

gathered and a second-floor bar for homosexual clientele. See chapter 7, this volume, for a detailed description of gay bars during this period.

9. Although the magazine's representative is referring to penises, he uses a polite linguistic device that means "symbolism." I have chosen to translate it in an approximation as "the phallus."

7

LIFESTYLES IN THE GAY BARS

Kabiya Kazuhiko

PART I: THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF SHINJUKU

Feelings of love are not just between men and women. Furthermore (male-male sexuality) is taking on a semi-professional character in today's world.

The existence of tea houses and bars catering to male homosexuals (*danshokuka*)¹—places today colloquially referred to as gay bars or gay shops² in Tokyo and other big cities—is known by many people through newspaper and magazine articles (half of which are either phony rumor or just briefly glanced at). Rumor aside, the places I actually know are in the city of Tokyo, and one can count twenty or so of just those that I have verified; what is more, they seem to be on the increase.

It is said that in every age and in every country, the number of homosexuals (*dōseitai*)³ increases after war, and Japan in the wake of World War II is probably no exception. Given that the homosexuality³ curve seems to be climbing remarkably, as might be expected, it is probably

¹Translated and reproduced from *Amatoria* (Studies in Sexual Customs), June 1955: 68-75, July 1955: 38-47, and August 1955: 146-55. Translated by Todd A. Henry.

fair to say that gay bars (*gei bā*) are and will increasingly become places of pleasure for these numerous sodomites (*sodomita*).

What is interesting is that this kind of gay bar, at least in this country, is a product of the end of World War II, and that it did not exist during the prewar era. I had been thinking for some time that I wanted to leave an accurate record of the particular manners and customs (*fizoku*) of the postwar gay bar for future *fizoku* historians. Having received a request from the editorial office of this magazine (*Amatoria*) to write something with this title, I would like to take this opportunity to at least make a report of the current places only in the Tokyo area in the most detailed and accurate manner possible.

The Place, Structure, and Character of Gay Bars

It is natural that, as a form of business, the gay bar occupies a place in the city's many bustling districts. Broadly classifying this phenomenon by area, let us first take a look at the neighborhood of Shinjuku.

There is a tea house/bar called Yakyoku (Nocturne) in a secluded place off a narrow alley behind Nikō, which is in front of Shinjuku Station. Relatively old and already in existence during the war, this place featured girly boys (*onna bōi*) at the time, but began anew as a gay bar immediately after the war and remains as such to this day. It is fair to call this place the pioneer of gay bars, and one can discern an established presence befitting it. However, the inside is quite cramped. Upon entering, there is a counter on the left and the only customer seating areas are on the right side and in the back.

The owner is a stout, large-framed man of fifty-five or fifty-six; as a former performer of female stage roles (*omnagata*) and with a proclivity for homosexuality as a passive type (*ūruningu*), his words and actions have an incredibly gentle air to them. One feels a mature sex appeal emanating from his entire body. It is as though his body has acquired such a sex appeal. According to what young customers say, one can sense something of a mixture between the paternal and maternal when one comes in contact with the owner. That is the feeling one gets, and, in fact, he is quite good at taking care of others. He really puts his heart and soul into it when it comes to his trade. He is indeed skilled at business.

It seems that I have a bit too freely written about the owner's personality, but that, in short, is because his character shapes the character of the place.

There are currently four barboys (*bōi*), all of whom are around twenty. (I will explain their nature in the next section.)

Ibsen, located right behind Daiei Studios, is the second oldest bar next to Yakyoku. If one proceeds nimbly up the stairs from the alley facing the street, one of the barboys opens the door. The inside is small and rectangular in shape; all corners of the room slightly protrude; at one corner is a seating area, while at the others are arranged three sets of tables and chairs.

The appearance of the thirty-five or thirty-six-year-old owner is slightly dark and that of a dominating type (*peda*); he always wears a rough, checkered, button-down shirt. His way of speaking itself is masculine, but the tone of his voice is quiet. Before opening this place, he was a regular at Yakyoku.

I have barely seen this phenomenon at other gay bars, but this place sometimes takes in ordinary couples (*futsū no abekku*)—this is to say, a couple consisting of a male and a female customer. I believe that this may be because this place is on the street behind the cinema district, a location easy to spot, and perhaps because intellectual couples are fond of the name Ibsen; regardless, the sight of male and female couples indulging in love talk at this kind of establishment somehow makes one feel a sense of pity and thus something strange about the whole thing.

Located in front of the Shinjuku Ward office in the middle of what is commonly called Shintenchū (the underground prostitution district of Hanazono-chō) is a new face, Adams, having opened last September. Its owner used to be a regular at Yakyoku, and, catching the wave of the gay bar boom (*gei bā būmu*) he opened this place; however, it is interesting that the place he chose is at the very heart of where hookers congregate.

Mr. K, the manager of this place, is a young man currently enrolled in a philosophy department at some university and is an aspiring writer who came to contribute his own diary to the magazine of the homosexual social gathering I organize; as the milieu of this place is discussed, let me quote a passage from it.

Establishments with a vulgar color, the entertainment district. Three gas lamps and four decorative street lamps in the middle of a blind alley il-

illuminated at dusk. Boldly wearing lurid makeup and clothes that please them, women catering to foreigners and Japanese line up chairs outside every door. In gay voices, they call out "Mr. Spectacles" and "Mr. Company President" in Panglish⁴, which is the same in every erotic district. Young foreign dilettantes reach their climax and are quick to say OK [let's do it] when women put their arms around their waist and lean on them coquetishly. A "short-time" [fooling around with these women] is as simple as a quick bowl of ramen. *Interaction between men and women is conduct that is quite natural* [emphasis in the original].

Behind the view that interaction between men and women is "quite natural conduct" lies the doubt that relations between men are not. As he has experienced sexual love with other men and constantly witnesses many other relationships like it, one ought to pay attention to this author's impressions.

Because this place was planned and constructed with three floors, it is tall enough to look up at. Inside, there is a counter downstairs which takes up a large area, and so the customer seating is extremely cramped. The upstairs area is oblong and somewhat spacious, with a few chairs and tables along the wall; the passageway is wide enough for two or three couples to dance.

The owner, aged forty, is very honest-looking and wears plain clothes. He appears to be busy with his main business (a café) and, therefore, does not show up much at the bar. His taste is for catanines (*chigosan*)⁵ and he is said to be a dominating type (*pede*). The manager, Mr. K, is also a fan of young boys. This is perhaps the reason for naming this place Adonis (the name of the beautiful boy who appears in the Greek myth).

If one considers Yakyoku and Ibsen as specializing in tea house/bar operations, Adonis has the quality of a club and a deep flavor as a social meeting ground. However, all three establishments reflect the local feel of Shinjuku, which does not put on the airs of Ginza, nor is it open to the public like Asakusa.

The Character and an Analysis of the Barboys

It is difficult enough to write about the world of the barboys who work at gay bars without the reader first knowing what should be called the

argot used among them. Doing otherwise would make this world utterly incomprehensible.

For example, words that we utter in the gay bar like *pede* (pederast) or *uru* (*urining*) have no currency whatsoever. We call the equivalent of *pede*, *otachi*,⁶ and that of *uru*, *one* (big sisters). Words like *homo* and *sodomna* are not used. Rather, we call them *ikken*. (It is unclear whether this term is written with the characters meaning "at first glance" or those for "one case".)⁷ People with a taste for *chigosan* (catanines) are said to be into "pediatrics" and those who like older men and the elderly, to be into "otorhinology" (*yitika*). The etymology of the latter comes from the fact that the elderly are hard of hearing. Those who not only like men but also women are called *donten*,⁸ and money is referred to as *ritsu*.⁹ Those resulting in a pricey tab are thus referred to as *ritsuya*. In this way, these words seem to be nearly the same as those used among male prostitutes (*danshō*). About half of the barboys at gay bars utter this kind of jargon—some on an everyday basis (those who are long-standing in the barboy profession), others in a proud way (those who are new to the profession).

The self-confidence that "we are not amateurs of this persuasion; we are professionals"—the self-assurance of being seen as experts in various matters is, I think, nothing but a manifestation of that which they conceal inside themselves.

Upon hearing a discussion of the cause of homosexuality (*daseikai*) I had with a member of my social gathering at the table of a gay bar, a barboy once complained about us to his buddies, saying that "those guys are talking about childish things"; this is a sufficient example to prove the "pride" they possess, as I have been discussing.

Now, if one were to record the characteristics of the barboys at Shinjuku's gay bars, first, in terms of age—the four at Yakyoku, five at Ibsen, and four at Adonis—of a total of thirteen, as many as twelve are in their teens. One is sixteen, he's the youngest. One is twenty-one, he's the oldest; most are eighteen or nineteen.

Because one is entering this kind of place, most individuals are homosexual (*daseitasha*) or are those with a proclivity for homosexuality (*daseikai no keikō*); however, something deserving special mention of late is that Yakyoku has hired non-*ikken-san* as barboys—that is to say, those without a homosexual persuasion (*homo no keikō*).

Why did Yakyoku do that? I have not questioned the owner about this matter, but I would conclude in this way.

Barboys with homosexual proclivities (*dōseiai keikō*) have a tendency to fall in love with their customers. If a customer shows up who is a barboy's preferred type, the barboy's eyes immediately light up and he is absorbed. Falling in love is a weakness. He can no longer be demanding. He stops forcing an enamored customer to spend as much money as he can. Even if they go to a hotel together, he cannot boldly pester him for money. In this way, in other words, it is unprofitable for the bar.

Another example is the not-so-infrequent expert of this persuasion who, as a form of stimulation, has the habit of enjoying himself by showing young men without homosexual proclivities the appeal and pleasure of cavorting in this world. Considering the trouble of this practice, it must indeed increase the enthralling sensation. The purpose of this business practice is to lure this type of customer.

A master of these things from experiencing a long career in the gay bar business, the owner of Yakyoku thus hired straight (*homo de nai*) barboys. Or, as a veteran of this persuasion, he might have even deeper reasons undetected by an amateur like myself, but I do believe that the speculations I have made above are not totally off the mark.

Let us go a bit further with this issue—namely, whether a barboy lacking a homosexual temperament (*homo ke no nai*) is, in fact, fit to work in this type of bar. As outsiders (*shirōto*), ordinary people might think that a boy like this would feel oppressed after a day of work or would be shocked and end up quitting. Of course, there are probably those who disappear after one disgusting experience. However, the truth is that not even one of the barboys now employed at Yakyoku has quit.

I have two or three personal views on the nature of this phenomenon, but I will omit logical explanations and attempt to let the words of a semi-pro (I will explain this term in detail in the next section) twenty-one-year-old student who frequents gay bars explain the reason on my behalf. I should first say that this young man does not have homosexual proclivities (*dōseiai keikō*), and so he says he does not understand the world of homosexuality.

"So, why are you doing these things?" In response to my inquiry, he answered in the following straightforward, really straightforward way: "For one, I am bored. Also, because it is, by and large, amusing. Another reason is because it makes money."

I think that straight barboys continue working at gay bars for one of these reasons.

When Ibsen recently put out a recruitment ad in the newspaper, about three barboy applicants showed up, more than half of whom were not of the homosexual persuasion (*kono keikō de nai*). This is also ultimately related to money; a practice induced by today's "economic downturn." Work at a gay bar or anywhere, as long as it makes money—teenagers' present outlook on life is indeed foreign to that which adults hold.

So, do the barboys at gay bars make that much money?

Depending on the bar's policy, they either live in or commute. For example, at Yakyoku they all live in, at Ibsen they all commute, and at Adonis there are both live-ins and commuters. The set salary is 2,000 to 3,000 yen for live-ins and 4,000 to 6,000 yen for commuters, which seems to be the going rate in Shinjuku.¹⁰

The entertainment fee is cheap. But, among them, many have regular jobs and work as barboys part-time. In this way, they work at a company or a store during the day and make a quick change into barboy by night. Or, they attend university by day; some study dressmaking with a private teacher.

As for additional income, they receive tips from customers at the bar, payment for spending the night at a hotel with a desiring customer, etc. Barboys cannot speak freely about the financial rewards of the latter, but based on what I hear from others, it is higher than that of (female) prostitutes. To be more precise, there is no such thing as a market price, which is determined by the individual customer.

Occasionally, some barboys have husbands—that is to say, a particular individual who is his regular. I will have the chance to comment in detail on this phenomenon.

In terms of their homosexual persuasions, *warrings* are by far the most numerous. Because *warrings* willfully take on feminine sentiments, their attitude and speech toward customers naturally becomes womanlike. Even when they are not coquettish like a woman, something in their facial features or bodily appearance manifests itself in a seductive way; at times, so-called sissy (*onē*) expressions like "exactly, honey" or "that's right, darling" fly right out of their mouths.

One time at Adonis, I heard the blustering words of an inebriated barboy, which, like the *warring* himself, were somehow soft.

Because work is work, their looks are generally neat. Many *urings* can be described as lovely rather than handsome. I always think that if they were not homosexuals, they would be rather well sought after as girls. Due to their beautiful looks, they are generally narcissists. They are fully confident in their looks and appearance, and seem to adore themselves. What they have in common with masculine homosexuals is their penchant for hygiene, never missing a day in the bath; they always wear clothes pressed neatly by an iron.

Finally, in terms of the kind of service they provide to customers at the bar, besides delivering ordered drinks, they sit next to customers with an interest in them or beside those who are their type and make conversation with them; if it looks like there is a money-making customer, they must also provide various erotic services. Like hostesses at regular bars and cabarets, there is no way out when it comes to business, but there is also nothing funny or laughable to spread rumors about it in tabloid newspapers and such.

The Characteristics and an Analysis of the Customers

From the perspective of customers in Shinjuku's gay bars, the difference between Yakyoku and other places is that the former holds fast to its regulars as an established bar.

At one time, foreign customers appeared at Yakyoku, Ibsen, and other bars, firing out money with a bang; lately, however, those "aliens" (*gai*) (the way foreign customers are called in this society), have altogether disappeared, perhaps drifting to high-class gay bars in the Ginza area.

If pressed to say, Yakyoku has more middle-aged customers than young ones, while Ibsen is the reverse, filled with young, salaryman types. Adonis, on the other hand, is overwhelmingly occupied by students.

Yakyoku and Ibsen are good for a tête-à-tête, while Adonis is suited for dancing and revelry. Whenever one goes to the second floor of Adonis, young customers and barboys are cheerfully dancing the mambo in a small area, whereas at Yakyoku and Ibsen, one frequently comes across the sight of customers and barboys tucked away from the seating area, engaging in sweet whispers.

Because the majority of barboys are passive types (*uru*), one would think that many of the customers are dominating types (*pede*), but this is not the case; rather, the number of customers with *urring* inclinations

is greater. Some people probably find it doubtful whether an *urring* like this would be satisfied by a barboy companion with the same proclivity.

However, by and large, the customer does obtain his satisfaction. Because the homosexual is always hiding his own feminine inclinations, which are different from those of society and the people around him, the ill feeling of this secret tends to settle in his heart. He is thus satisfied by simply coming to a gay bar and, all at once, spewing out this gloominess in his heart. There is no need to hide one's sexual orientation (*seikō*), as everyone here is a "comrade" (*dōshi*). If one can chat with like-minded barboys and customers, dance, and expose one's true self, the ill feeling inside is suddenly relieved. And, at times, there are even cases wherein the customer's (*urring*) sentiments match that of one's preferred type of *pede*. In this way can one's desires be released.

The reasons for going to gay bars can roughly be divided into three categories:

1. One has his eye on a barboy
2. One somehow wants to dispel his melancholy
3. One is in search of a sexual object among the customers

However, to this has been added a new trick of late (such was also the case before). As I touched on a bit earlier, this involves those semi-pro types who themselves come with the aim of finding a customer for "business."

These types are a motley crew: those without an occupation, the unemployed, salarymen, or students who do it for part-time work, and even some *ikken-san* (but like the students mentioned above, many are not homosexual). It is, in short, a money-making enterprise, and when it comes to business, anything goes.

PART 2: THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF KANDA, GINZA, AND SHINBASHI

The Neighborhood of Kanda

An Owner with the Name "Mama-san."

One can first mention Silver Dragon (Shirubā doragon) among Kanda's gay bars. This bar opened in 1949 and for about two years did a quiet

business for a small clientele of foreign customers. But, from 1951, it finally became known among homosexual lovers (*shudo aikōsha*) and is said to have become busy. As for the location, it is on the right side of the Imagwabashi streetcar stop in Muromachi, about one city block down the alley from the bakery on the corner. They hang a small sign that reads "Ginryū" (silver dragon).¹¹

Small eateries and one-shot bars uniformly line both sides of that neighborhood. When I said the name Silver Dragon about two years ago while having a shot at a nearby bar on my way home from my first visit there, the barmaid grinned and said with a wry smile, "Oh, that place of homosexuals (*okama-san*) . . ." This narrow attitude toward homosexuality (*danshoku*) is not restricted to the women at that bar; this limited level of understanding is commonplace among people in general. The difficulty for this gay bar to get along with the three establishments on either side is likely a source of anxiety.

So, when one opens the door to Silver Dragon and walks in, there is a big counter to the right of the staircase; small, however, are the seats. In the back, there are stairs that lead upstairs. It is here that customers remove their shoes, check their hats and overcoats, and then proceed to the second floor. There is an eight-*tatami*-mat (approximately 13 m²)¹² room here with benches, tables, and other furnishings suitably arranged. The lighting is slightly dim, and the face of the person sitting in the corner is only visible in an ash-white color.

The owner is called "Mama-san" here. Although tall, a bit plump, and with a slightly dark complexion, he has a round and gentle countenance. At first glance, he looks no older than thirty-something, but apparently born in 1911, he is really forty-three or forty-four. Because he is a complete *wuring*, his body type is characterized by light facial hair and an adam's apple that cannot be seen. With a small lower jaw and a shapely body, he has, in large measure, taken on feminine characteristics.

However, his personality is extremely open; he is not secretive and is without airs. "It is because I am a woman. . .," he boldly proclaims. He dislikes formal clothing and wears a gaudy Hawaiian shirt all year long. In terms of having his own thoughts on male homosexuality (*danshi doseiai*), this Mama-san is probably the best-known gay bar owner in Tokyo. Without borrowing from others, he maintains his own opinion.

He thus seems to be on the mark in the training of his barboys (I will explain this point in detail later).

During his youth, this clean-cut man, valuing harmony with society and finding it difficult to dismiss his mother's propositions, is said to have married without choice; after a few months, he eventually divorced without ever laying a finger on her.

He currently lives with his mother. What "filial piety." One cause of his homosexuality may, however, derive from this very condition (mother complex).

Mama-san says that his desire is to make his place into a club rather than a bar, and, yes, one can feel a pleasurable air in the upstairs atmosphere where customers, barboys, and the owner amicably intermingle.

And next, one more place. . . .

Until now it was the Silver Dragon when one thought of gay bars, but just two or three months ago a place called Shangri-la recently opened its doors in the same area around Kanda Station. When you hit the alley directly in front of Silver [Dragon], turn right and walk twenty or thirty paces along the wide road and then turn the corner at the pharmacy? [sic], which will be on your left side; you will soon see a small, faint green sign with the name of the place in white letters. The place is on the second floor, a climb up the stairs directly off the street. Once inside, there is a small counter on the left and the seats are big; the place is arranged in bar style with benches, small tables, and so on.

I have not met the owner, but he is a thirty-five- or thirty-six-year-old foreigner. As this is the first foreign-managed gay bar in Tokyo, it seems there is a unique quality to this place. But, as I am unfamiliar with the details that ought to be mentioned, I shall stop simply at information about its location.

Interaction between Barboys and Customers

At present, there are five barboys at Silver Dragon who range in age from twenty to twenty-five. In terms of their homosexual inclinations (*homo no keikō*), one is a dominating type (*otachi* or *pede*) and the other four are *wuring*s and *one-san* (big sisters). Here, the *wuring* barboys take on female names such H-ko and C-ko.¹³

Just as the owner is "Mama-san," the "women" (*onē*) of this establishment play the female role. Most of the barboys here engage in other occupations by day or are studying as apprentices. What is different about them in comparison to the barboys of other places is that they seek jobs with a relatively productive dimension to them. This seems to be the influence of Mama-san's training.

When new barboys come into service, they are always edified as follows: "Although you are pampered by the customers because you boys are young, it is a big mistake for you to think like that forever. They will no longer pay attention to you when you reach a mere twenty-five or twenty-six. Only when a gay barboy is young is he a flower. So, you must prepare for getting old by taking up some kind of work. The problem is that because you are barboys at a place like this, everyone thinks you want to do ballet or make your living doing Japanese-style dance. But, here is where you go all wrong. This is, in fact, a sign of your lazy habits. Rather than yearning for such things, you had better learn to take on a more steady and reliable job."

This kind of "training" seems to be having an influence on the way in which they conduct their lives.

Mama-san also says the following to his barboys: "Homosexuals (*ikken-san*) are always thinking about men, but enough with that kind of passion—you should try to devote yourselves to other things."

In other words, he recommends the sublimation of feelings for the same sex. Those words were by all means reasonable, but needless to say they were not really being carried out.

It is a fact that the desire to seek a same-sex partner among sodomites is by far stronger than that of ordinary people (*fusūbito*) seeking a partner of the opposite sex. If one begins to discuss from what this derives, this discussion will become both drawn out and miss the point of this article, and so I will restrain myself; suffice to say that this feeling also occurs among the gay barboys who are assumed to be able to easily seek the objects of their love.

The barboys of this establishment do accompany customers when invited to a hotel, but for homosexual (*ikken-san*) barboys, this is not necessarily done simply for the sake of making money. Incidentally, although I did not put to paper accurate statistics in the last installment (Part 1, above), the market price for the love a

customer provides to a barboy is currently said to cost 1,000 yen. Next, in speaking about the customers of this place, the number of foreigners was overwhelmingly high at one time; however, it seems the ratio today is about two foreigners for every eight Japanese. Hence, barboys who are preferred by Japanese have replaced those types who fancy foreigners.

In terms of the age range of customers, people in their twenties and thirties seem to make up the largest proportion. As for region, there are a variety of customers, including people from Ginza and Asakusa.

The atmosphere of the place is free and flexible—it takes on a Japanese style if, on that day, the person who sets the mood has a Japanese taste, and if the person likes Americans, it has a Western flavor. Once, when caworting on the second floor of this place, a slim young man who is said to be a master of Japanese dance suddenly stood up, told me to play the record "*Musume dōjōji*" (The maiden of Dōjō temple),¹⁴ and danced a few steps to the rhythm. I recall watching over him after everyone there quieted down. Although it was Japanese dance in Western clothes, there was not the slightest oddity about it; it was, on the contrary, a dance full of "girlish" glamour. However in demand, this elegance cannot be seen at ordinary cabarets in the Ginza area, to which unrefined company officials are taken by the heads of construction companies. This is certainly not a biased view of mine. It is unmistakable. This is a fact.

As I have said numerous times, gay bars are places of real comfort and shared pleasure for their customers.

Neighborhood of Ginza

Brunswick and Others

"A meihocce teahouse named Rudon, located in an area of Yurakuchō, opened after the war and from some point it became a club for followers of that path (*sono michi no hito tachū*). But, some customers knowing nothing of this come in, drink a coffee, and without realizing a thing, walk out the door."

By chance, some people know that this place-called Rudon, described above in Mishima Yukio's *Forbidden Colors* (1951),¹⁵ is Brunswick, which is located in Ginza's Owarichō. You will see this place directly

on your left if you go about half a block in the direction of the Sanbara Bridge from the Ginza *yon-chōme* intersection, turning right at the corner of the kimono shop in front of Ono's Pianos. Whether you are a woman or a man, if you stop in front of this place, a door boy from behind a transparent window will open the door with "Please, do come in." Willy-nilly, you must go inside.

By day or night, the interior has a dazzlingly bright feeling to it and a playful sensation like a movie set. Toward the back there is a counter and six or seven lovely tables with relatively spacious seating; a multi-colored and many-sided chandelier hangs freely from the ceiling. On one pillar hangs a wide-brimmed Cuban hat with a gaudy ribbon, and on the other a model airplane. Somehow it has the air of a teashop where one encounters young girls or middle-school students.

On one shelf a ball-shaped duckweed said to be taken from Lake Akan fills a glass container with a deep and dark green, and, in the big glass container where customers pass, tropical angelfish remain still with their two long feelers drooping down.

I have no knowledge of tropical fish, but as far as I have heard, these small angelfish have incredibly keen senses; indeed, they do not miss the minutest of sounds, and they recall the face of their owner with this keen sense. It is interesting that, with their acute nerves, they somehow are thought to resemble sodomites.

As Mishima Yukio also mentions, this place, due to its location, is frequented by male-female couples (*abekku*) and fellow females who stroll along the Ginza—the feeling is that passers-by know nothing about it [being a gay bar]. That young female customers are particularly numerous is, like the sweet red-bean paste place Orizuru (Folded-paper crane) in Shinbashi, probably just because the barboys are young and handsome. If this is indeed true—namely, that the female customers come in with their sights on the barboys—then, that the former, who know nothing about sodomites (*sodomita*), who hold neither fancy nor interest in their lives, are somehow typical.

To return to our subject, near the door there is a staircase that leads above ground. Upstairs on the second floor is the veritable headquarters of the gay bar Brunswick. When the patrons who follow that path (*sono michi no kyaku*) enter this place, they immediately go upstairs without looking around on the first floor.

The second floor of this place is more spacious than the other places already mentioned. At the top of the stairs there is a counter and chairs lined up all the way to the back door leading outside. There are seven or eight sitting areas. Because the passageway is wide, there is enough room to dance in groups of three or four.

The owner of this place is forty-five or forty-six. He has a modish mustache below his nose and long hair. And as can be gathered from the decorations of the place, he likes rather flashy clothing. It is said that he managed a café in Ginza long before the war. At home, he has a child and a wife who runs a store specializing in sweet red-bean paste. Even though he has a wife and children, he is, of course, a homosexual (*shudo*) lover; in terms of his sexual proclivities, he is a dominating type (*pede*) who seems to have taste for beautiful boys (*bishōnen*). However, when he first opened this establishment, he had no plan for a gay bar; he simply settled on nice boys who were to his liking and put them to work. But, before he knew it, people of this persuasion began to congregate here. The oldest bar in Ginza, this place, as one might imagine, seems to have a good clientele.

Brunswick probably figures within the category of "high-class" bars, but as for places that one can walk into with relative comfort, there is one-called Ranya.¹⁶

If one goes two or three minutes in the direction of Yuraku Bridge from Sukya Bridge, the last stop on the city tram, turning right at the church, Ranya is just before the tempura shop.

This bar also consists of two floors. The downstairs area is very small, and so most customers are shown to the second floor. The second floor is also narrow and long, and the illumination is dim like other places. Chairs and tables are lined up all along the wall, and barboys come and go diagonally across the narrow passageway. Patrons dance with barboys here, as do customers with other customers. This probably increases the extreme sense of closeness.

At thirty-five or thirty-six, the owner is rough-skinned and has the feel of a dominating type (*pede*). There is another gay bar in the neighborhood with the (assumed) name "B." I will withhold the actual name and location of this place according to the owner's wishes, but I will go ahead and make note of its unique features from my own point of view. That is to say, "B" operates as a regular

teashop by day, but when the night curtain comes down over the neighborhood, it turns into a gay bar. This is indeed an interesting way of doing business.

At around 7:00 p.m., the curtains are all tightly closed, the door securely shut, and "ordinary" (*futsui*) customers are no longer allowed in. Only those who happen to know—that is, customers familiar with "this way"—enter through the back door. It has both an upstairs and downstairs, the interior design and furniture is simple.

The owner's forehead is balding, but he is still young; with clear-cut looks like a Noh mask and neatly dressed, he is certainly an emblematic Ginza type and has the feeling of a typical sodomite. Night brings out the *homo*—with an understanding of the secrecy of such sodomites, this owner perhaps chooses this kind of business practice.

The Role of Barboys as Comedians

There is one amusing barboy in Brunswick. He has a small frame of just over five feet, a light complexion, and a countenance that is slightly more humorous than charming. His age is maybe twenty-five or twenty-six. Insofar as he has given himself the name "the comedian Bonta,"¹⁷ his way speaking and attitude is entirely clown-like; he is always singing jazz in a loud voice when customers are not around. For a part-time job, he sometimes sings at an Asakusa cabaret.

What is more, he encourages intermingling between customers as well as between customers and barboys. Hence, as soon as he encounters someone, he asks, "What type of person do you like?" With a tone full of a particular humor, he solicits his interlocutors without arousing in them a feeling of shame. He asks in a homey way, as if he will quickly find one a partner.

I think this kind of comedic personality is rare among sodomites. Generally, the personality of sodomites is introverted and neurotic, and, externally, they keep a straight face. That is because most of them do not have an iota of burlesque.

Bonta's comic disposition feeds into his spirit of service. From this spirit of service must stem his penchant for and commitment to channeling the love of others. Or, his comic service is, perhaps, a commercial stunt, but I think there is nothing wrong with that.

At present, Bonta seems to have the position of head barboy at this place. There are thirteen barboys from ages fifteen to nineteen—that is, the point between adolescence and early manhood.

Hitherto, this place tended to hire thin and delicate beautiful boys (*bishonen*) who were fancied, but recently this has changed and it is staffed by barboys with masculine countenances and figures. According to Bonta, "Beautiful faces like those of dolls are out of style nowadays. Customers are unhappy unless the boys are handsome and have a dark-skinned, clean-cut look. In other words, those with a Cuban style; if you know what I mean."

Once seen, young, dominant-type (*otachi*) boys are welcomed by their clients. However, this is not to say that the number of *uring* customers has increased. Whether sodomites are passive (*uru*) or active (*pede*) these days, the aforementioned type of man is, for the most part, being sought after as the object of love. As a result, it has become all the more difficult for feminine (*onē*) men to find partners.

So, the barboys at this place all work in uniforms consisting of a white-style coat and black trousers. However, Niwa Fumio,¹⁸ who freely makes use of a variety of eccentric materials, portrayed a Brunswick-like atmosphere in a short story called "Blue Streets" (*Aoi machi*) from a year or two ago. As he makes reference to the barboys, let me extract this passage:

... in [the bar] therapy, the feeling that one is, in particular, being ogled at coils around one's skin, and it does not go away. Maybe that is because they are not casually looking at one. Which reminds me that all the men at this place deliberately make one feel as if they are aiming at some kind of effect. This may be too much thinking on my part. From their standpoint, they are probably behaving naturally. There was, in fact, something in common with the feeling that I got from Shin.

And so on and so forth. It seems apparent that even someone like Niwa Fumio is in a state of bewilderment at the uncomfortable mood of this place. Hence, for straight people who are not of this persuasion (*kono michi de nai mono*), there is something in the atmosphere produced by the gay bar that they perhaps cannot stand to bear.

The barboys of this place usually go to school in the afternoon. About half of the barboys commute while the remainder board at the owner's home.

Moving on, Ranya has four or five barboys, and "B" has close to ten. At both, the age is about twenty, but the performance fee is highest at "B," from about 5,000 to 10,000 yen.

Turning to the makeup of the customers at these three places: First, Brunswick, which has a ratio of about one foreigner to nine Japanese, used to abound with students and young office workers, but now middle-aged men seem to make up half of the clientele. In other words, it is likely that students who are dependent on their parents and young workers eventually run out of money cavorting at this type of "high-class" bar.

The head barboy, Bonta, explains it like this: "Yeah, this place maintains its pride as a Ginza establishment, but does not make impetuous customers spend unreasonable amounts of money. If a customer initially admits that he only has a certain amount of money, we try to show him a good time within his limits. . . ."

There is this tradition that if a customer loosens the strings of his pocketbook and cavorts at "high-class" gay bars, then a large sum of money will indeed stream forth.

The son of an old shop owner in Ueno who shows a passion for the barboys at this place and goes there repeatedly is known to have spent several hundred thousand or several million yen.

Next, as for Ranya, many of its customers are young men in their twenties and thirties. I once happened to see Mishima Yukio at this place. Although half are Japanese, foreigners are known to come occasionally. Most of the customers are Japanese, but individuals with strange-colored hair seem to stop by on occasion.

The Neighborhood of Shinbashi

Bobby's Club

As of now, there is only one gay bar in Shinbashi, called Bobby's Club, which is on the third floor where Orizuru is located. Just like the gay bar "Y" in the Torimori area, there are almost no homosexual (*ikken*) customers now and so it is no different than a straight bar.

If, after leaving the west gate of Shinbashi Station, one goes out onto the street along the Tamura-machi-Shinbashi segment of the streetcar, there is a sweet red-bean soup shop hanging a sign that reads "Orizuru" on the side toward Ginza. Alongside is a staircase facing the road, by swiftly going up from there to the third floor one will arrive at Bobby's Club.

There was a nude photography studio here until the summer of 1953, but after it went out of business, a gay bar called Lira Boy opened. However, this place closed at the beginning of this year; two or three months ago the manager changed, and thus was born Bobby's Club.

Inside there is a small but gorgeous hall. On the right side immediately after entering, there is a check for storing one's coat and personal items, alongside which is a large counter with a precious feel to it; benches and small tables are arranged next to the window.

Although the owner is a man named "Mr. Bobby," he is not a foreigner; he is bona fide Japanese. According to calendar years, this owner is said to be already over fifty-five, but when one sees him under the light of this place, he invariably looks just over thirty. The sound of his voice is a somber bass, but it is youthful. He has a tall, fit figure, and his clothes are chic, like those of a stripling.

When I met this owner, I recalled Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.¹⁹ It seems that this owner has somehow said goodbye to becoming an old man.

The number of boys exceeds ten, all with nice builds; they are handsome striplings of around twenty years of age. All of them elegantly sport a coat and necktie. It would seem that more of their appearances are masculine (*otachi*) rather than feminine (*one*). Most of the customers here were foreign since the time of Lira Boy; even now, the ratio is said to be six foreigners to four Japanese.

According to what the gay bar owner hears from his barboys, most of the foreign homosexuals (*ikken-san*) are *wrings* (*ūru*). It is said that one frequently runs into those who, with a big build and stern look, invariably have the look of a dominating type (*pede*) but actually play the female role. Therefore, dominant (*otachi*) barboys were chosen at this place, a situation slightly different from that of the aforementioned Brunswick, where many boys with a masculine (*otachi*) air about them were hired.

PART 3: THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF UENO AND ASAKUSA

The Neighborhood of Ueno

From former days, the lands of Ueno have had an extremely strong connection to *danshoku*. There was the homosexual (*danshoku*) incident between the great Edo-period (1603–1868) actor Sawamura Tansuke²⁰ and Ueno Myōō Inshokai that caught the public's attention at the time. Although it died out in other areas during the Tempō Reforms (1841–1843), this persuasion flourished in the male catamite tea houses (*kagemataya*) in the precincts of Edo's Yushima Tenjin Shrine until the Meiji Restoration (1868); and, much later, it immediately reemerged after World War II, as male prostitutes gave rise to numerous talking points, and so on. . . .

Despite the strong connection that homosexuality (*danshoku*) has thus had with Ueno, there is only one gay bar where aficionados of this persuasion gather. Located in Yushima Tenjin Okokozakashita, Yushima is that one place. It used to operate at Ueno Yamashita but last year it moved to Yushima, as the sign reads.

It is usually said that the owner of this place, who is a huge fan of the new school, took the name from one of his favorite *kyōgen*²¹ narratives, "Onakezu" (Genealogy of a woman), but another theory has it that it is probably due to the fact that in former days male catamite tea houses were lined up along Yushima.

In which case, it must have been the bar owner's cherished desire to run a business that matched his own homosexual proclivities (*dōseiai sekiō*) with that alluring name, Yushima, while appreciating the entangling emotions of male catamite tea houses located around there. Well, the owner's name is Y K, and he worked as a male actor of female roles (*omagita*) in the Soganoya Gorō troupe; he still dresses as a woman at the bar. But, he did not wear the female hairstyle when the place was at Yamashita; rather, it is cut and parted in a masculine way. However, all the clothes he wears are for women.

His carriage, attitude, and language are also feminine. He is a woman through and through. He is very sensitive, and I feel that to be a woman's sensitivity, I think this belongs to something of androgyny (feminization) or eviration (demasculinization), rather than to being an *uringi*.

Although his age is just over forty, he has few whiskers, no wrinkles, and his looks are of a gentle man's body. He is also an affable person, but I think that on the inside he harbors a sense of resistance that does not easily yield to people.

It's discernable that the structure, design, and management style of the place clearly pronounce his personality and that he does not see eye to eye with other such businesses.

If one descends the stone steps of Yushima Tenjin Shrine's Okozaka, there, on the left side of a tranquil, narrow street in the rear of the neighborhood, quietly sits Yushima. It is a drinking establishment with a sober and relaxed feel, not closely related to what might be called a "gay bar." When one opens the black-painted entryway—it is not a door—one finds a counter and chairs in a small, three-*tatami* area (roughly 16 ft^2 or 5 m^2), and so the seating for customers is terribly cramped.

There is another room behind the counter. There is a bench and a small table in this Western—which is to say, Japanese-style Western—room, which has the feel of four-and-a-half *tatami* mats (roughly 24 ft^2 or 7.25 m^2). When the store was opened, this room and the former were one, but they were divided into two last summer. Maybe it was a "golden cut" undertaken as a management strategy.

On one wall in this room is a circular window, hollowed out in the shape of a crest called Uraume; on the other side of that window is Mama-san Y K's living room.

There is a second floor. Before there was only one room on the upstairs level, but after remodeling there are now two guest-rooms. They are four-and-one-half *tatami* mat rooms suitable for light drinking while facing one another across a table.

All this is arranged according to Y's tastes, and in the establishment's remodeling, one seems to be able to see some shifts that Y K's mind has experienced.

One cannot understand Y K without knowing the struggles and troubles involved in running an unusual bar with the determined will of a woman (?) in this rigid society.

As Y says, "My real ideal is to hire two or three young barboys in their teens, making them up in the image of the traditional catamite (*wakazasu*) or something, and have them entertain customers. But, that, as you know, is a dream. There aren't such boys in this day and age.

Speaking of young ones nowadays, they are all Western wannabes with long sideburns, curled hair, and, if not, try out a crude haircut like an American soldier; they smell of Westerners and there is not even one who resembles the catamite (*wakashū*) type. Furthermore, in terms of service, homosexual (*ikken-san*) boys often play footsie under the table with customers and some even touch each other. I could not possibly do such things."

Turning his hand to the side, Y makes a face showing his impatience.

This is not to say that he denies any intimacy; he does not mind some people becoming sexually intense like animals if the two are covered by a curtain or a veil; yet his hope is that everyone is "plain and romantic" in his bar.

Because alone he cannot handle everything himself, Y has hired bar-boys two or three times, but none of them seems to have fared well.

Having apparently given up on male barboys, Y has now hired two authentic girls to serve the alcohol. Given this, Yushima will probably take a different trajectory than a so-called "gay bar."

It wouldn't matter much, as many customers come to his bar just because they favor Y K's personality, not because they are after the barboys or some aim like that. And, so, it is not a problem. However, it might become a place not associated as a pleasure ground for sodomites.

The Neighborhood of Asakusa

Asakusa also has a strong connection with homosexuality (*danshoku*). Although unrefined, there were catamite tea houses (*kagemataya*) during the Edo period and a male prostitute den in the area of Yoshinōchō during the early Showa Era (1925-1989).

Centered around the sixth block near Asakusa Park are a number of theatrical houses and movie theaters; not a few of the actors and entertainers performing in these playhouses—generally referred to as playhouse performers—have homosexual proclivities (*homo keikō*). And, even if they do not clearly have this proclivity, many among people who work in the playhouses or in the performing arts consider sexual relations with women (*yoshoku*) ordinary, and thus choose homosexual (*danshoku*). One can view this among playhouse performers as an

anticustomary spirit, if one were to go so far as to call it that. Borrowing their words and putting it simply: "Women (*suke*) are strange and cannot be dealt with. It is better to have sex with men, of course."

I have just remembered and so I will write it down here: Although people know well that the wandering Hiraga Gennai²² was fond of catamite youths (*wakashū*), my view is that his penchant for them derived, in part, from his anticustomary spirit.

To return to our story, there are many aficionados of this persuasion in Asakusa, and, as written above as regards those individuals associated with playhouses, rather than hiding their homosexual penchant, they triumphantly flaunt it, which is probably why it is easy to operate gay bars in this area. As a result, there are more bars here—numbering eight at present—than in any other amusement quarter of the city.

As for the quality Asakusa's gay bars have in common, the local flavor is also reflected in their plebian character. They are accessible and genuine without any airs. One can feel free going there in Western clothes and Japanese wooden clogs.

Well, let's take a look into the establishments one by one.

Four or five houses before taking Nakamise from New Nakamise Boulevard, which passes directly from the side of Asakusa Matsuyayoko to the movie district around the sixth block, there is an alley on the right. The narrow lane can be almost described as a gay bar alley (*gei bā yōkōcho*), which has four or five such establishments in a row.

On the right side, the first is Tamatatsu, the oldest such establishment here in Asakusa. At the entrance, there is a large paper lantern on which is written the bar's name. Passing through the divided curtain, the inside is relatively spacious; on the left side is the counter, which one often sees at outdoor stalls selling *oden* (vegetables, fish cakes, dumplings, and other items served in a broth), and on the right, chairs and four or five tables—a common layout. It is not stylish, doesn't pretend to be chic, and is without a serious appearance.

This is OK for Asakusa. On second thought, it is just right.

The owner is a sturdily built man of about fifty who, as his hobby, makes dolls. According to the manager, who seems to have a solid homosexual relation with him, the owner was not originally a homosexual (*ikken-san*). I would like to probe his views on homosexuality, but maybe the owner's penchant for this persuasion results from a state of mind

like the playhouse performers mentioned above or, knowing the allure of both male and female persuasions, perhaps he has arrived at a mental state in which "women are boring and men are more interesting," as Itô Harusame used to often say.

L, with the position of manager, is around thirty years of age; he has a round face and, having shaved himself nice and blue, he is a rather handsome man who, at first sight, has the aura of an *uringi*. It is not that he uses feminine jargon (women's language) but is very *suave* [emphasis original].

He has the same hobby as the master—dollmaking—but another of his pastimes is to entertain and work as a matchmaker between customers. Based on a commercial mindset, this spirit of offering his services is, above all, due to the fact that he has already firmly acquired someone of his ideal type (he is an, "otorhinologist," which is an argot for one who fancies old men). If he were sexually unsatisfied, it would be difficult for him to help others.

There are three barboys (I will discuss barboys in detail in the next section).

The next bar is Futaba, which is diagonally across from Tamatatsu. Its façade and layout is, more or less, like that of Tamatatsu; the only difference is that the former is a bit less spacious.

I am not sure if someone drew it, but on the lintel in the corner hangs a design of a naked man. Interestingly, a small leaf (a real leaf) has been placed over his private parts.

The owner says, "Come, Mr. Detective, for it is rotten to be scolded." That is very Asakusa-like and quite charming.

The owner, T, is a tall young man only twenty-eight years old. He fluently spins out feminine language, answering any question.

"This thing of M+W²³ is in fashion these days; if you were to gauge, what is your approximate ratio?"

"Hmm. About 30 percent M and 70 percent W, I would say (*kashira*).²⁴ But, you know, in the bar I talk in this way, but when I go to charge a customer, I become a respectable man."

"So, you change your use of language inside and outside the bar?"

"No. It is not that I do it consciously, but when I leave the bar maybe it's that I don't want to be ridiculed and I straighten up; inside the bar, everyone is a homosexual (*ikken-san*), you know. I naturally feel relaxed,

and because I have many feminine characteristics by nature, I just feel at home."

"What's your ideal type?"

"All people of this persuasion have two things, their 'actual ideal' and their 'ideal.' Their actual ideal, which is to say their complete ideal, is an ideal person who they dream about, someone they would jump at if they could encounter him. One cannot possibly come across that kind of person. So, where possible, they compromise with their emotions, and look for someone as close as possible. That's what they call their 'ideal.'"

... The ideal I seek out is someone who is about forty and of a medium build. I despise chubby body builds to the point of shuddering. After that, I fancy thick eyebrows and beautiful eyes. By far, I like those who have a slightly dirty look."

By slightly dirty, he doesn't mean unhygienic; T underscores someone whose appearance includes disheveled hair, Western clothes, and Japanese sandals.

I learned a lot from what he had to say.

There are also three barboys who work at this establishment, none of whom are much older than twenty. They are lively boys with high spirits.

Right next to Futaba is a bar called Kiyoshi.

This bar used to be called Nitta Minoru's Place, as Nitta Minoru, the former actor in Shoichiku's films, used to manage it; now, a man named K K runs it.

On the right side is the counter; on the left, chairs and tables; and in front of a one-half *tatami* mat area (about 8 ft² or 2.5 m²), a counter for making *okonomiyaki* pancakes.

The owner, K, an intellectual who used to work at a small newspaper company, is a fair-skinned, handsome man of thirty-four or thirty-five, or a "beauty" as they are called in this world (of course, in the case of sissy types). He is a person with a nihilistic feeling. He has a wife and children, but his wife knows about his sexual proclivities and the nature of the bar, perhaps an exception in this world where everyone keeps their homosexuality a secret from their families. By the way, he is also into "otorhinology."

Due to the fact that this place appears to have exceptionally good dancing, one can always find two or three couples boogying in the cramped seating area.

People dance in a very Asakusa style: with their bodies pinned to one another and their faces rubbing against each other, they really enjoy the intoxication of dancing.

There are three barboys—two are middle-aged, and one is in his twenties.

Hakataya, a hop, skip, and jump from the Nakamise area, is on the left side of the street if one takes an immediate left from the street that passes through the sixth-block movie district, which is directly opposite the International Theater (Kokusai Geijō).

As might be expected, the bar is designed for the masses—a large, cavernous establishment indeed. The counter is ridiculously large, so that customers can huddle around it.

A man with a shiny, oily face, the owner is fifty-five or fifty-six, a native of Hakata, Kyushu. It is said that like the owner of Tamatatsu, P—not a lad, but a thirty-five year old—plays the wife's role for him, and they are in a good relationship.

There are also two barboys around thirty years old.

Also in this area, behind the Hongan Temple, is a bar called *Lo-beriya*.

Serving drinks and *okonomiyaki* pancakes, this place used to use only the second floor for customer seating but was recently remodeled to include an underground, salon-style room. In the front is a counter, and as for customer seating, there are five or six sets of chairs arranged throughout the room.

The owner, S, is thirty-two or thirty-three, an active man with a darkish complexion. His homosexual proclivity is that of a dominating type (*pede*), seemingly taking as his objects of desire those about ten years younger than he.

The character of this bar is one wherein a barboy is in constant attendance on his customer. In other words, it adapts a cabaret-style entertainment strategy: Barboys must cater to customers' likes.

Which reminds me, there are four or five barboys in addition to assistants.

In addition to what I have mentioned above, other bars include Nagasaki, which is right off of Kokusai Geijō Boulevard, and Momoyama and Kisen, which are close to Tamatatsu. They are all, more or less, like the many bars already mentioned, and so I will omit them.

I forgot to mention that most gay bars in Asakusa have a second or third floor, which are sometimes used for customer seating or as a bedroom. They give off an Asakusa-like, a very Asakusa-like particularity. Which is to say, if people take an interest in one another, they prefer to quickly become acquainted in a forthright way without putting on airs or fills.

As mentioned above, although unusual, middle-aged barboys work in Asakusa's gay bars. This is something one cannot encounter in the bars of other areas. One of the middle-aged barboys at Kiyoshi is thirty-four or thirty-five, and the other is about forty; at Hakataya, they are thirty-five or thirty-six, but none of them can be called attractive, even in terms of their flattery.

It is interesting that all of these individuals make it brilliantly working as barboys.

Among Asakusa customers, there are many who are said to be "otorhinologists" or who "specialize in older men." In other words, those who seek the love of fifty-year-old men or people of older generations; among these customers are those who, as mentioned above, by and large fancy older barboys.

In terms of these older barboys' ideal type, A at Kiyoshi (forty years old) says he likes mafia types who are about the same age; B (thirty-four or thirty-five) says he likes young ones in their twenties; and P at Hakataya, insofar as he has a deep commitment with the owner, is of course devoutly into otorhinology.

Futaba and Loberiya are places that offer only young barboys.

If, by way of experiment, we were to attempt to inquire into the fancies of these young barboys. . . .

C at Futaba says he's twenty-three but, at first glance, is a nice barboy, pale-faced and slightly chubby, who appears no older than eighteen or nineteen; he says that aside from men over fifty, he feels absolutely no affection.

"I am especially enamored by white-haired men. My real ideal is someone with silver hair and who tends to put on a bit of weight," and so on, answers C. Could it be said that he has a silver-hair fetish?

Generally speaking, it is a fact that sodomites are extremely sensitive to the hair on their partner's head and body. They have a deep interest in the hair on one's head, eyebrow hair, facial hair, underarm hair, chest hair, shin hair, pubic hair, etc. Naturally, the more dense the hair,

the more attraction they feel. Among homosexuals, it is not at all an uncommon occurrence for them to suddenly lose interest in someone simply because of a sparse endowment of public hair, in spite of the person's ideal looks and body type.

The barboys at Loberiya are between about twenty and twenty-three, none of whom are as extreme as to be "pure otorhinologists"; generally, it seems that they are into older middle-aged men to the age of about forty.

As the owner of this bar interprets it, "but most of them can barely stand it; if they were to speak their mind, I believe their real motive is for the money."

That is, in fact, probably true, but it is also a stern reality that among homosexuals there are those who love older men.

Asakusa's plebian character is also manifest in the appearance of the barboys and in the look of the bars.

The majority of the barboys have their hair stylishly trimmed.

In winter, they are often seen in a windbreaker or jacket, and in summer in a Hawaiian or polo shirt; they are almost never seen wearing a suit. With few shoes, they either wear slip-ons or Japanese sandals.

In terms of their conversation, they use many arcane, feminine words. That feminine language is not softly spoken; rather, it is used bluntly. What is interesting is that this feminine language sounds more virile than masculine language.

In this area, sissies indeed become masculine. That effeminate men become masculine is a convoluted way of saying it, but it can be broken down as follows.

Being called a sissy (*one*) or *wring* in this world indicates individuals with a feminine sentiment in their mind, but that doesn't severely damage their personality or their overall character.

That a sissy-like barboy uses feminine language means that he has naturally acquired that which derives from a commercial mindset and that he wants to be treated as a woman by customers, although his true personality is, after all, that of a man.

I understand that this kind of masculinity naturally expresses itself in the open and ostentatious atmosphere of Asakusa and produces a virile resonance in their feminine language, manifested in the complex form of an "energetic feminine manner."

Although it is unclear whether the barboys are conscious of this or not, but that kind of sissy hot temperedness (*takkasa*) is better appreciated by customers over and above their pure feminization (*joseika*).

Another particularity of the barboys in Asakusa is that they do not perform part-time jobs during the daytime.

Why don't they do part-time jobs or go to school? It might be laziness, lack of diligence, etc., but the most important reason is that the majority of Asakusa gay bars, which do not look favorably on barboys doing part-time jobs or going to school, are live-ins.

In terms of the financial guarantee, the salary fixed by the bars is about the same as in other areas, or even less.

So in order for them to earn more money, they have to provide ample services to their customers. If requested by a customer, they have to carry out amorous exchanges from time to time. Those kinds of exchanges inevitably become numerous. And, even after returning from a night out with a customer, they still have to take care of business at the bar. These kinds of chores are the reason why they are forced to abandon doing part-time jobs or attending school.

Let's take a look at the customers in Asakusa's gay bars.

Looking at their age, there are many young clients at Loberiya whereas at the four bars Tamatatsu, Futaba, Kiyoshi, and Hakataya, most seem to be older, middle-aged customers.

Let me explain the case of the latter.

The reason for numerous older customers at the latter four bars is, as mentioned earlier, because the owner and many of the barboys are "otorhinologists," as are many of the customers.

Many customers fancy young men of the same sex, based on a state of mind in which, in terms of their age, they search for what they have lost. However, because there are young barboys in these establishments who are "otorhinologists," a romance becomes possible if compromises are made to some degree.

Although young customers come to these four bars, most fancy men in their forties or fifties. Hence, young ones go to those bars looking for older barboys and middle-aged owners, and even middle-aged and older customers come. Based on the good offices of the owner, love connections are made between customers and barboys and between customers themselves.

And, in this world, there are absolutely those middle-aged men who seek out middle-aged men and older men who seek out older men. There are quite a number of such customers at the gay bars of Asakusa.

Which is to say, species who call out to and gather with their own species; here, these types of customers can fairly easily find their fancy.

The "focus on older men" is thus truly in its heyday at Asakusa's gay bars. As one store owner went as far as to convey with a serious face, "A thirty-five- or thirty-six-year-old barboy or one about forty is, to a certain extent, not good enough. I desire an even older barboy."

Looking at customers in terms of their place of origin, there are few from this area, but as regards other areas, it seems that many people come from the downtown areas of Nihonbashi, Ginza, and Kanda. It should go without saying that the reason why there are few locals is because of sodomites' particular sense of secrecy whereby being seen by an acquaintance is undesirable.

In addition, customers from the countryside are fairly numerous. This is because Asakusa's plebian character makes it easy to approach for people from the countryside.

When homosexuals (*dōseitashū*) from the countryside come to Tokyo, they want to go to the gay bars, but because both the barboys and customers in the places around Ginza put on airs, they cannot blend into that kind of atmosphere. And soon after, they will become afraid of how much they will be overcharged. At which point they pick up and naturally head for Asakusa, which is frank and has neither an air nor a secret. That is because they can easily find a partner there, even if it is for a brief romantic exchange. The reason for this is because the owners of Asakusa's bars are busy channeling customers' affections.

If we inquire into customers' professions—storeowners, business employees, factory workers, students, entertainers, playboys, etc.—many, as is the area itself, are of the plebian class. Sometimes policemen also come as customers.

"I was allured by the prosecutor's keen eye," as one bar owner put it; those with the looks of a police officer are lionized in this world.

Even in Jean Genet's *The Thief's Journal*, homosexuality between a police officer and a sodomite is taken up. In the story, a young *wring* man—the Genet-like "I" of his work—has romantic feelings for a police officer and follows him around day after day; two years later, he admits

his love for the police officer, and, in the end, they come to love one another.

Due to his profession, the police officer might be hiding it, but I think that among them there are surprisingly many who, likely have homosexual proclivities (*dōseitai keikō*)—just as homosexuality (*danshōku*) was prevalent among soldiers who carried out a communal life solely among men. . . .

One can often see a playboy look among the customers not only of Asakusa's gay bars but also in the bars around Shinjuku; I feel like I can understand their homosexuality (*dōseitai*).

If one simply thinks of the cases of gamblers and "knights of the town" who have traditionally led an all-male, communal life; of the strong bonds between boss and follower and between elders and their patrons; of the feelings of awe and attachment of the latter for the former and the deep feelings of affection of the former for the latter; and of the sense of contempt for women one can sometimes see in them—whether they are conscious of it or not—homosexuality (of course, a spiritual thing), in spite of its different manifestations, is thus thought to have arisen.

But, even if there are those who, let us say, are conscious of that, as in the case of policemen, it is probably that their "stubborn" nature suppressed those kinds of feelings without them appearing on the surface.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to add my personal thoughts on what I have enumerated above in surveying the essence of gay bars. Thinking through everything:

1. The management is too commercial.
2. The business has no room for improving.
3. The managers' ideal toward homosexuality (*dōseitai*) is shallow.

Omitting the details, I can broadly summarize these three points.

To begin with, let's first discuss the first point.

Being what it is, it is natural that business is businesslike, but its over-commercialization is, instead, a cause for losing customers.

As I mentioned in the first installment (Part I, above), because homosexuals want to dispel the frustration in their hearts, many go in search of the gay bar, which is, at best, an artificial place. Considering them the same as cabaret customers, they cannot be overcharged 30,000 to 50,000 yen for a bill of under 1,000 yen at a bar for the masses. As that would hardly last for workers, they naturally end up staying away.

These are words that most apply to so-called high-class bars. . . . Point two refers to the fact that most of the establishments are either bars or pubs.

The manager of Silver Dragon mentioned his hope: He thought, for example, that it would be nice to have at least one club-like bar—a bar where anyone could feel free to go inside, meet like-minded customers gathering in one place, and chat and drink with one another.

One can say that the second floor of Silver is almost like this. Point three is that the owners of gay bars have nothing but a shallow ideal about homosexuality. To this day, some of them even hold an inferiority complex.

I think that in terms of their *raison d'être*, gay bars should be given far higher praise than regular cabarets and bars.



Note: For those with questions or concerns about homosexuality (*homosekushuaritei*), please inquire at the following address (with a self-addressed, stamped envelope): Ekoda 2-974, Nakano-ku, Tokyo.

NOTES

1. Literally meaning "male colors," this traditional word for male-male sexual relations was pronounced *nanshoku* in the Tokugawa Era (1603-1868), but later came to be pronounced *danshoku* in popular discourse. See Pfungfelder (1999: 184n114). By the 1950s, when this article was written, the term was falling out of favor. A *danshokuka* (or *nanshokuka*) is someone who engages in male-male sexual practices. As *danshoku* was the favored pronunciation by this time, that is the transliteration employed here.

2. In the original these terms are referred to in capitalized Roman script as GAY BAR and GAY SHOP.

3. The term here in katakana is *homosekushuaritei*, probably a typo as this spelling does not feature elsewhere.

4. The English spoken by pan-pan girls.

5. A *chigo* was traditionally a young pageboy who would wait upon senior Buddhist monks and samurai. The subcultural use of this term to designate the younger partner in male homosexual liaisons lasted well into the twentieth century, as its use in this instance shows.

6. This term is apparently related to the term *tachi* (top), widely used today in Japanese lesbian and gay communities.

7. As the author's confusion over how to write the term suggests, *tiken's* etymology is unclear. An article on "Okama expressions" published in the scandal magazine *Hyaku man nin no yoru* suggests the term is to be written with the characters for "one case/item" and that it was a slang term for the penis among homosexuals. See *Hyakuman nin no yoru* (1963).

8. That is "flip-flops" or "reversibles," men who would take on both active and passive roles.

9. Literally a rate or a percentage.

10. The figures here are presumably per month. For instance, in 1953 when televisions were first introduced to Japan, they cost 15,000 yen per set—a figure that placed them out of the reach of most consumers.

11. "Ginryū" is made up of the two Chinese characters for silver dragon. In contrast, the term "Silver Dragon" as written in the Japanese syllabary for foreign terms (katakana) would likely have had a more fashionable ring at the time.

12. Room size in Japan is often measured in terms of a standard-sized *tatami* (straw mat), which varies from eastern to western Japan but is roughly 6 ft. (180 cm) by 3 ft. (90 cm).

13. The character *ko* affixed to Japanese names typically indicates the female sex.

14. *Musume dojiri* is one of the great dance-dramas of the kabuki stage. The ancient legend of a young woman possessed by unrequited love provides the framework for a series of solo dances that take the girl from innocence, through frustration, to her transformation into a vengeful serpent-demon.

15. *Forbiddlen Colors* (*Kinjiki*) describes a marriage of a homosexual man to a young woman.

16. *Ran* means "orchid" but is also used as an abbreviation for Holland (*Oranda*) and so the name could be translated "Dutch House."

17. This may be in reference to the contemporary comedian Tokyo Bonta.

18. Niwa Fumio, 1904-2005, was a novelist who published over eighty books in his long life.
19. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the only novel by Oscar Wilde, was first published in 1890 and tells of how a portrait of the eponymous Dorian Gray is marred because of his many sins, becoming old and disfigured, while he himself remains young and perfect.
20. It is unclear to which incident Kabuya is referring here. He may have confused the name of the actor. Sawamura Sōjirō (1685-1756) was a famous kabuki actor who founded a dynasty. His descendant, Sawamura Sōjirō V (1802-1853), was an accomplished *onnagata*.
21. A brief play performed between Noh plays to provide comic relief.
22. Hiraga Gennai (1728-1780) was a polymath who experimented in both science and literature. His *Nenashigusa* (Rootless grass; 1763) is a satirical tale of Enma, Lord of the Dead, who falls in love with a kabuki actor and dispatches a demon off to the world of the living to kidnap him.
23. M(en) + W(omen) refers to mixing feminine and male language.
24. The Japanese term *ksshira* conventionally marks feminine language.

8

ROUNDTABLE: FEMALE HOMOS HERE WE GO

Saijō Michio (*chair*), Ōgiya Afu (*writer*), Ueshima Tsugi (*bar owner*),
Miwa Yōko (*company employee*), Kawakami Seiko (*company
employee*)

Homosexuality is not just for men! Among women it is also a splendid rage!

WOMEN ARE SECRETIVE

Saijō: Shall we get started? We had planned to see Professor Ōta Tenrei¹ and the writer Ōgiya Afu² this evening but unfortunately Dr. Ōta has an emergency case and cannot attend. As I expect Mr. Ōgiya to arrive any moment now, shall we begin? Welcome again to all of you who came during this busy season. I have long hoped to have this kind of opportunity to discuss female *homo* but it was quite difficult to assemble women. That we could gather three women tonight is all thanks to the painstaking efforts of Miss Ueshima, so firstly I wish to thank Miss Ueshima profoundly.

UESHIMA: Oh, it was nothing. As both Miss Miwa and Miss Kawakami are young women, unlike myself, it will be a problem if they appear in magazines and so forth. Therefore they only agreed after I said that they could appear under pseudonyms rather than their real names.

¹Translated and reproduced from "Zadankai: jōsei no homo makari tōru," *Fuzoku kagaku* (Sex-customs science), March 1955: 148-57. Translated by Winn Lunsing.

Todd A. Henry is assistant professor of history at Colorado State University. His teaching and research focus on the intersection of modern Japanese and Korean history, urban history, and the history of gender and sexuality. He is the author of "Sanitizing Empire: Japanese Articulations of Korean Otherness and the Construction of Early Colonial Seoul, 1905-19," *Journal of Asian Studies* 64, no. 3.

Wim Lunsing received his M.A. in Japanese studies from Leiden University, 1988, and his Ph.D. in anthropology from Oxford Brookes University, 1995. He has taught at Oxford Brookes and Copenhagen universities and was a research student at Kyoto Seika University (1991-1993) and a research fellow at Tokyo University (1996, 2001-2002). He is the author of *Beyond Common Sense: Sexuality and Gender in Contemporary Japan* (2001) and numerous papers on sexuality, gender, and research methods and ethics in Japan.

Mark McLelland lectures in sociology in the School of Social Sciences, Media, and Communication at the University of Wollongong. He is author of *Male Homosexuality in Modern Japan* (2000) and *Queer Japan from the Pacific War to the Internet Age* (2005), and the coeditor of *Japanese Cybercultures* (2003), *Genders, Transgenders, and Sexualities in Japan* (2005), and *AsiaPacificQueer: Rethinking Sexuality and Gender in the Asia-Pacific* (forthcoming).

Katsuhiko Suganuma is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of English with Cultural Studies at the University of Melbourne. His areas of research focus on contemporary Japanese sexuality politics, queer globalization, and postcolonial feminism. Some of his essays have appeared in *Intersections: Gender, History & Culture in the Asian Context*. He is currently working on his Ph.D. thesis, tentatively titled "The Politics of Global Desires: Intercultural Homo-Eroticism in Post-War Japan."

James Welker is currently working on a doctorate in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His publications include "Telling Her Story: Narrating a Japanese Lesbian Community," *Japanstudien* 16 (2004);

"From *The Well of Loneliness* to the *akurui rezubian*: Western Translations and Japanese Lesbian Identities," (with Beverley Curran) in *Genders, Transgenders, and Sexualities in Japan* (2005); "Beautiful, Borrowed, and Bent: Boys' Love as Girls' Love in *Shojo Manga*" in *Signs* 31:3 (Spring 2006); and "Lilies of the Margin: Beautiful Boys and Queer Female Identities in Japan," in *AsiaPacificQueer: Rethinking Gender and Sexuality in the Asia-Pacific* (forthcoming).

QUEER VOICES FROM JAPAN

**First-Person Narratives from Japan's
Sexual Minorities**

Edited by Mark McLelland,
Katsuhiko Suganuma, and James Welker

With a Foreword
by Donald Richie



LEXINGTON BOOKS

A division of
ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS, INC.
Lanham • Boulder • New York • Toronto • Plymouth, UK

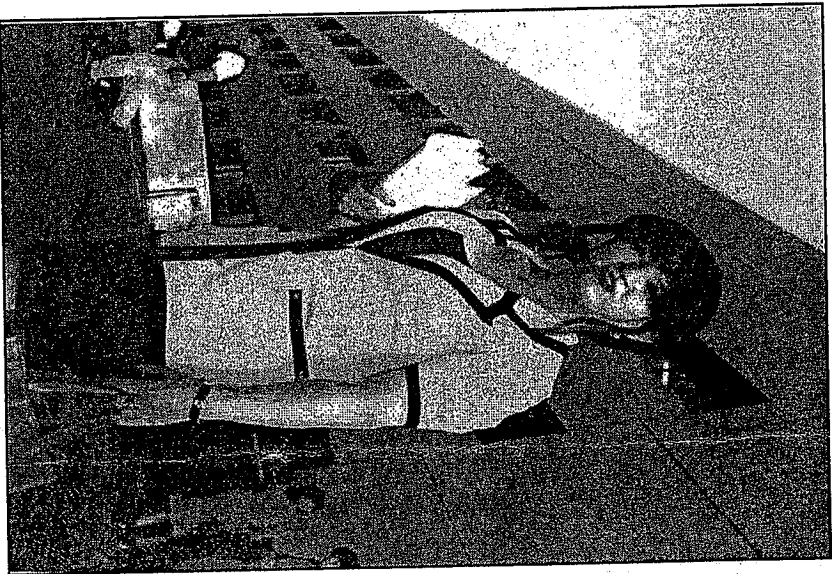


Photo courtesy of Mitsuhashi Junko.