganda ‘sei’ no apurezoku,” *Mainichi Shinbun*, April 3, 1953. *Maisaku*.

English-language scholarship expands on panpan women and female sex workers in the wake of Japan's postwar defeat, discussions of sex work in the occupation would be incomplete without the panpan's male counterparts. Whether for their meekness or their violence, male prostitutes were described by media and medical practitioners as epitomes of postwar societal collapse.

### **In reply to McLelland**

While acknowledging danshō's visibility in print, one would be mistaken to equate kasutori renditions of male prostitutes to empowerment of male-male eroticism or queer sexual desires. One must also consider that these magazines were typically written for a heteronormative male audience and projected an objectifying gaze on male prostitutes as sexual anomalies. McLelland argues that sexuality was the "source of popular resistance to both Occupation and Japanese government attempts to establish normative, state-sanctioned parameters for desire, practice, and identification."<sup>35</sup> However, this statement overlooks how male prostitutes appeared in print media frequently as tricksters duping their male clients, often to elicit laughter from audiences and invite an objectifying gaze and fascination toward those with "perverse"—hence, ryōki—sexual tastes. Although male prostitutes often did trick their clients or refuse to disclose their gender to unsuspecting clients, this narrative neglects how some clients, both male and female, also actively sought out male sex workers. As mentioned previously, medical case studies of cross-dressed male prostitutes further stigmatized sex workers as reflections of postwar ideological collapse and moral degradation, while some ryōki articles took this a step further in claiming that the "trauma of Japan's defeat had emasculated Japanese men, leading to an increase in passive male homosexuality and a predisposition toward masochism."<sup>36</sup>

As an extension of Michel Foucault's assertion that yes to sex does not mean no to power, yes to queer sex does not mean no to heteronormative power.<sup>37</sup> Arguably, male prostitutes experienced a dual liberation and alienation: cross-dressed prostitutes and their clients created their own spaces to engage in non-heterosexual activities, but media portrayed their activities as "perversions" and "paraphiliacs" at worst and peculiar case studies at best. To claim that popular media affirmed male-male sexuality fails to consider how male prostitutes were sensationalized, othered, and linked to postwar disorder and chaos. As psychiatrists, journalists, and low-brow magazine writers tied together both sexual and societal "disorder" in the wake of wartime surrender, they implicitly linked male-female relations to a "civil" and "upright" pre-war social order.

### **Conclusion**

This paper explored the following question: What can media representations of male prostitutes in Japan during the Allied Occupation (1945-1952) tell historians about Japan's postwar period? I argued that medical and popular media mutually

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<sup>35</sup> McLelland, *Love, Sex, and Democracy*, 149.

<sup>36</sup> McLelland, *Love, Sex, and Democracy*, 154.

<sup>37</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 100.

linked “abnormal” expressions of male-male eroticism to societal disorder in postwar Japan. On one hand, psychiatric journal articles connected the “emasculated” male prostitute to the “unstable” and “defeated” Japanese nation, while low-brow popular magazines invoked curiosity and pity toward male minors selling sex as reflections of postwar hardship. Finally, the Ueno Park incident of November 1948 was introduced as an inflection point in media discourses, where male prostitutes were portrayed as vagrants with a hidden “masculine” energy beneath their effeminate disguise.

Sex work is not exclusively female, and media portrayals of prostitution on a gendered spectrum can reveal how the Allied Occupation was both “democratic” and restrictive, particularly for non-heterosexual members of Japanese society. Studies of male and queer sex work in postwar Japan can challenge and destabilize gendered binaries of female-male and occupied-occupier, such that the Allied occupation did not just politically and sexually “conquer” Japanese society. As demonstrated in the media analyzed in this article, medical researchers and journalists alike inscribed their postwar sentiments of wounded masculine pride onto male sex workers sleeping with other men. For further research, a comparative study on the media depictions of *danshō* in postwar Japan, and *Bahnhof Boys*—teenage male prostitutes—in postwar Berlin, can provide insight into conceptual links in society between postwar chaos and male-male eroticism. Moreover, a closer study of first hand testimonies of “queer”<sup>38</sup> communities can provide a fresh alternative to pathologizing and sensationalizing media accounts.

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<sup>38</sup> I use “queer” with air-quotes as the term is somewhat anachronistic to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Japan.

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