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Panpan: Streetwalking in Occupied Japan

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This article explores sex markets in Occupied Japan. These operated under a legal regime distinct from traditional pleasure quarters and provided wage labor. There, streetwalkers, or panpan, had unprecedented control over their work. Many came from the middle class and formed women-led gangs that resembled criminal syndicates. The former especially concerned social scientists and mothers in postwar Japan. Calls to sanitize public space to protect Japanese children increasingly dominated public discourse about the U.S. military bases. By 1953 new regulations forced panpan into brothels where they lost the control over their labor they had enjoyed during the Occupation (1945–1952). This article also suggests that reactions to base prostitution in Occupied Japan paralleled those in the United States during the war.

Key words: prostitution, U.S. military, Occupied Japan, sex work, women workers, children’s rights

Pleasure quarters of the past had order, they were out of public view. The word “licensed prostitute” (shōgi) does not convey the social ills, disorder and seduction bound up with the term prostitution. Rather, people think all those things apply to the word panpan.1

During the U.S. Occupation, the Japanese used the word panpan to refer to prostitutes who violated the conventions of a well-ordered sex industry by selling sex in the open: on the streets, in movie theaters, in bars and cabarets. This visibility jarred the public and was a departure from the past. Streetwalkers had occupied a specific place in elaborate taxonomies of prostitutes, although not a prominent one. The modern licensed system and its Tokugawa predecessor had kept streetwalkers at the bottom of the hierarchy, below the various ranks of geisha and prostitutes working in teahouses, brothels, and inns. References to streetwalkers in

print media are scant, perhaps because, as cultural historian Inoue Shōichi noted, Japanese men preferred indoor sexual liaisons. The preference was so entrenched that men found ways to engage prostitutes away from the eyes of strangers even in the days and weeks after Japan’s surrender. American servicemen brought with them a new attitude toward “the space of love”—one that encouraged street prostitution.2

Panpan drew criticism and admiration for their exuberant sexuality. Kanzaki Kiyoshi explained: “The street girl (sutoriito gaaru) walks in daytime, arms linked with American servicemen, unapologetically bold. She has no scruples about what others think. Her conduct is different from [street prostitutes] of the past.”3 Kanzaki, a prolific writer on prostitution in the postwar era, distilled the anxiety felt by many Japanese about the public nature of panpan eroticism, which was a departure from, and a threat to, the customs of the brothel.

The street market for sex was run by women. It coexisted with a vast regulated and quasi-regulated market based on brothels controlled by proprietors. Unlike prostitutes confined to brothels by law, force, or a combination of both, panpan moved freely, monopolized negotiations with customers, and had no obligation to split their earnings with a manager. In this sense, they dictated the terms of their labor, making such women an anomaly in Japanese and modern world history. Despite the policies of Japanese authorities and the Supreme Commander for Allied Powers (SCAP) designed to restrict them, panpan attained economic power and the status of cultural icons.

Scholars have focused on the ways in which SCAP and Japanese authorities cooperated to manage prostitutes for American

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2. For more on sexual customs, see Inoue Shōichi, Ai no kukan [The space of love] (Tokyo, 1999).

3. Kanzaki Kiyoshi, “Gaishōron” [On streetwalkers], in Kanzaki Kiyoshi, Yoru no kichi [Base at night] (Tokyo 1953), 216. For more on taxonomies, see Sarah Kovner, “Base Cultures: Sex Workers and Servicemen in Occupied Japan,” Journal of Asian Studies, 68 (2009), 777–804. Taxonomies of prostitutes were not unique to the Occupation. For reports of streetwalkers in Japan before the war, see Watanabe Yōji, Gaishō no shakaigakuteki kenkyū [Sociological research on streetwalkers] (Tokyo, 1950), 18–20, and Tanabe Shigeko, “Biishōfu to hōritsu” [Prostitutes and the law], Fujin no sekai [Century of women], 8 (Feb. 1949; 1995) 123–129. Japanese names in the text and notes are written in Japanese style, with the family name first, except when a name is cited otherwise in an English title.
forces and, more broadly, to control the sexuality of Japanese women. However tight their bonds might have been, and however traumatic “the structural violence of the Occupation on women,” as historian Hirai Kazuko called it, the U.S.-Japanese coalition could not stop women from building a vibrant street market for sex during the first half of the Occupation.4

Streetwalkers made up the largest and best-known contingent of the prostitutes known as panpan.5 Another contingent included the prostitutes recruited by the Japanese state to “comfort” the occupiers.6 The construction of brothels for the U.S. forces began within days of Japan’s surrender, when the Higashikuni Cabinet asked prominent brothel keepers to prepare for the arrival of occupying forces. Brothel keepers formed the Recreation and Amusement Association (RAA).7 This consortium of brothels, cabarets, and beer halls opened in time for the landing of the

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4. In “RAA to akasen,” Hirai Kazuko asked, “How did structural violence work on women who made it possible to frame the Occupation as a ‘success’ and ‘peaceful’?” She argued that violence worked through the Recreation and Amusement Association (RAA) and quasi-legal pleasure quarters, which opened after the RAA brothels shut down. Hirai Kazuko, “RAA to akasen: Atami ni okeru tenkai” [The RAA and the red-line districts: The development at Atami], in Okuda Akiko, ed., Senryō to sei: sessaku, jittai, kyōshō (Tokyo, 2007), 79–118.

5. The number of streetwalkers varied by year and by who did the counting. Kanzaki Kiyoshi claimed panpan numbered 50,000 in 1950. The Ministry of Justice counted 30,000 in 1957, a year when the total number of prostitutes was pegged at 130,000. Both figures likely underestimated the total, for streetwalkers moved frequently and may have chosen not to identify with the label. See Ministry of Justice, Materials Concerning Prostitution and its Control in Japan (Tokyo, 1957).

6. Hirai used panpan to refer to women who worked in the RAA or red-line districts. Using panpan in this way highlights the coordination between Japanese proprietors, bureaucrats, and SCAP, but it does not clarify the realm of the streetwalker and her importance to the economy and society. See Hirai, “RAA to akasen,” and Hirai, “Nihon senryō wo sei de minaosu” [A new look at the Occupation of Japan through sex], Rekishigaku Kenkyū, 500 (2004), 107–130.

first U.S. forces at the end of August 1945. SCAP closed the wildly popular RAA brothels in March 1946 due to high rates of sexually transmitted disease. Some RAA prostitutes then moved into brothels in pleasure quarters opened to servicemen.\(^8\)

Others joined streetwalkers already at work. While SCAP and the Japanese authorities were building both RAA brothels and public health policies to regulate the sexuality of Japanese women during the volatile first six months of the Occupation, women workers themselves were constructing a street market for sex. Kanzaki Kiyoshi reckoned that the first streetwalkers came from the ranks of the homeless who lived in the Tokyo subway system. Other contemporary reports confirm that the street market emerged in this time of flux. U.S. forces moved into Tachikawa air force base on the outskirts of Tokyo in early September 1945. Within three weeks 120 prostitutes joined them, apparently former geisha and “comfort women” of Japanese soldiers. Panpan working in Yokohama’s parks numbered as many as 2,000 to 3,000 in November. Women struggling to survive through the earliest months of the Occupation developed the customs of the street market for sex, which became the realm of the panpan.\(^9\)

American authorities freed prostitutes from contractual prostitution in brothels in January 1946 with the bold policy stated in SCAPIN 642, but this did not dampen their enthusiasm for managing prostitution behind the scenes. The closure of the RAA brothels

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8. This article uses “pleasure quarters” as a general term for districts of sexual commerce run by small business proprietors and “brothel prostitute” for a prostitute who worked for a proprietor. Brothel prostitutes had many names and different degrees of recognition from authorities (or none at all). I argue that, from a labor history perspective, the differences between streetwalkers and brothel prostitutes as a class were greater than the differences among brothel prostitutes because brothel prostitutes were controlled by proprietors who often doubled as creditors.

9. Hirai argued that the closure of the RAA created panpan. See Hirai, “Sei de minaosu,” 109; however, the street market developed in the first six months of the Occupation, in spite of the formation of the RAA and SCAP’s public health policies. Observations of streetwalkers in the first months of the Occupation come from Kanzaki, “Gaishōron,” 221; Nishida Minoru, Kichi no Onna [Women of the base] (Tokyo 1953), 123–124; and a Kanagawa prefectural official, quoted in Izuoka Manabu, “Kariikomi to seibyōin: sengo Kanagawa no seiseisaku” [Mass arrests and sexually transmitted disease hospitals: Postwar Kanagawa sex policy], in Okuda, ed., Sensyō to Sei, 120–121. In addition, there were streetwalkers in Tachikawa and Hibiya in Tokyo from September 1945, according to Duus, Haisha no okurimono, cited in Hayakawa, “Senryōgun heishi no ian to baibaiyuni no saihen.”
the following March began a new phase of cooperation between SCAP and the Japanese to confine prostitution to areas that had served as licensed pleasure quarters before the war. The police named these areas the red- and blue-line districts. These plans did not deter panpan or stymie the growth of street prostitution. Police affidavits, reportage, and studies by frustrated scholars show that panpan undermined plans to restrict sexual commerce to businesses in designated neighborhoods. Former RAA prostitutes who turned to the streets to make ends meet thus entered an already vibrant marketplace, created by women who had ignored the orders issued by the U.S. and Japanese authorities after Japan's surrender.

The Supreme Commander himself recognized the limitations of policy as a tool for containing “fraternization,” a word that had replaced the better known “f word” for sexual intercourse, at least in Occupied Germany. An aide to Gen. Douglas MacArthur recalled:

Suddenly we passed a G.I. embracing a Japanese girl, hotly. “Look at that,” the General said. “They keep trying to get me to stop all this Madame Butterflying around, too. I won’t do it. My father told me never to give an order unless I was certain it would be carried out. I wouldn’t issue a no-fraternization order for all the tea in China.”

Scenes like this might have irked the Supreme Commander, but they moved Japanese citizens to action. Newly enfranchised women claimed the mandate to protect neighborhoods that had heretofore been free of prostitution from the incursion of streetwalkers. They used the language of “children’s rights,” a new way of talking about public morals that emerged along with the panpan.

**Panpan in the immediate postwar period**

Panpan and their foreign customers connected in the gray area between dating and prostitution in bars and public spaces. This was in line with the practices of U.S. military personnel stateside and in other parts of the world. Conceived of as female

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“delinquency” and “promiscuity,” casual prostitution near bases in the continental United States was regarded as a threat to national defense preparedness during World War II. Worriers singled out the motivations of young women: “Camps and war-production areas have acted as magnets upon young girls who seek adventure, romance, marriage and economic opportunity.” A supervisor in the Federal Security Agency opined that “[They] come because they are escaping a past blindly, caring nothing for an uncertain future, anxious to live only in the present.”

The U.S. military had grappled with prostitution near military installations for decades and had arrived at no consensus. Navy Medical Corps captain Dr. Joel T. Boone laid out one popular view: “If we bear in mind that our armed forces are sexually aggressive [and] they must be if they are going to be good soldiers and sailors . . . [w]e can only hope to control and educate.” However, Boone continued, even if prostitution were regulated, “We cannot stop the so-called amateur competition [from] the girl on the street who likes a man in uniform.” These descriptions of American women in war time could have been written by any one of the self-appointed experts on panpan once streetwalkers became a familiar sight and topic for analysis in Occupied Japan.

Judging from the orderly establishment, recruiting, and operation of the RAA in the fall of 1945, one might conclude that the Japanese had a handle on social conditions at the end of the war. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Confusion reigned. Civilians and military personnel alike found themselves alone and far from home when the Emperor’s thin voice announced defeat on August 15. The incendiary bombing campaigns that the Allies had waged since March leveled over half of all structures in the metropolises of Tokyo and Osaka, and dozens of other cities suffered comparable or worse destruction. Aerial bombings of urban centers had rendered 9 million Japanese homeless. The housing situation stood to worsen before it improved because approximately 6.5 million civilians and military personnel awaited repatriation from Japan’s overseas territories. Adding to the chaos,

the first-ever atomic bomb attacks reduced Hiroshima and Nagasaki to rubble on August 6 and 9.13

Young women slipped through tears in the social fabric that had held them close to their families, even though many had worked away from home in factories as state-mandated conscript labor (teishintai) or as servants in the households of the well-to-do. Morishita Yasuko from Hiroshima told police that she was working in a Kobe factory as a conscript when she learned that her only living parent, her mother, had died in the bombing of Hiroshima. Like many others, she made her way to Kyoto, one of the few cities left standing. Tsuda Keiko reported that she headed for Osaka’s massive Tennōji black market after her parents perished in a Kobe air raid. In early 1946, SCAP prohibited travel to cities in order to curb the number of refugees like these. Japanese authorities cooperated by restricting rice rations to individuals who showed proof of a local address.14

Regulations did not deter refugees like Morishita and Tsuda who had nothing to lose. The cities also drew the homeless, who lived in extralegal limbo in the shadow of black markets where refugees, legal residents, and comparatively well-off rural families bartered and sold a range of goods from produce to treasured heirlooms.15 This was a precarious life for women in particular; unattached men, by contrast, had the option of joining the syndicates that ran the markets. Tsuda, for instance, worked as a cook in Tennōji’s black market for three months without receiving any pay. Orphaned and without proof of legal residence in the city, she turned to streetwalking.

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14. For the stories of Morishita Yasuko and Tsuda Keiko, see “Gaishō no kōutsusho” [Affidavits of streetwalkers], in Takenaka Katsuo and Sumiya Etsuji, eds., Gaishō jittai to sono shuki (Tokyo, 1949), 222 and 234, respectively. See Nishida, Kichi no onna, 20, 199, 203. SCAPIN 563 outlawed travel from rural areas to cities of 100,000 or more, unless one had permission to travel and proof of a place to live. Prohibitions on travel extended from early 1946 to January 1949. Rural inhabitants were not issued ration cards. See Takemae Eiji, Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and Its Legacy (London, 2000).

15. An estimated 300,000 people worked in Tokyo-area black markets run by criminal syndicates (tekiya) in 1946. See Ino Kenji, “Yamichi kaihō-ku koto hajime” [Start of black market free zones], in Ino Kenji, ed., Tokyo yamichi koboshi (1978; Tokyo, 1999). For more on the culture of black markets, see Dower, Embracing Defeat.
Policies cobbled together worked at cross-purposes. This meant that young women uprooted by the war’s calamities faced bleak employment prospects in the formal sector. Ota Hatsue told surveyors a common story. She decided to leave an unstable home headed by her stepmother and sick father; in exchange for a ticket to Kyoto, she sold her belongings, including her residency papers. A private work agency (kuchiireya) referred her to a coffee shop, which refused to hire her because she lacked the residency papers necessary for rice rations. Japan had never been congenial to young women without family ties. Even before the war, orphans and single women carried with them the taint of “unrespectability.” The new residency requirement gave employers a legal excuse to shun them. Soon another policy swelled the number of unemployed women. Businesses summarily dismissed women workers to create vacancies for men returning from overseas. Those fortunate enough to hold onto their jobs earned an average of 45 percent of male wages. In these conditions, many women chose streetwalking.\(^{16}\)

Openness was a hallmark of the street market, distinguishing it from the closed and formal world of the pleasure quarters. Becoming a streetwalker was comparatively easy. Women could observe panpan in parks and train stations to learn what the work entailed. Pleasure quarters, by contrast, discouraged casual female passers-by. In addition, brothel keepers demanded that prostitutes sign a contract and sometimes required a guarantor. Despite the apparent abolition of contractual prostitution by SCAPIN 642 in January 1946, as well as other American changes to Japanese law, no revision changed the law of contracts. Japanese appellate courts had upheld commitments made by women and their guardians since the turn of the century. This relatively consistent case law enabled brothel keepers to continue recruiting indentured prostitutes even after the war.\(^{17}\) Unlike brothels, the streets made no such legally binding demands of women.

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16. For Ota Hatsue, see “Gaishō no kōjutsusho,” 264–265. For more on unemployment, see Imaoka Kenichirō and Bō Eiko, “Tokushu fujin no seikatsu to mondai” [Special women’s lifestyle and problems], in Ôkôchi Kazuo, ed., Sengo shakai no jittai bunseki (Tokyo, 1950), 290.

17. It would take more than a proclamation by SCAP or even an imperial order to dissolve a legally binding loan. Not until the Japanese Supreme Court ruled in 1955 to nullify the loan component (shôhisha taishaku) of prostitutes’ labor contracts did prostitutes begin to gain the upper hand in negotiations with brothel keepers. For one view of Meiji indentured prostitution, see J. Mark Ramseyer, “Indentured Prostitution

Streetwalkers in Occupied Japan
Easing the transition to streetwalking were female acquaintances, rather than guardians, the usual bridge into prostitution. The orphans Morishita and Tsuda began entertaining American servicemen at the suggestion of friends. Tsuda reported that she was fed up with life in the Tennōji black market when she happened to meet a woman working as a panpan. Before long, Tsuda moved into the same inn as her acquaintance to entertain servicemen. From Tsuda’s perspective, she left an unstable job for an “interesting” and well-paying one.

Like Tsuda in Osaka, Kawada Hiroko in Kyoto claimed her introduction to streetwalking came from a female acquaintance. She told surveyors that she had admired the style of panpan and had studied English in order to converse with G.I.s. A chance encounter in Kyoto Station drew her into the trade. Upon finding a lost wallet, Kawada pursued its owner, who turned out to be a panpan. The grateful woman thanked Kawada by providing introductions to foreign men.18

These kinds of transitory relationships also sprouted among women in hospitals where police quarantined suspected panpan. Hospital inmates had been swept up in “catches” (katchi), which entailed indiscriminate arrests of women in public places on suspicion of prostitution. The Japanized English neologism “katchi” was a word in the patois of G.I.s and panpan, and of the Japanese and American authorities who implemented the policy. U.S.-Japanese cooperation on the problem of “venereal disease” began early in the Occupation. On October 16, 1945, SCAP instructed the Japanese government to test sex workers who had contact with foreign troops. The Welfare Ministry responded by preparing the Venereal Disease Prevention Law, which gave local authorities wide latitude in whom they chose to test. It went into effect on December 1.19

Unlike the prostitutes in brothels and the RAA, street prostitutes moved freely and could evade the testing order. At the end of January 1946, military police and their Japanese counterparts

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18. For the story of Kawada Hiroko, see “Gaishō no kōjutsusho,” 227.
19. Fujino, Sei no kokka kanri [State management of sex] (Tokyo, 2001), 177.
began rounding up women in public places. The first raid netted eighteen women in Tokyo. A much larger haul followed in March, in which 300 women were arrested. Police sent the women they arrested to hospitals designated for “medical” testing. “Virgins” earned automatic release, although one doctor admitted that it was hard to make a conclusive determination of virginity. He and his colleagues relied on women’s dress and manner of speech to select which women to release. Women who could not convince doctors of their “sexual purity” were held for three days in the hospital. Carriers of sexually transmitted diseases remained hospitalized until their symptoms subsided.

Catches began to draw criticism by the fall of 1946 for the frequent, callous arrest of “innocent” women. The arrest and confinement to a hospital of a member of a Tokyo-area labor union prompted the formation of the Protect the Women Association, which protested American treatment of “respectable” Japanese women. From the reactions of the women who sold sex, it is clear that panpan used the hospitals for their own purposes. Police affidavits show that hospitals became sites for networking and places where novices learned the ways of veterans. The stories of incarcerated women show the ways they subverted the authorities’ desire to reduce sexually transmitted disease and street prostitution.

One social welfare expert lamented that women used their time in the hospital to “practice their ugly ‘special’ skills and expand their knowledge.” Panpan would have agreed with his assessment. Hamamura Shōko, a Kyoto woman, had a matter-of-fact explanation: “If I’m going to be arrested even though I’m not fooling around with foreigners, I might as well try it.” Upon her release, she asked a woman she had met in the hospital to introduce her to a foreigner. Sunose Katsuko learned enough as a patient

23. The arrest of “innocent” women spurred the creation of the “Protect the Women” organization in November 1946. See Koikari, The Pedagogy of Democracy, especially chapter 5.
to give her the confidence to quit her poorly paid job in a dance school for life on the streets. 24

Hospitals were a well-known outpost of panpan society. Mizoguchi Kenji set a key scene there in his 1948 film Women of the Night. The scene opens as a woman in a group of panpan swaggers through the front doors of a hospital and announces to the male guard, “I’m back, old man!” Such familiarity between hospital staff and patients appears to have had a basis in reality. The Kanagawa Shim bun exposed the freewheeling atmosphere of one hospital, where police officers danced with patients, and men’s and women’s laughter lasted into the night. 25 Kanzaki Kiyoshi suggested that hospitals served as a sort of haven from harassment in 1950, when Tokyo streetwalkers got wind of an imminent catch and chose to enter Yoshiwara Hospital for its duration. 26 Given the earnings of panpan, these women calculated the risk of arrest versus the costs of convalescence and chose a hospital stay over leaving the streets for other kinds of sex work.

These indiscriminate arrests did not necessarily reflect arrogance on the part of the occupying forces toward a defeated people. When it came to “protecting the troops,” the American public and policymakers alike had disregarded the civil rights of American women throughout World War II. With the “amateur” in mind, Congress passed the May Act in 1941, making prostitution “within a reasonable distance” of military encampments on American soil...
a federal crime. The Federal Bureau of Investigation invoked the act to arrest 331 women near Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and Camp Forrest, Tennessee, in 1943. According to a Gallup poll, U.S. citizens agreed that American women who engaged in casual sex with military personnel deserved stiff fines and jail time. The May Act thus served as a precedent for the “catches” in Occupied Japan. 27

Also in 1941, five religious organizations came together to provide “wholesome recreational activities” and to “creat[e] the right kind of leisure environment” for U.S. military personnel. They founded the United Services Organization (USO), perhaps best known for its long relationship with comedian Bob Hope. From its inception, the USO aimed to deter casual prostitution. Dr. Janet Fowler Nelson cut to the chase: “To be quite blunt, neither are venereal diseases contracted, nor babies conceived, on the post. Nor by any stretch of the imagination can responsibility for the less happy aspects of sex in wartime be fairly assigned only to the men in military service” (emphasis in original). The Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) went on to recruit hostesses and “vouched for and investigated [their] character and integrity.” 28 The USO was to be a Recreation and Amusement Association without sex.

These domestic policies, like the policies developed by SCAP in cooperation with the Japanese, attempted to reduce sexually transmitted disease among U.S. military personnel. U.S. military brass knew disease was endemic and not unique to Japan. The U.S. Navy reported that “venereal disease” accounted for more work

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days lost than any other ailment in twenty-five out of the forty-six years since 1900 and that it placed second only to influenza in the other years. During World War II, the rate soared. After seizing the Philippines, MacArthur saw the rate of infection jump from 5 per 1,000 to 143 per 1,000 in six months, and this increase was but a fraction of the rise in the European Theater. Over the two months following V-E day, over 43,000 servicemen—“nearly the equivalent of three full infantry divisions”—contracted a sexually transmitted disease at a rate called “the highest in military history.”

To reduce these rates, SCAP in Japan and Congress in the United States implemented measures to control women’s sexuality. The risk of arrest was greatest for women who dressed in provocative ways and socialized with troops out of doors. Pundits tried to pinpoint what caused this “abnormal” behavior among women, but they overlooked the biggest draw to the streets: money.

**Economic power of *panpan***

Streetwalking paid more than a woman could earn in virtually any other occupation. Tokyo *panpan* could make upwards of 40,000 yen per month, compared to formal-sector employees who took home an average of 2,200 yen for office work and even less for factory work. The potential for steady high earnings made streetwalking an attractive choice in the midst of runaway inflation and layoffs that targeted skilled and semi-skilled women workers.

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31. Watanabe Yōji reported that in 1949 Kyoto *panpan* made an average of 14,570 yen, while in Tokyo they made from 26,700 to 40,000 yen per month. *Panpan* made far more than other sex workers. Watanabe figured the gross earnings of the brothel prostitute equaled the net revenue of *panpan*, and the average monthly pay for first-class café “waitresses” and dancers came to just half of the take of *panpan*. Watanabe, *Gaishō*, 145–146, 175–177, 118. See also Enokimoto Takashio, “Baishōfu no shakai...
Cash paid upfront appealed to *panpan*, as did the items soldiers bartered for sex. *Panpan* enjoyed access to material comforts like silk stockings and chocolate. This access colored their relationships with other Japanese, including the police. A *panpan* in Kyoto declared that the police were “Absolute beggars. All it takes is for them to see your face and they start asking, ‘Hey! Got any chocolate? Give me some cigarettes. Give me some soap!’” Conventional wisdom had it that army servicemen often paid for sex with chocolate, canned goods, and trinkets. In the disappointed words of a *panpan* new to the naval port of Yokosuka, “The army has camps, so army personnel bring money and goods. The sailors bring only cash.”

Consumer items unavailable in Japan except at post exchanges made their way into black markets via *panpan*. Also appearing in black markets were the personal belongings of G.I.s and sentimental gifts bestowed upon favorite *panpan* before the G.I.s ended a tour of duty. During one tearful farewell, a young soldier thrust a wristwatch into a woman’s hand. Once he was gone, she dried her eyes and wondered aloud to a friend how much the watch would fetch on the black market. Payments in cash and in kind left *panpan* flush with hard currency, giving them an edge when searching for housing. In a complete reversal of pre-war conventions, homeowners now welcomed single women as boarders.

The housing market around Tachikawa air base in Tokyo was described by resident and *panpan* advocate Nishida Minoru. Nishida, an author of children’s books by profession, spent the war working with youths in China on anti-opium projects. After he returned to Japan in 1946, he became an informal ally to Tachikawa’s streetwalkers. His account, published in 1953, offers an even-handed look at the lives of streetwalkers without the judgmental tone of his contemporaries like the scholars Sumiya Etsuji and Watanabe Yōji.

eisei” [Social hygiene of prostitutes], in Takenaka and Sumiya, eds., *Gaishō: jittai to sono shuki*.
32. See “Gaishō no kōjutsusho,” 232.
According to Nishida, panpan became favored tenants of landlords. At first, only the poorest of residents, usually returnees from mainland Asia or victims of war-time calamities, would rent to them, but from 1947 on, landlords moved in and began to cater to the women’s needs. Signs plastered along the streets of residential neighborhoods proclaimed “Rooms Available: Young women only.” These landlords turned away formerly sought-after “reputable” tenants like male students and salaried workers because panpan could pay higher rents.35

As an indicator of the economic power and autonomy of panpan, and wholly unlike the brothel prostitute who worked for a proprietor for several months, a year, or more, a panpan did not stay anywhere for long. Short-term rentals suited her needs as she fluctuated between the roles of bataafurai and onrii, Japanized English for “butterfly” and “only one.” The “butterfly” took many customers, while the “only” was mistress of one individual (although some “onlies” took additional customers on the sly). The “butterfly” lived in inns with other women. If she fought with the other tenants, she moved. If she found a patron, she became an “only” and moved into private rooms. When a relationship ended, the “only” returned to an inn to work as a “butterfly” until she could find another patron.36

Innkeepers had no choice but to accept mobility as a feature of the market. It was impossible to impose long-term financial obligations on women who, without a legal or familial imperative to stay put, might suddenly disappear. In the words of Takenaka Katsuo, coeditor of a study of streetwalkers with economic historian Sumiya Etsuji: “[Panpan] have no overseers or bosses who press them for cash or oppress them with status (mibunteki) obligations. They are alone but they are free. They have a workplace, which, though insecure, allows them to keep all of their earnings.”37 With plenty of money and bound by no obligations to family or employers, panpan dissatisfied with a situation could simply move. This was a privilege few women enjoyed.

35. In 1948 landlords took 2,000–2,500 yen per month from panpan tenants. See ibid., 23, 34, 78. See also Watanabe, Gaishō, 182.
36. According to Watanabe’s survey, only 20 percent of panpan lived in one place for more than six months; Watanabe, Gaishō, 183. For “butterfly” and “only” distinction, see Nishida, Kichi no onna, 59–60.
37. See Takenaka Katsuo, “Gaishō no chōsa ni itsuite” [Concerning the survey of streetwalkers], in Takenaka and Sumiya, eds., Gaishō: jittai to sono shuki, 8.
New roles as *panpan*

Like the Japanese general public polled in a 1949 national survey, scholars compared streetwalkers to brothel prostitutes and found them lacking. Sumiya Etsuji wrote:

Compared to the *panpan*, the character of the brothel prostitute is generally docile, feudal and submissive. Her moral consciousness comes from business instinct and thus is very low; however, it is not as low as the moral consciousness of she who also sells her chastity, the *panpan*. The lack of inhibition and beastliness of the *panpan* are almost never found in the brothel prostitute.

Sumiya acknowledged that *panpan* had much in common with “normal women” because they enjoyed the benefits of education. Nevertheless, the combination of education and outrageous behavior put *panpan* in a “third” category all their own.

Sumiya backed his thesis with examples that left him deeply troubled. He came into contact with prostitutes held in Kyoto’s Heian Hospital. He offered one of them as an example of a woman who transgressed the categories of the “normal woman” and the “illiterate, feudal, and docile” brothel prostitute: One day the woman hung from her window and bellowed like Tarzan, pleased with herself. On another occasion, Sumiya passed a group of *panpan* who paid him and his colleagues no mind, continuing to eat snacks and tell coarse stories while lying on the floor, something “of course you’d never seen normal women or even brothel prostitutes do.” What bothered him most was that *panpan* denied him the respect he had come to expect from women. Sumiya called their “bad manners” a lack of shame and diagnosed their indifference to his status a consequence of postwar conditions.

Data corroborate the perception that streetwalkers were unlike brothel prostitutes. They appear to have come from different backgrounds: In the late 1940s only 10 percent of all Japanese women (and 9 percent of brothel prostitutes) graduated from

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38. Kokuritsu Yoron Chōsajo, ed., *Fûki ni kansuru seron chôsa*, cited in note 1, found that 51 percent of respondents had a negative opinion of *panpan*, compared to only 27 percent for brothel prostitutes.


women’s higher schools, but one-third of streetwalkers had done so or had attained a higher degree. Also suggestive of the relatively comfortable upbringings of *panpan*, just half of streetwalkers cited “economic hardship” as the reason they entered the trade, compared to 72 percent of brothel prostitutes.41

Another 22 percent of *panpan* summarized their motivations with the word *yakekuso*, or desperation, which usually meant discord at home. The streets were absorbing victims of a new kind of poverty: women estranged from their families. *Panpan* in Tokyo reported that they had taken up life on the streets without the consent of their parents or relatives, often after a quarrel. Morishita had run away after a fight about dating a Japanese postal worker. One can imagine a woman like her telling Nishida that she liked foreigners because “they didn’t know the language and couldn’t tell other Japanese what [she] was up to.” The separation of *panpan* from their families contrasted sharply with women working in the pleasure quarters, where brothels continued to provide a last resort for families, rather than individual women, in need.42

The emphasis on motivations in these studies obscures the reality that the Occupation was a time of hardship even for what Sumiya called “normal women.” The war permanently displaced many Japanese who had previously enjoyed comfortable lives. The death of a breadwinning husband or father could plunge a financially solvent family into poverty. These crises had grave implications for teenaged daughters. Both *panpan* and brothel prostitutes were far more likely than the average Japanese woman to come from single-parent homes.43 Regardless of how they articulated their circumstances, few prostitutes came from families untouched by war.

On the streets, *panpan* answered to no male authority. Autonomy was unusual for women workers and a significant development in the history of Japanese prostitution and labor. Proprietors had firm control over the earnings of brothel prostitutes. While seemingly independent waitresses in pre-war Japan might have negotiated with customers, bar managers usually took a cut of their

42. For more on *yakekuso*, see Watanabe, *Gaishō*, 90–95; for Nishida’s conversation, see Nishida, *Kichi no onna*, 154–155. For the classic overview of indentured prostitution, see Maki Hidemasa, *Jinshin baibai* [Selling of people] (Tokyo, 1969).
43. For figures and analysis, see Enokimoto, “Baishōfu no shakai eisei,” 41–44.
earnings directly or through a system of punitive fines.\textsuperscript{44} No formal system bound \textit{panpan} to kick back a percentage of their earnings to pimps or \textit{panpan} house operators in the first half of the Occupation.

Several factors made the autonomy of \textit{panpan} possible. Organization was key. \textit{Panpan} formed gangs according to location and whether they took Japanese or foreign customers. These gangs resembled criminal syndicates (\textit{yakuza}). Concepts central to criminal syndicates, such as turf (\textit{nawabari}) and justice (\textit{jingi}), governed the conduct of women members as well. \textit{Panpan} members concerned themselves with internal discipline and relations with neighboring gangs. Like the \textit{oyabun} (senior member or father figure) of the underworld, a charismatic veteran called \textit{anego} (elder sister) served as leader. Tachikawa-area gangs had ties to authorities. In one remarkable case documented with photos by Nishida, the fire and police departments hosted a reconciliation ceremony between feuding gangs. Eight hundred \textit{panpan} came to a local theater to hear eighteen \textit{anego} from the “North” and “South” promise “Henceforth, let’s not engage in turf wars. Let’s get along and be good citizens.”\textsuperscript{45}

Departing from the practices of pimps and \textit{yakuza} bosses, \textit{anego} did not dictate a gang member’s daily activities nor demand a cut of a \textit{panpan}’s pay, require her to work at certain times, or accept all comers. \textit{Panpan} gang members were free to set their own terms and to keep all of their earnings. Privileges like these were unimaginable for women working and living in brothels, who rarely possessed the right to handle money or to refuse customers.

A conversation retold by Nishida underscores the importance of cooperation and communication among \textit{panpan}—the ever-present threat of violence. According to his informant, word spread quickly when a \textit{panpan} discovered a G.I. had a sexually transmitted disease. Soon no one would accept the serviceman as

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{44} For more on café waitress work, see Elise K. Tipton, “The Café: Contested Space of Modernity in Interwar Japan,” in Elise K. Tipton and John Clark, eds., \textit{Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910s to the 1930s} (Honolulu, 2000), 119–136.

\textsuperscript{45} Many commentators made this connection. See Minami Hiroshi (moderator) \textit{et al.}, “\textit{Panpan} no sekai” [The world of the \textit{panpan}], \textit{Kaizō}, 30 (Dec. 1949) 74–87; Kanzaki, “\textit{Gaishō} ron,” 221; and Michael Molasky, \textit{The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory} (London, 1999), 111. For discussion of the dispute and for the photo, see Nishida, \textit{Kichi no onna}, 136–137.}
a customer. It was these frustrated G.I.s, she hinted, who resorted to rape to satisfy themselves.46

Calls to the Japanese police were futile. A police officer identified as “O” was notorious for the way he treated the women he arrested. Preceding him was a reputation for entering the residences of panpan in an imperious manner—by walking on tatami mats in his boots, purposely breaking glass, and blowing his harmonica unnecessarily.47 Darker stories circulated that he let women go who had sex with him and harassed those who refused. One streetwalker reported that another officer told her, “There’s no reason for us not to kill one or two of you.”48

Not only did panpan face violence from customers and police, but they also risked attacks from each other. Gangs enforced codes of conduct with ritualized abuse called “lynching.” “Gate of the Flesh,” a popular 1947 short story later made into a film, depicted the violence that women suffered when comrades got wind of their intention to leave the street trade.49 The final scene of Mizoguchi’s Women of the Night is an extended, graphic representation of this kind of violence. Such fictional accounts must have been fresh in the minds of panpan who participated in a popular magazine’s roundtable discussion in 1949. Panpan vehemently denied that such violence was a part of their world. “Our hope is that women can leave this world as soon as possible,” said one woman. However, before the subject was dropped, another panpan conceded, “There are some cases when we administer discipline, but never for those who don’t deserve it.”50 Organization offered women a degree of protection from forces working upon them as a group, but it also provided them with a way to brutalize one another for real and imagined slights.

Panpan did possess a monopoly on one resource sought after by reporters and scholars: information about their lives and backgrounds. Panpan leveraged this resource to their advantage, for they had extensive experience dealings with authorities, unlike brothel prostitutes who had limited contact with the world outside the brothel and its customers. Panpan had to deal not only with

46. See Nishida, Kichi no onna, 111.
47. See “Gaishō no kōjutsushō,” 223–224.
49. For analysis of “Gate of the Flesh,” see Molasky, The American Occupation, 112.
50. See Minami et al., “Panpan no sekai,” 78.
customers and innkeepers, but also with the military police, the
Japanese police, and the journalists and researchers who pursued
them. Aware of the conflicts of interests that motivated these con-
tingents, panpan became adept negotiators.

Contemporary news reports and scholarly studies inadvertently reveal the care with which women managed their relation-
ships with men. This discretion frustrated researchers. Sociologist
Watanabe Yoji complained: “How can researchers who have nei-
ther authority nor power get reliable data from streetwalkers who
calmly give false statements even to the police?” Indeed, panpan
acknowledged that they had a deep distrust of authority, believing
that the police asked intrusive questions to satisfy idle curiosity or
to pass time: “The police say, ‘I’ll let you go if you tell me the truth
about everything.’ Women who are unaccustomed to the question-
ing end up telling the truth. But once you get accustomed [to it],
you know that’s what the police always say, so you become shrewd
about what to tell them.”

Sumiya Etsuji acknowledged, “Women aren’t going to dis-
close more than is in their interest,” but Watanabe tried very
difficult to make it in the interests of patients of Tokyo’s Yoshiwara
Hospital to give him information. He announced to an assembly
of panpan:

After this, the people here are going to ask you various questions and
record your answers on these forms. Please take care so that absolutely
nothing but the truth is written down. If you say something untruthful,
it will only be bad for you, so beware. This form is designed to reveal
any lies at once. We will also check your answers with other materials,
so we will catch your lies right away. If you tell the truth, we won’t take
you to a faraway island, and we won’t contact your family. Of course, we
will not release your name. But if you don’t tell us the truth, I don’t know
what will happen... You understand what I’m saying, don’t you? Get it
through your head.

Even a threat to contact family members, dreaded by panpan since
many had often fallen out with their relatives, could not persuade
the women of the importance of Watanabe or his work. He re-
ceived a great deal of useless data and guessed correctly what the
panpan thought of him: “Another idiot from the university.”

51. See ibid., 79.
Panpan also asserted themselves when dealing with American authorities. In recounting the story of “Teruko” who stood up to a serviceman named “Tommy,” Kanzaki Kiyoshi illustrated the woman’s skills as a negotiator. Teruko demanded that Tommy seek professional help for his bed-wetting. When Tommy attacked Teruko, took her clothes, and returned to his quarters on the base, Teruko approached a military police and succeeded in having Tommy return her belongings. Women like Teruko appear to have been capable of confronting the U.S. military when their rights were violated.53

Communication with Americans contributed to the ability of panpan to maintain autonomy from pimps. Panpan told Nishida a colorful story about how they outwitted pimps for control of the streets of Tachikawa. Would-be pimps demanded that streetwalkers hand over a percentage of their earnings. When they refused to comply, the men retaliated by spreading rumors among G.I.s that certain panpan suffered from tuberculosis or sexually transmitted diseases. Panpan claim to have countered the slander by using tattoos. A woman would tattoo or carve her own initials and those of a favored G.I. on her arm or thigh and, at an opportune moment, reveal the initials to her target and melt his heart. Once the relationship cooled, she carved a new set elsewhere on her body or reused the originals, telling new targets that she had misspelled a name. The ruse worked.54

The story suggests that wiles like carving tattoos and skills like English proficiency facilitated direct communication between panpan and U.S. servicemen, who likely preferred flirting with women to dealing with middlemen, as was Japanese custom. That was how G.I.s approached women in the United States, judging from the fears of “amateurs” and “pick-ups” circulating during and after the war. Studies show that pimps (himo) failed to corner the street trade. Women claimed they accepted customers from male pimps

53. Kanzaki gave these pseudonyms to the man and woman in Kanzaki Kiyoshi, “Maketeinai onna” [A woman not defeated], in Kanzaki, Yoru no kichi, 92. In another example, Hirai Kazuku and Hayakawa Noriyo described “the lady Matsumoto,” an informal problem solver called when trouble arose in the resort town Atami. Although her background is uncertain, Hayakawa’s research suggests that Matsumoto had worked as a dancer. She had exceptional English skills. See Hirai, “RAA to akasen,” 100, and Hayakawa, “Senryōgun heishi,” 61.

54. See Nishida, Kichi no onna, 28–30.
only when a refusal might lead to violence. A 1949 survey of Kyoto streetwalkers revealed that only three of 197 panpan worked for a pimp, one for a man and two for a woman.55

The beginnings of regulation

In 1948 Japan regained considerable authority over its domestic affairs. Communities started to criminalize solicitation, beginning the demise of the street trade. Miyagi prefecture led the way in July. Sendai, its prefectural seat, was home to the 11th Airborne Division and an estimated 3,000 panpan.56 By 1956 twelve prefectures and dozens of municipalities had enacted regulations that fined or imprisoned women convicted of solicitation.57 Anti-prostitution legislation was first introduced to the postwar Diet in 1948. It failed to draw much support at first but passed in modified form as the Prostitution Prevention Law in 1956. This law outlawed brothel prostitution, criminalized solicitation across Japan, and provided some rehabilitative measures for prostitutes to transition into mainstream occupations. The story of the law has a central place in the history of prostitution and women, but an exclusive focus on this piece of legislation obscures the many incremental legal changes that reduced the autonomy of street prostitutes and changed the nature of commercial sex after 1945.

During the U.S. Occupation, the salient distinction was between prostitutes who worked out of sight for proprietors and those who worked in public view. The proliferation of local regulations stemmed from a general desire to rein in the latter, which was sometimes called “scattered” prostitution (sanshō). According to the 1949 national survey, only 25 percent of respondents wanted to ban the pleasure quarters, but the figure rose to 77 percent for street-walking.58 Had the public known the extent to which American

55. Panpan told Nishida that they arranged their own affairs and reported that they dealt with pimps only when a refusal might lead to violence; see ibid., 28–30. For more on pimps, see Watanabe, Gaishō, 152, 210, and Sumiya and Takenaka, Gaishō jittai to sono shuki, 164–165.

56. Fujino, Sei no kokka kanri, 194, 201; Tanabe, “Baishōfu,” 128; Watanabe, Gaishō, 228.

57. For more on these two pieces of legislation, see Fujino, Sei no kokka kanri, and Nagai Yoshikazu, Fuishoku eigyō torishimari [Regulation of adult entertainment businesses] (Tokyo, 2002).

58. See Kokuritsu Yoron Chōsajo, ed., Fūki ni kansuru seron chōsa, 1–2.
and Japanese authorities were cooperating to operate and regulate
brothels in pleasure quarters for U.S. servicemen, the Japanese in
1949 would likely have been pleased and asked for even more co-
operation. The trend toward local regulation began long before
the outbreak of the Korean War, which has been seen as a turning
point in Japanese-American efforts to manage sex.\footnote{59}

Although anti-prostitution legislation failed to pass, the Diet
enacted other bills that targeted \textit{panpan} and brought a semblance
of order to the burgeoning sex industry in 1948. Under the rubric
of “public health,” the Sexually Transmitted Disease Prevention
Act (Seibyō Yobō Hō) called for the incarceration and compulsory
medical examination of women “strongly suspected of habitual pros-
titution.” The Adult Entertainment Law (Fūzoku Eigyō Torishimari
Hō) reinforced the convention that sex belonged indoors and out of
sight—a convention that \textit{panpan} flouted. The law created licensing
for the many kinds of sexually explicit entertainment new to the era,
delineating entertainment inappropriate for children. As Nagai Yo-
shikazu argued in his book on the law, distinguishing children from
adults was new to public morals discourse. Anti-\textit{panpan} activists em-
braced the distinction and invoked the innocence of children to
persuade the public to turn against unfettered street prostitution.\footnote{60}

Until \textit{panpan} appeared in the streets in 1945, most prostitution
took place in neighborhoods most women had no reason to enter.
During the Occupation, vendors of sex encroached upon areas pre-
viously free of prostitution without regard for the presence of fam-
ily residences or children. As everyday life regained a semblance of
normality, \textit{panpan} experienced a backlash. According to the 1949
“Survey Concerning Public Morals,” citizens’ disgust with \textit{panpan}
was rooted in terms of harm to children’s moral development:

\begin{quote}
[The \textit{panpans’}] attire and attitude cause far stronger antipathy than
what was expressed toward brothel prostitutes in the survey. In particu-
lar, people think the \textit{panpans’} showy makeup and attitude, kinky permed
hair and garish dress are eyesores, and that their walking brazenly on the
streets has a bad influence on virtuous children.\footnote{61}
\end{quote}

\footnote{59. Niigata and Miyagi prefectures enacted the first regulations concerning
streetwalkers in 1948. As early as 1946 Japanese began to press for policy responses to
streetwalkers. See Koikari, \textit{The Pedagogy of Democracy}, 179–181.}

\footnote{60. Nagai, \textit{Fūzoku eigyō torishimari}, argued that child welfare was a prime motiva-
tor for the Adult Entertainment Law.}

\footnote{61. For the survey, see Kokuritsu Yoron Chōsajo, ed., \textit{Fūki ni kansuru seron chōsa}.}
The alarm—and expressions of alarm—grew after the Occupation ended. Educators and mothers claimed to see the effects of exposure to *panpan* in children’s thinking, speech, and play.62 One elementary school teacher asked her students what they wanted to be when they grew up. Horrified, she reported that the girls responded in unison: “Americans’ girls.”63

In the late 1940s children’s rights rhetoric became a formidable weapon in the arsenal of opponents of street prostitution.64 Anti-prostitution activists and critics of U.S. military power seized upon “child welfare” to blast the atmosphere of base towns and the *panpan*, both of which, they charged, infringed upon the rights of the child. The elevation of the child in public discourse reflected the optimism of the postwar moment, a result of the popular Child Welfare Law (1947) and the promotion of children’s rights by the new Women and Minors Bureau. Activists who worked to rid their streets of *panpan* drew on the language of the Children’s Charter, issued in 1951 by a government-affiliated group. The charter proclaimed twelve basic rights of the Japanese child, among them “the right to be raised in a sound environment.” Such an environment at the time implied freedom from sexual sights and sounds. Kanzaki raised the alarm over the potential consequences of such exposure by citing elementary school students’ replies to the question “What did your mother say when you got something from an American soldier?” He reported that 80 percent of mothers said, “Good for you,” and 10 percent gave their children the practical advice to “go get more.”65

Also promoting children’s rights were local branches of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), an organization introduced by the American occupiers. Local PTAs played a major role in the push against street prostitution on both sides of the Pacific and may be seen as part of the Cold War containment culture.


63. Reported in ibid.

64. By contrast, Hirai Kazuko highlighted the importance of the Korean War to shaping Japan’s prostitution policy; see Hirai, “Sei de minaosu.”

described by Mire Koikari. Japanese and American PTAs believed that “sex hygiene” education for children was a duty shared by parents and teachers. The Japanese did not simply copy the American model, however. American PTAs feared that schoolgirls left to their own devices would engage in casual sexual relations with U.S. servicemen. Japanese PTAs, on the other hand, focused on removing *panpan* and carousing soldiers from places where schoolchildren congregated. This difference suggests that cracks in containment culture were present from the start, as the interests of Japanese citizens diverged from U.S. foreign policy goals.

Like the PTAs, educators took a critical stance toward the effects of American military power in their communities. The Japan Teachers’ Union organized the Protect the Children Association in April 1952 with the mission of enforcing the Children's Charter. PTAs and teachers organized campaigns to “clean up *jo-ka*” areas frequented by children, starting in 1951. In Tachikawa, high school students led a movement to clean up the area around their school. The base commander cooperated by prohibiting military personnel from going out after 11 p.m., and police


enforced regulations that kept streetwalkers from congregating at Tachikawa station. Children on their way to school were, for a time, no longer subject to the sight of loitering women.70 Using the language of child welfare and the rights of the child, mothers and teachers criticized Japanese accommodation of American military sexual “needs.”

Hirai Kazuko has shown that the Korean War strengthened cooperation between the U.S. military and Japanese authorities in organizing brothels and testing prostitutes for disease. In addition, Japanese citizens were not passive in the face of increasing base town prostitution or U.S. military might. Japanese citizens too pushed for more regulation of street prostitution, which was partially realized as early as 1948 in some locales. The push intensified after 1951.

The Security Treaty between the United States and Japan was signed on September 8, 1951. Aside from the visibility of pan-pan, many problems simmered under the surface. The Security Treaty left Japanese residents with conflicting emotions about the more than 700 permanent U.S. military installations on sovereign Japanese soil. Common complaints included damage to fishing grounds, noise pollution, and the requisitioning of agricultural land.

Criticism of the United States began in earnest after the Occupation ended, which in part explains the surge in publications about base town prostitution in the early 1950s. One Women and Minors Bureau official explained, “We felt like we couldn’t openly make a fuss about the prostitution problem until after the signing of the Peace Treaty.” Tokyo University president Yanaihara Tadao made up for lost time. In a 1952 speech, he stated that the effect of base town prostitution was “no less than that of the destructive power of the A-bomb.” Language like that would not have been possible during the Occupation.71

70. See Nishida, Kichi no onna, 120; Kanzaki, “Tachiaagaru seinen” [Rising youths], in Kanzaki, Sengo Nihon, 106–107; and Okada Hideko, “Moeru idosui” [Burning well water], in Inomata, Kimura, and Shimizu, eds., Kichi Nihon, 38, 42, 75. Resistance welled up among some residents of base towns like Tachikawa and Yokosuka. Both towns had grown alongside the Japanese military before and during the war. Prosperity depended on providing services to military personnel, first Japanese and later American.

71. For publications on base town prostitution in the 1950s, see Molasky, The American Occupation of Japan. See Ichikawa et al., “Zadankai,” 26–27, and Yanaihara...
Japanese citizens described the relationship between the United States and Japan using the term “colonial.” Diet member Kimura Kihachirō claimed that Japan faced the fate imposed on mainland Asia by Japan a generation before: rule by a foreign power. The introduction to *Children of the Bases* (1953), a collection of essays written by young children about their exposure to panpan and sex, lamented that Japan, which had long looked down on the rest of Asia, was sinking into a “colonial condition” just as the peoples of Asia were throwing off the yoke of colonial rule.

A second use of “colonial” indicted the behavior of Japanese citizens. Memories of Japanese imperial endeavors were fresh in the minds of many who used and heard this term. As early as 1948, Ōtsuka Tatsuo described *panpan* as “fully enjoying the transformation into superficial colonial beauties.” Nishida was troubled by children who pestered G.I.s for chocolate and by adults who felt that “there is something to be gained from associating with foreigners.” Indeed, as Sarah Kovner noted, many Japanese business owners in base towns did rely on foreigners for their livelihoods.

A Keio University study group despaired of the reactions of schoolchildren to streetwalkers and called the desire to walk with foreigners or speak English “colonial envy.”

Panpan were a visual reminder of the unequal relationship between the United States and Japan. The demands of citizens uncomfortable with the nature of Japan’s relationship with the United States forced them from the streets and into brothels. Like panpan who created a realm of their own, Japanese citizens in turn created a space within containment culture to criticize the U.S.-Japanese alliance.

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74. See Kovner, “Base Cultures.”

Conclusion

Focusing on politics and policy sheds light on the ways that SCAP, along with Japanese authorities, controlled the sexuality of Japanese women, but it obscures the fact that panpan built a vast market and a society of their own in spite of policy. The conclusion that SCAP controlled women’s sexuality belies the voices of prostitutes found even in the records produced by authorities. To be sure, SCAP and Japanese authorities did work to manage the sexuality of individual Japanese women. Critiques of this collaboration necessarily highlight the costs to the individual, but individuals did not work and live alone. Panpan worked with other women. Framing panpan in terms of organization brings us closer to how panpan saw their lives and work. They formed communities that they themselves managed. In this way, the street trade contrasts sharply with the parallel trade run out of brothels under the management of proprietors.

Analysis of violence against women lies beyond the scope of this study of how women created and ran a market of their own. Panpan faced arrest, incarceration, and forced medical exams, like all Japanese women deemed suspect in the eyes of authorities. In addition to this structural violence imposed by the Occupation, panpan suffered rape and assault from customers and rogue police. Nonetheless, these risks did not stop women from forming a street market. The threat of violence might even have given women an incentive to cooperate with each other.

Ironically, another type of cooperation by women ended panpan’s autonomy. Japanese teachers and mothers led the way under the banner of the PTA and other civic groups. After 1952 anti-Americanism inflected their calls to ban panpan. While the U.S. military factored in Japanese domestic discourse about prostitution, it did not drive policy toward prostitution in Japan in the 1950s. First as economic actors and then as protesters, Japanese women themselves had a profound impact on the geography of prostitution after 1945.