

SAKAGUCHI ANGO AND HIS FLESH LITERATURE

by

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B.A., University of Colorado at Denver, 2008

A thesis submitted to the

Faculty of the Graduate School of the

University of Colorado in partial fulfillment

of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Japanese Language and Civilizations

Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations

2011

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has been approved for the Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations

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## Abstract

Jacobs, Paul (M.A. Japanese Language and Civilization)

Sakaguchi Ango and his Flesh Literature

Thesis directed by Professor Janice Brown

Sakaguchi Ango (1906-1955) was a Japanese author who prided himself on being a literary misfit. This is why many categorize his writing along with Dazai Osamu and Oda Sakunōsuke, as a part of the *buraiha*<sup>1</sup> literary group. As a misfit, his writings presented original ideas for his generation, one of which is the idea of *nikutai bungaku*. *Nikutai bungaku* is a literary approach that features carnal bodily desires. This class of literature was formed after World War II, when a few authors such as Tamura Taijirō wrote stories and essays about men finding salvation and freedom from their situations through sexual relations with women. Ango responded to the idea of Japanese people finding freedom and believed that through the body humans would find freedom. Ango took the concept of *nikutai bungaku* and applied it to other areas besides sexual encounters with women. I use two of his famous essays, “Nihon bunka shikan” and “Darakuron” to explain how Ango made use of the techniques of *nikutai bungaku*. Ango desired for Japanese people to be free in spirit and life. His remedy was for each person to live according to his/her bodily desires, and through that lifestyle Ango imagined a healthier country. In Part II, I have translated three writings by Ango that show his idea of the “flesh” is not completely limited to a man and a woman’s carnal relationships. By reading some of his works, one can see the oddity and originality of his concepts.

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<sup>1</sup> Buraiha: A literary group that was known for their eccentricity in their writings and lifestyle. The authors in this group drank heavily and used drugs. The authors stories featured anti-heroes that were debauched and adrift.

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## PART I

This thesis will discuss the work of Sakaguchi Ango (1906-1955) from the perspective of *nikutai bungaku* (肉体), or literature of the flesh. As part of my thesis, I will present three original translations from Ango's work: an essay, "Panpan garu" (パンパンガール 1947; Panpan Girl); a short story, "Nichigetsu sama" (日月様 1949; Master Sun-Moon); and an interview, "Erochizumu to bungaku" (エロチズムと文学 1948; Eroticism and Literature).

### *Introduction*

Sakaguchi Ango (1906-1955) was born in Niigata, Japan. He attended school in Niigata where he struggled to excel. One of his uncles was recorded as saying, "When he grows up, Sakaguchi will either become an amazing intellectual, or a terrible nuisance."<sup>2</sup> This prediction eventually came true. Ango came to possess both of the qualities mentioned by his uncle; he was an intellectual and a nuisance within the literary world. At 17 his parents sent him to attend school in Tokyo. He decided to enroll in the Indian philosophy department at Tōyō University to study Buddhism. He also attended Tokyo Athénée Français in order to study French. After graduation he began writing short stories and essays. He did not limit himself to any one literary category. Half of his literature is critical essay, and the remainder is in a variety of genres, such as farce, folk tale, mystery, historical fiction, and social commentary. Ango's work was also inspired by Buddhism and eighteenth-century French literature.

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<sup>2</sup> Sekii, Mitsuo, *Sakaguchi Ango* (Tōkyō: Shinchōsha, 1986), 35.

Many literary critics and researchers place authors in categories in order to study them with more accuracy. Yet because Ango wrote in so many styles and in a variety of ways critics were often frustrated, being uncertain where to place him. This problem was to affect Ango's reception, not only in Japan but also abroad. As Dorsey and Slaymaker note, "Not surprisingly, this evaluation infected foreign researchers of Japanese literature, among whom he was virtually unknown, even to experts in the field."<sup>3</sup> In this way, literary critics were unable to connect Ango to any single literary school. The fact that it was nearly impossible to place Ango neatly into the confines of a literary group, I believe, contributed to Ango's singularity as a writer. Nonetheless, on occasion, Ango has been associated with the literary group *buraiha*, which can be translated as "the unreliaables" or "the decadents". Oda Sakunosuke (1913-1947), Ishikawa Jun (1899-1987) and Dazai Osamu (1909-1948) are authors who are included in the *buraiha* style of writing. According to the *Nihon bungakushi jiten* the *buraiha* are "distinguished by rebelliousness toward established intellectual order, a yearning to escape from its restrictions into an abiding freedom, and a longing for the sacred."<sup>4</sup> Each of the authors listed above seem to fit comfortably within the boundaries of this group, but this may be too narrow a category for Ango. Just as his uncle predicted, Ango may indeed be viewed as a kind of "nuisance." Difficult to categorize and hard to pin down, Ango is also known for his unusual and thought provoking ideas. For example, laced throughout Ango's stories is the idea that the Japanese people should live according to their desires, and the corollary that liberation from oppression can be found through the body. This is the aspect of Ango's writing I will discuss in this essay.

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<sup>3</sup> James Dorsey and Douglas Slaymaker, *Literary Mischief: Sakaguchi Ango, Culture, and the War* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2010), 24.

<sup>4</sup> Dorsey and Slaymaker, 6.

In the years immediately following World War II, a type of literature arose that focused on such corporeal liberation. This was called *nikutai bungaku* (肉体文学)<sup>5</sup>, or “literature of the flesh,” and was taken up by both male and female writers. In order to analyze Ango’s work, I will distinguish between male and female “flesh writers” and the different themes each bring to the literary table. Within this discussion I will argue that although Ango’s prevailing themes deal with *nikutai*, his focus expands the widely accepted view that *nikutai bungaku* is simply about carnality, or sexual encounters. I believe that his views on *nikutai*, although not explicitly stated, deal with all kinds of bodily desire, and are not limited to liberation obtained by sexual encounters alone. I will use two of Ango’s famous essays to argue this idea. The two essays are “Nihon bunka shikan” (日本文化私観 1942; A Personal View on Japan); and “Darakuron” (墮落論 1946; On Decadence).<sup>6</sup> Both of these essays express clearly what Ango’s view on the body is, and as a result how he views humanity. Although they are written in two different time periods, one during the war and the other after, the consistent theme of *nikutai* helps show Ango’s different view clearly. By examining works written in two different time periods, I will attempt to demonstrate the principal characteristics of Ango’s *nikutai bungaku*. I have translated three of Ango’s works, which I will also discuss with regard to this topic. My desire is for Ango to become better known for his unique ideas as well as for his eclectic writing. Viewing Japan from Ango’s eyes can offer a new and singular perspective on Japanese literature and culture of this period.

Although Ango is difficult to place in contemporary literary society, there are several scholars who have written about Ango and his works. Among them are James Dorsey, Douglas

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<sup>5</sup> The label, *nikutai bungaku*, came into use after Japan’s defeat; although similar writings may be found before and during the war, these have not been classified in this way.

<sup>6</sup> Both of these works have been translated by James Dorsey, in Dorsey, James, and Douglas Slaymaker. Literary Mischief: Sakaguchi Ango, Culture, and the War. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2010.

Slaymaker, Karatani Kōjin, Robert Steen, and Shōji Hajime. I will refer to the work of these scholars throughout this essay. There is a cult following of Ango today as his essays were used in the student barricades of the 1960's because of his emphasis on disregarding existing structures.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Ango's works***

Ango began writing original works in 1931, one year after graduating from college. As Ango began writing, two different styles emerged: “lyrical works set in the countryside and those in, or about, the genre of farce.”<sup>8</sup> His works dealing with the countryside are mainly about the idea of *furusato* (ふるさと). *Furusato* refers to the “home town” or “place where one originates”. In Japan this word has a positive and romanticized connotation, yet when Ango uses it he deconstructs the romantic imagery. Many believe this is because of his own unhappy memories of his hometown in Niigata. Some of the first stories that include this theme are “Kuradani mura” (黒谷村 1931; The Village of Kuradani) and “Furusato ni yosuru sankā” (ふるさとに寄する讃歌 1931; An Ode to the Hometown). The first story is of a “young man’s simultaneous awakening to both religious and carnal desires in an isolated village.”<sup>9</sup> The second story is about a young man who returns to his home only to be disappointed, for his expectations of his hometown was shattered. Even in his first works, long before the official *nikutai bungaku* was established, the theme of carnality was present.

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<sup>7</sup> Dorsey and Slaymaker, 79.

<sup>8</sup> Jay Ruben, *Modern Japanese Writers* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2001), 36.

<sup>9</sup> Ruben, 36.



Ango's first publications using the genre of farce include, "Kogarashi no sakagura kara" (木枯の酒倉から 1931; From a Sake Warehouse in the Winter Wind), "Kaze hakase" (風博士 1931; Professor Wind) and "FARCE ni tsuite" (FARCE に就いて 1932; On farce).<sup>10</sup> The first story is about a man who has trouble giving up drinking; try as he may, the cold wind always brings him back to the sake warehouse. The point of this story is that "the obsession with abstaining from drink can be a bigger obstacle to spiritual growth than imbibing freely."<sup>11</sup> Again we see that even in Ango's early stories, although not about sexual desires, the theme of *nikutai* is present. Drinking sake has to do with *nikutai* because of its connection so-called fleshy pursuits. The desire to indulge the flesh can include any aspect of the body. Food and drink are needs of the body; therefore I equate them with *nikutai*.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, Japan began to conduct war on two fronts – against the United States and against China. During this time, the Japanese military took control of the government and placed strict limitations on what writers were allowed to publish. The focus was on news and literature that upheld "Japanese ideals," such as the sovereignty of the emperor and the glory of the war. Even though the government tightly regulated writers, Ango published a few works during the war. Some of these works include "Nihon bunka shika" (日本文化私観 1942; A Personal View of Japan), which I will discuss later in this paper, and "Shinju" (真珠 1942; Pearls), which comments on the Pearl Harbor attack.

In 1945 when the emperor announced Japan's unconditional surrender, the war was over. Japan had suffered through devastating fire bombings and two atomic bombs and was to be

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<sup>10</sup> Farce is a writing style that emphasizes slapstick, silly, or spoof techniques to explain a story. For more on specific types of farce written by Ango refer to Shōji Hajime's *Sakaguchi Ango*. (Tōkyō: Chūsekisha), 2003. Hajime identifies five categories of farce from Ango's writing: *Kannen shōsetsu* (observation literature), *setsuwa shōsetsu* (narrative literature), *dokutaku* (slapstick comedy literature), *fūzoku shōsetsu* (novel depicting customs and manners of the day) and *chyaban* (farcical plays).

<sup>11</sup> Ruben, 36.

occupied by the United States until 1951. Nonetheless, the ban was lifted on all types of literature, making way for the “flesh” writers, and Ango. Some of Ango’s most popular works were published in the years following Japan’s defeat. “Darakuron” (墮落論 1946; On Decadence), “Hakuchi” (白痴 1946; trans., “The Idiot,” 1962) and “Sakura no mori no mankai no shita” (桜の森の満開の下 1947; trans., “In the Forest, under Cherries in Full Bloom,” 1997), are among these works. His postwar works possess a much more erotic tone, as Ango was now free to express his ideas through any imagery that he desired. In the interview I translated entitled, “Erochizumu to bungaku” (エロチズムと文学 1948; Eroticism and Literature), Ango states that the flesh writers do not write about erotic things merely for pleasure, but because “people cannot be understood without *nikutai*.”<sup>12</sup> Therefore, while his images of the body may be graphic, his intentions are to connect these images to the character of the Japanese people.

There is a distinct difference between Ango’s works and other modern literature of his time. Ango describes his approach to literature in his essay “Sengo Bunshō Ron” (戦後文章論 1951; On Prose After the War). He says:

I hate the modern literary style that exists only in written form. In daily life we use a much more lively speech. You feel as if you are handling Persian you have just learned when you use this ‘modern literary style.’ I wonder how anyone can stand it. The reason I started writing the way I do is not that I wanted to invent a new style but that I got, really, so sick of writing in that just-learned Persian language.<sup>13</sup>

Ango tried to write as one would speak, which according to him gave his writing character. Because of this, his work can be difficult to read, as he may stop a sentence in mid-thought, and

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<sup>12</sup> Sakaguchi Ango, “Erochizumu to bungaku,” in *Sakaguchi Ango Zenshū vol. 17*, 268.

<sup>13</sup> Masao Shimura. “Under the Cherry Blossoms in Full Bloom” in *The Journal-Newsletter of the Association of Teachers of Japanese*, Vol. 3, No. 3, April 1966, 4.

then continue it later, just like one would do when the train of thought is lost while speaking. Masao Shimura gives good advice as to how we, as readers, should approach reading and translating Ango's work. Shimura states that "the reader should not be unduly troubled; such phrases are used merely as "fillers," a technique borrowed from *kodan* style."<sup>14</sup> Shimura is commenting her on Ango's tendency to repeat words that may seem unnecessary for written language; this is similar in English to the use of "filler words" such as, "like", "umm" or "you see". Shimura points out that we should not consider these filler words crucial to the story, as Ango is only mimicking the old *kodan*<sup>15</sup> style of writing.

The French existentialist writer Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) wrote a short story called "Intimité" (1945), which inspired Ango to expand upon literature pertaining to the body. Ango comments on this story in his essay entitled, "Nikutai jitai ga shikō suru" (肉体自体が思考する 1946; The Body Itself Thinks). In this essay, Ango places Sartre's work alongside his *nikutai bungaku*. The story "Intimité" is about a woman named Lulu, who has a very possessive husband. The husband loves her, yet does not show it. Lulu toys with the idea of leaving her husband for a younger, more romantic man and eventually decides to leave and live with the other man. As they lie in bed together, all Lulu can think of is her ungrateful, pallid husband back home. Now that she is with another man she cannot shake the desire for her husband. She tells the man that she will not be leaving town with him, and decides to go back home. Lulu would rather endure the neglectful treatment of her husband than travel to an insecure future.

When Ango read the Japanese translation of "Intimité", it excited him. He had found in French literature what he believed was a partner in the literature of the flesh. Ango said that "his (Sartre) ideas became corporeal and the story separated itself from theory and existed

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<sup>14</sup> Shimura, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Kodan is a style of traditional oral Japanese storytelling.

independently.”<sup>16</sup> While Sartre wrote almost exclusively about existentialist ideas, Ango saw this story through the lens of the body rather than as a theoretical concept. Ango states that some may believe Sartre’s work possesses no intelligence because the author gives the body itself a voice and makes that the sole focus. Yet Ango is certain that because of the focus on the body, Sartre has imparted a revolutionary meaning to this story that surpasses intellect. With this new found revelation, Ango writes:

Until now I hadn’t heard of Sartre, but I realized the need to separate the body’s thoughts from the thoughts of the spirit in order to understand what the body itself is saying. In this way we must voice these thoughts [thoughts of the body] in stories. I regard reexamining humans as a necessity. And I am not alone in this thinking. It is a question asked by countries from the east to the west. We must use the body and its thoughts to find answers to questions of human identity and morality.<sup>17</sup>

As Ango states repeatedly, *nikutai bungaku* should be used to understand humans and the individual. It was through reading Sartre’s short story that Ango reestablished and renewed his own ideas about the body. Around the same time as Ango’s essay, “Nikutai jitai ga shikō suru”, Oda Sakunosuke wrote an essay entitled, “Kanōsei no bungaku” (可能性の文学, 1946; Literature’s Potential) which touched on Sartre’s short story “Intimité.” Oda did not fully agree with Ango, saying, “Sartre liberates, but does not search for salvation.”<sup>18</sup> Oda believed that it is not enough for literature to merely liberate, as that is only half of what the Japanese people need. They also need to search for salvation. Ango agreed with Oda, but argued that the thoughts of the body are where one must start; salvation, liberation and morality can then enter into people’s lives. In other words, Ango tells Oda not to get ahead of himself.

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<sup>16</sup> Sakaguchi Ango. “Nikutaijitai ga shikō suru,” in *Sakaguchi Ango Zenshū* vol. 4, 268-269.

<sup>17</sup> Sakaguchi Ango, “Nikutaijitai ga shikō suru” in *Sakaguchi Ango Zenshū* vol. 4, 269.

<sup>18</sup> Douglas Slaymaker, *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction* (New York, NY: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004) 28.

### *Nikutai Bungaku*

As mentioned, the theme of this thesis is Ango's expansion of *nikutai bungaku* and how this relates to his view of Japanese people and culture. In order to comprehend this further, we must understand what *nikutai* meant to the writers who wrote about it.

*Nikutai* (肉体) is translated as "body" in English, yet as Slaymaker points out, there are multiple Japanese words that can be translated as "body", such as *karada* (体); *shintai* (身体); and *nikutai* (肉体). Slaymaker explains this more fully in his book, *The Body in Postwar Japanese Literature*. According to Slaymaker, *shintai* can be thought of as a combination of mind and body, while *nikutai* has a connotation that refers to an animal-like body. In another way of describing it, "*shintai* gives the sense of a solid object as in physical science usage, [and] *nikutai* generally refers to [the] subjective and emotion-laden response of a living object."<sup>19</sup> When referring to *nikutai*, these Japanese authors target the animalistic nature of the body. That is why many, if not all, flesh writers incorporate sexual encounters between men and women. According to *Gendai Nihon Bungaku Daijiten*, *nikutai bungaku* was established at the end of the war where the sense of freedom produced a self-indulgent sexual culture.<sup>20</sup> Thus, *nikutai* became an addition to post-war literature. If the purpose of literature is to better grasp human nature; then the body, which comprises the fundamental state of human nature, needs to be established through literature. This means that the author's goal is to write about a character that indulges his or her bodily desires in order to find freedom from life's troubles. One of the more

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<sup>19</sup> Slaymaker, 9.

<sup>20</sup> Sen'ichi Hisamatsu, *Gendai Nihon Bungaku Daijiten* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin) 1968.

determined *nikutai* writers was Tamura Taijirō (1911-1983). He wrote several works with the word *nikutai* in the title, “Nikutai no mon” (肉体の門 1947; The Gate of Flesh); “Nikutai no akuma” (肉体の悪魔 1947; The Demon of Flesh); “Nikutai wa ningen de aru” (肉体は人間である 1947; The Flesh is Human); “Nikutai kaihō ron” (肉体解放論 1947; Essay on Freeing the Flesh); and “Nikutai bungaku no hōkō” (肉体文学の方向 ?; The Direction of Flesh Literature). By examining some of these stories and essays, I will explain the ideas behind flesh literature held by many of the writers.

In Tamura’s essay “Nikutai wa ningen de aru” he explains that during World War II one of the principal ideas upheld by the government was that human reason had nothing to do with the body; therefore, if people were to perform any unnecessary bodily functions they became beasts. These actions can be classified as carnal activity. Tamura points out that following the war, ideas about the body ran counter to the ideas dictated by the autocratic state. Going against the state and using the body to find “reason” was the strategy Tamura believed would produce a better outcome for the Japanese people, especially in view of the outcome of the war. Like Tamura, the flesh writers chose themes that opposed the way the government ran the country during the war. To understand better the climate in which this change took place I will briefly explain the concept of *kasutori bungaku* (粕取り文学). *Kasutori* culture was “a commercial world dominated by sexually oriented entertainments and a veritable cascade of pulp literature.”<sup>21</sup> This lifestyle encouraged an escapist mentality; in other words, it encouraged people to take part in whatever would help them escape reality. The word *kasutori* was derived from *kasutori shōchū*, which is an alcoholic beverage consumed in this era. It was said to be so

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<sup>21</sup> John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1999), 148.

potent that after only three shots the person drinking would be completely incapacitated.<sup>22</sup> It was within this climate that the flesh writers produced their gaudy writings.

Tamura argues that the body is reality or truth. If *nikutai* was not the basis for understanding humans, “thought” itself would become unreliable. He states that, “one of the reasons why we lost the war was because thought wasn’t connected to the body.”<sup>23</sup> The goal of this flesh writer was to use the body as a catalyst to find the reality of humanity, or as he wrote, “To find the meaning behind the body is to find the meaning behind humanity.”<sup>24</sup> Tamura encouraged writers and thinkers of the time to become decadent. Ango also calls for the Japanese people to fall into decadence in his essay “Darakuron.” Tamura argues that because literature has been set free, writers also must set their ideas free and embrace the body that was so constricted during the war; in this way, people will gain liberation and understanding.

During the war the Japanese were subjected to strict constraints. The idea behind this was *kokutai*, which meant that the nation should be viewed as a (healthy) national body. The Japanese people were expected to consider the nation as the site of the body. The Emperor was the head and the people were the body, doing the work for the head, therefore if their own bodies were healthy, the whole body would be able to function at top efficiency. According to Igarashi, “The body gained official attention not only as the basis for national production and reproduction but also as the medium through which the official ideology for the nation could be materialized.”<sup>25</sup> Japanese ideology at that time was based on the restriction of the body. The word that was used to refer to the “national consciousness” was *seishin* (精神), which means

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<sup>22</sup> For a detailed analysis on *kasutori bungaku* refer to John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, 148-162.

<sup>23</sup> Tamura Taijirō. “Nikutai wa ningen de aru” in *Tamura Taijirō Senshū*, 190.

<sup>24</sup> Tamura, “Nikutai wa ningen de aru,” 190.

<sup>25</sup> Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970* (Princeton University Press, 2000), 48.

personality or spirit. According to Slaymaker, “The flesh writers focus on the carnal physicality of the *nikutai* and eschew the *seishin* which they associated with the propagandistic usages of abstract ‘spiritual’ values.”<sup>26</sup> When the government used this word, *seishin*, it downplayed the importance of the individual. Therefore, the flesh writers refused to include “spirit” or “personality” in their discussions of the body. Although it may seem that the flesh writers left out important aspects regarding human reality, the reason is clear. While the Japanese certainly have personalities, they were so used to the control and suppression of individual desire during the war that in the flesh writer’s eyes, a discussion of personality was not worth considering. Flesh writers assumed that the body was central to individual identity. It is no wonder Ango and other flesh writers wrote specifically and adamantly against any restriction on the body. Since the Japanese had lost the war when restricting the body, it is only natural to believe that indulging the body would provide victory and liberation.

As early as 1937 *kenkō taisō* (health exercise) was established to encourage loyalty to Japan. This loyalty was to be produced by the training of the body. In the 1940’s the government put into effect two laws, the National Physical Strength Law (*Kokumin tairyoku hō*) and the National Eugenic Law (*Kokumin yūsei hō*). These laws aimed to monitor and train the Japanese body. Not only did these laws establish tests for physical examinations, they also severely reduced the amount of food people could eat, indicating that the denial of these desires would bring great honor. “The distance between mind and body was collapsed in wartime efforts to create a nationalist body.”<sup>27</sup> Not only did the government separate mind and body, it also tried to dismiss the individual in place of the national body (*kokutai*). Consistently throughout postwar flesh literature, we see a separation of mind and body, in order to exalt the

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<sup>26</sup>Slaymaker, 9.

<sup>27</sup> Slaymaker, 49.



concept of individuality. This seems to be a response to the wartime national body, in which it was believed that the mind and the body were two distinct human characteristics and that putting them together would be detrimental. In Ango's "Panpan gāru" (パンパンガール 1947; Panpan Girl) he describes the *panpan* girls, Japanese prostitutes, as cheerful and intelligent. He says that if "these women become free in both spirit and in intellect Japan will become a truly rich and cultured nation."<sup>28</sup> Ango's ultimate desire for humans is for them to have both intellect and a free spirit. Ango explains how the *panpan* girls had to leave their intelligence behind in order for them to pursue a truly free life. Ango himself does not believe that it is possible for people to possess both intellect and a free spirit in full; therefore, if one were to choose between having intelligence or a free spirit; he would prefer them to choose the latter. Ango finds the *panpan* girls to be great role models for the Japanese people because they indulge their bodies with a free spirit. Tamura adds to this line of thought; he says that during the war acting on impulse was viewed as being even lower than a beast. This type of view kept people in a stagnant frame of mind. By discouraging this type of freedom, "the merchant's son will always become a merchant."<sup>29</sup> The Japanese people were caught up in a system that limited choices and the extent to which people could explore their individuality.

### ***Male and Female Flesh Writers***

With the end of the old regime in Japan, a new foreign force was in control. According to Igarashi, Japan assumed a female position with regard to the American victors.<sup>30</sup> The United States took control and dominated Japan. The Japanese soldiers who returned home after the war went from being the epitome of masculinity to assuming a role similar to that of a subjugated

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<sup>28</sup> Sakaguchi Ango. "Panpan garu," in *Sakaguchi Ango Zenshū vol. 5*, 458.

<sup>29</sup> Tamura Taijiro, "Nikutai kaihōron", in *Tamura Taijiro Sensū vol.5*, 193.

<sup>30</sup> Igarashi, 15.

female. On top of this, the Japanese public began hearing about the atrocities committed by the imperial forces throughout the war. Dower notes, “As a result, many ex-servicemen found themselves regarded not just as men who had failed disastrously to accomplish their mission, but also as individuals who had, it was assumed, participated in unspeakable acts.”<sup>31</sup> Although flesh writers felt relief from the oppressive wartime oppressive regime, this was replaced by the occupation. The main difference was that people were allowed to express themselves freely during the occupation. *Nikutai bungaku* sought to liberate the Japanese people from both the wartime regime and the U.S. occupation. Relating this to the individual who was affected by the war, Kurumizawa Kōshi writes, “In the extreme deprivation of bodily comfort, sexual desire becomes equal to one’s will to survive.”<sup>32</sup> This is another reason the body can be related to freedom and/or salvation. During the war and in postwar years, people’s ideas about liberation focused on the fulfillment of individual desires, such as sex, food, and housing. These are all desires that were met physically, not spiritually or mentally. This is important to remember as we discuss Ango’s view on *nikutai*, because these physical elements all relate to the desires of the flesh. As one can imagine there were differences in the way in which men and women reacted to the loss of the war and the ensuing occupation. These differences may also be seen between male and female flesh writers. The men flesh writers would generally write about male characters using women to discover something new. While the men found liberation and freedom, the women were still subjected to the male dominated system.

Accordingly, female flesh writers took a different approach to their literature. Although the same themes existed, such as sexual encounters and the depiction of graphic events, the women used their own bodies to find liberation. Sharalyn Orbaugh explains three options

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<sup>31</sup> Dower, 60.

<sup>32</sup> Igarashi, 55.

women writers used in writing fiction of the flesh. Each of these options works against the dominant “economies of power”<sup>33</sup> which she describes as the woman’s place in a society. The first option is to maintain and describe current social experiences, thereby exposing the harm done to women. The second strategy is to keep the current configuration of power but use received roles to their advantage. This is done by focusing on positive values. For example, if women in society are generally passive, then stories may depict women doing positive things from that position. The final option keeps the current configuration of power but reverses the gender roles. In a world where males once dominated, now women become the power holders. Common themes and imagery in these stories may include “incest, explicit sado-masochism, amnesia, infanticide, cannibalism, murder, dismemberment, disfiguration, and so on. All of these except amnesia involve the body directly, and violently.”<sup>34</sup> In other words, the women in the stories use their sexuality to seduce and gain control of men or situations within the setting of the narrative. In this way they gain liberation. A few women listed by Douglas Slaymaker as flesh writers are Sono Ayako (1931- ), Hiroike Akiko (1919- ), Nakamoto Takako (1903-1991), Shibaki Yoshiko (1914-1991), and Saegusa Kazuko (1929-2003). Another woman flesh writer that I will add is Ikeda Michiko<sup>35</sup> (1910-2008), who was interviewed alongside Ango in “Erochizumu to bungaku”. According to Slaymaker, “Men seemed to fear the loss of their sexuality and with it their identity as men; the women’s fiction does not establish so close an identity between women and their sexual identities.”<sup>36</sup> During the war men were in a position of ultra-masculinity as warriors. Yet after the war the idea of men being defenders and warriors did

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<sup>33</sup> Orbaugh, Sharalyn, “The Body in Contemporary Japanese Women’s Fiction,” in *The Woman’s Hand: Gender and Theory in Japanese Women’s Writing* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1997), 122.

<sup>34</sup> Orbaugh, 123-124.

<sup>35</sup> Ikeda Michiko was known as a female flesh writer who became more well-known after publishing her story, “Jūfuden” (1950).

<sup>36</sup> Slaymaker, 33.

not disappear. Therefore when foreign men invaded Japan and became the superior males in the society, the Japanese men lost their ability to express their masculinity. “It seemed that in response the Japanese men turned their gaze towards their countrywomen.”<sup>37</sup> This will be discussed in further detail in the “Nihon bunka shikan” section. Although male and female writers differed in their expression and usage of the body, it was understood by both groups that in contrast to the mind, the body harbored the basic emotions of humans. Therefore, in whatever way the writer decided to portray the body, the result was the same -- liberation.

To summarize the purpose of *nikutai bungaku*, I would like to quote Tamura, “The *nikutai bungaku* that we are referring to targets the pre-modern subjugation that all Japanese people have within their hearts. This form of writing will push us into a brighter future.”<sup>38</sup>

Tamura seems to include all of his fellow flesh writers in this statement, stating that they share a common belief. This belief is that all Japanese people are subjugated and need to find liberation through carnal desires. This in turn will lead to a better future for the Japanese people. Having described both male and female perspectives on *nikutai*, I will now examine Ango’s view on *nikutai* and show how it differs from the general literature written on the body.

### ***Introduction to Translations***

Before undertaking the analyses of “Nihon bunka shikan” and “Darakuron”, I will give a short description of the works I have chosen to translate, “Panpan garu”, “Nichigetsu sama”, and “Erochizumu to bungaku”. I have chosen these three works not only because to my knowledge

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<sup>37</sup> Slaymaker, 33.

<sup>38</sup> Tamura Taijiro, “Nikutai bungaku no hōkō” in *Tamura Taijiro Senshū vol. 5*, 198.

they have not been translated<sup>39</sup>, but also because each work illuminates a different element of Ango's *nikutai bungaku*. As I have mentioned above each of these works are different genres of literature, the first is an essay, the second a short story and the third an interview. Although there is great diversity in the style of each work, there is a continuity that flows through each that helps to illustrate my argument.

Ango's desire for the Japanese people to live according to their carnal desires is reflected strongly in his essay "Panpan garu" (1947). Ango believes that if the Japanese can live in accordance with carnal desire, the country will develop a strong culture. He says in this essay "the panpan girls are the cultural symbol for the entire country."<sup>40</sup> He uses the example of panpan girls to illustrate how Japan should re-invent itself.

*Panpan* girls are Japanese prostitutes who became active during the U.S. occupation of Japan. These women were different from the prostitutes of old. The *panpan* girls only did business with GI's or wealthy Japanese businessmen. Unlike earlier prostitutes, they were not forced to stay in a certain location, and they had the power to choose their customers. This was a radical breed of Japanese women who "heralded an oncoming commercialization of sex that would flourish long after they themselves disappeared."<sup>41</sup> After Japan surrendered and the U.S. forces occupied the country, the Home Ministry decided to set up exclusive brothels where the American GIs could have encounters with women. This was called Tokushu Ian Shisetsu Kyokai (特殊慰安施設協会 Recreation and Amusement Association). This is one example of how Japanese men began to feel their masculinity was being eroded. Since the occupying forces

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<sup>39</sup> For a list of English translations for Ango's work, refer to the bibliography.

<sup>40</sup> Sakaguchi, "Panpan Garu," 458.

<sup>41</sup> Dower, 133.

were able to take advantage of Japanese women, men felt helpless. The government organized these exclusive brothels due to the fear that the occupying troops would retaliate against Japanese women as the Japanese soldiers had done to the Korean comfort women. By placing lower-class Japanese women in these brothels, the government intended for these women to provide a barrier between the occupying forces and the average woman. In this way, the government believed that they were protecting their women. Between December 1945 and December 1946 prostitution was banned due to massive outbreaks of sexually transmitted diseases. Yet at the end of the year the ban on prostitution was lifted. It was said to be a part of women's human rights to be able to choose whether or not to participate in these activities. Out of this climate the *panpan* girls were born. "Even while being looked down upon, they came to exemplify a certain tolerance toward other races and an undeniable independence in their defiant behavior as a whole."<sup>42</sup> Ango wrote his essay about these *panpan* girls praising them for their free spirit and individuality. They exemplified Ango's image of *nikutai bungaku* by living life according to their simple desires.

"Nichigetsu sama" is a short story that Ango published in 1949. It is a story that begins with a man who was sent to a mental hospital because it was believed that he was abusing drugs. Coincidentally, Ango was sent to this same hospital after he had passed out from fatigue and drug abuse. Although this story is a work of fiction, the events reflect elements of Ango's real life. The protagonist claims that he is not an addict, yet he admits to his reliance on sleeping pills. While recovering from an overdose of sleeping pills, he recounts a story about an eccentric man named Ooji Kimigorō (Kimi-chan for short) who he met a few years earlier. This man exemplifies the type of *nikutai* that avoids using explicit sexual images. Kimi-chan gives into

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<sup>42</sup> Dower, 133.

the desires of his body by gambling, drinking, tattooing and cross-dressing. Living like this got him into trouble, but Ango praises his lifestyle. Kimi-chan tell a story about a woman who loved art so much that she needed to express her artistic nature in its purest form. Therefore she decided to tattoo a picture on her thigh. She desired to feel and experience the art, but when she was finished she was so disgusted by the image she tore her flesh out to erase the picture from her body. Although this is not explicitly sexual, is a carnal image that Ango paints. Since the man was able to capture the essences of both male and female, or metaphorically, experience both the sun and the moon, in this way he became liberated. He was able to use cross-dressing to help him avoid certain social requirements. For this character, giving into the desires of the flesh allowed him to experience life as both male and female.

“What does he mean when he says the sun and the moon?” I asked.

Again the wife, seemingly disappointed, looked down and chuckled, saying, “You could call it ‘Mr. sun-moon I suppose. It’s the religion that Kimi-chan has made up. A man and a woman, this is sun-moon. He feels that because he is a man but wears woman’s clothes he, by himself, represents the sun-moon. Other than that he is a normal man, who is gentle and good hearted.”<sup>43</sup>

The meaning of *nichigetsu* is to be both the sun and the moon, with the sun representing men and the moon representing women. This story is not about a man taking advantage of women to gain understanding or liberation, but about indulging the flesh in other ways that allows the author to explore the idea of the body in different arenas.

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<sup>43</sup> Sakaguchi Ango, “Nichigetsu sama”, in *Sakaguchi Ango Zenshū vol. 7*, 391.

The last work that I translated is an interview that took place in 1948 between Ango and Ikeda Michiko.<sup>44</sup> This interview is entitled “Erochizumu to bungaku” (エロチズムと文学, 1948; Eroticism and Literature). Within this interview three topics are discussed: 1) the rationality of the body; 2) the cheerful *panpan* girl, which echoes his essay “Panpan garu;” and 3) the identity of the erotic writers. This last section explains how Ango views himself. His view is that he is not an erotic writer and that he does not write about the body for pleasure’s sake, but to discover deeper truths about humanity. This interview provides the basis for his conclusion of this thesis. Each of these works that I have translated were written in the years closely following the end of World War II. As we will see, the ideas presented in these writings are mirrored by Ango’s wartime essay, “Nihon bunka shikan” which I am about to discuss. This essay will provide a good view of Ango’s ideas on the literature of the body and how these compare to the general idea of this type of literature. The following section is my analysis of “Nihon bunka shikan”, which is an essay Ango wrote during the war in order to express his opinion about Japanese culture. As I analyze this work and “Darakuron”, my intention is to show how Ango’s view on *nikutai bungaku* differs from the general idea described above. My translations are to be read with the themes of the following two essays in mind. I will argue that in these two essays Ango’s *nikutai bungaku* is not only about sexual encounters, but about the fulfillment of any bodily desire, and how this relates being Japanese or even human.

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<sup>44</sup> Ikeda Michikio (1910 – 2008) is a Japanese author from Kyoto. She was known as a flesh writer and began publishing works from 1950.



### *Nihon bunka shikan*

Before examining the details of this essay I believe it is important to delineate the history that led up to Ango's ideas in "Nihon bunka shikan." In this essay Ango refers to specific historical figures and places that pertain to specific events beginning with the Meiji restoration.

Change swept over Japan in 1868 with the Meiji Restoration. Prior to this time Japan had a limited amount of contact with the western world. After witnessing the devastation China suffered in dealing with the western powers during the Opium Wars (1839-1860), Japan was motivated to cut ties with outside influences. The only significant contact Japan had with the outside world was through the Dutch, with whom limited trade relations was maintained. Nonetheless, the Japanese realized that they were falling behind; therefore, they began opening their borders reluctantly. In 1868 discontented samurai overthrew the shogun and established a new government. This government opened its doors to the west and in doing so began a quest for world power. As Dower remarks, "While most of the rest of the world fell under the control of the Western powers, Japan emulated them and joined their banquet."<sup>45</sup> Japan accomplished this by gaining its first colony in China in 1895. Japan also became more confident when it defeated Russia in a battle over Manchuria in 1905. This was the first major victory over a western country by an East Asian nation. In 1906 Japan gained control of Korea. Japan's confidence continued to increase as it added resources to their strength. Having established a colony and declared a victory over a major power, Japan was on the point of becoming a world power. In World War I, Japan joined the Allied forces and emerged among the victors.

In the 1930's Japan began its quest to unite Asia under one umbrella. This was called *Dai Nippon Teikoku* 大日本帝国 (the Great Empire of Japan). Japan had been in a continuous

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<sup>45</sup> Dower, 21.

state of war against China since 1931. During this time Japan and US relations began to deteriorate. In 1941 Japan entered into the Second World War with the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7. In 1942 Japan reached its peak of expansion. Its arm spread from China to the mid-Pacific, with fingers in the Netherlands East Indies, French Indochina, the British colonial possessions of Burma, Malaya, and Hong Kong, and America's Philippine colony.<sup>46</sup> The "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" was the veil behind which the Japanese hid their desire for the control of Asia. As the war continued, Japan turned to certain slogans or propaganda to motivate the public and the military to keep the war efforts alive. In order to encourage the Japanese people to hold nationalist sentiments, it was imperative that the people understood what it meant to be "Japanese". The ideal way to encourage this attitude was spurred on by sayings such as *fukoku kyohei* 富国強兵 (rich country, strong military) which was most common during the Meiji period but carried on during the war. *Banzai* was the cry of the Japanese soldiers, which meant eternal life. The Japanese usually referred to the emperor when uttering this phrase. People were encouraged to take pride in their sacrifice for the immortal Emperor. This in turn was a tool that the Japanese Imperial government employed to forge a strong nationalist identity. The censorship of literature and other informational documents also reinforced the nationalist and militaristic agenda. In this climate where Japan was at its most victorious and filled with national pride, Sakaguchi Ango wrote his provocative article, 日本文化私観 "Nihon bunka shikan" (1942). This title has been translated as "A Personal View of Japan" and "An Eccentric's View of Japan."<sup>47</sup> Both of these are accurate but I will refer to this work with the Japanese title.

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<sup>46</sup> As listed in John Dowers, *Embracing Defeat*, 22.

<sup>47</sup> James Dorsey translates "Nihon bunka shikan" as "A Personal View of Japanese Culture", in his book *Literary Mischief: Sakaguchi Ango, culture, and the war*. The title, "An Eccentric's View of Japan" is coined by Alan Wolfe.

As the title suggests, this essay is written to describe Ango's view of Japan. The importance of this essay is due to the discussion of ideas that were ahead of their time. Karatani Kōjin (b. 1941), a Japanese philosopher and literary critic, has expressed his surprise that this essay could have been written during the war because its ideas mirror post-war writings, in the sense that culture is examined as coming from the individual and not the "family nation". That is why some translators have translated the title using the word "eccentric" to describe Ango. In this essay, Ango unexpectedly places the people above the Emperor. In wartime Japan, identity was found in serving the Emperor. This philosophy, upheld by the militaristic government, demanded a certain amount of conformity from the Japanese. The government praised those who were diligent, hardworking, and pure in their service to the Emperor. This is important to the discussion of Ango's essay because the personal view of Japan Ango presents lifts up the people instead of the Emperor. He argues that the people make Japan what it is, not the Emperor. This is why Karatani Kōjin states, "Ten years ago a friend finally helped me realize that I had deceived myself into thinking that 'Nihon bunka shikan' was a postwar writing."<sup>48</sup> The major themes are based on Ango's ideas about aesthetics and are separated into four categories: things "Japanese", vulgarity, the home, and beauty.

Ango repeats these themes in many of his writings, yet this is one of the essays in which his personal views are most clearly laid out. In my opinion, each theme has two factors in common: 1) the fact of "being Japanese"; and 2) the "carnal body" (*nikutai* 肉体). After I examine the four themes Ango lays out in this essay, I will discuss how the carnal body relates to each of Ango's topics.

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<sup>48</sup> Karatani, Kōjin, *Sakaguchi Ango to Nakagami Kenji* (Tōkyō: Ōta Shuppan, 1996), 10. (Translation mine)

“Nihon bunka shikan” was the name of an essay written about Japan by an architect from Germany. In this essay Bruno Taut (1880-1938) wrote about the uniqueness and beauty of Japanese culture. His view was that beauty is discovered and created by a nation rather than by individuals.<sup>49</sup> He examined architecture and art as ways in which one might come to understand and appreciate Japanese culture. Ango wrote his essay to argue against Taut’s notions on Japanese culture, which Ango believed were misguided. Ango found Taut’s essay flawed because Taut wrote from a foreigner’s perspective. Many of the places that Taut incorporates in his essay are places that most Japanese are never able to visit. Ango wanted to present a Japanese point of view on Japanese culture. Therefore, Ango brings the opposite argument forth, stating that rather than the nation creating beauty and cultural identity, it is the individual that creates these things. Taut emphasized outwardly beautiful buildings and customs. He applauded the rich culture to be found in the Japanese temples and tea ceremonies. To Taut, these beautiful things are what represent Japanese culture and that which sustains it.

Ango believed that these ideas held no weight. While Taut found beauty and culture in Buddhist temples, Ango ignored the cultural worth of the temple and gave credit to the monks instead. Ango argued that even if all the temples were destroyed, Buddhism would still exist, yet if all the monks died, the beauty would die with them. In this way, living people play a major role in creating beauty and culture rather than established sites or icons. The buildings that Taut labeled as holding the beauty of Japanese culture are certainly significant monuments. Some of the buildings and art mentioned by Taut include the Katsura Detached Palace<sup>50</sup>, the Gyokusen<sup>51</sup>,

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<sup>49</sup> James Dorsey, “Culture, Nationalism, and Sakaguchi Ango,” 350.

<sup>50</sup> Prince Hachijo Toshihito (1579-1629) established the villa in Kyoto, with a traditional tea house and gardens.

<sup>51</sup> A Buddhist temple in Shizuoka prefecture, established between 1573-1592. It was the first location used as an American consulate.

Sesshū's paintings<sup>52</sup>, Sesson's zen painting<sup>53</sup>, paintings by Chikuden<sup>54</sup>, paintings by Ike no Taiga<sup>55</sup>, and the works of Tessai<sup>56</sup>. Each of these buildings and paintings has contributed to Japanese culture, but Ango argues that they do not define Japanese culture. Ango claimed that the average Japanese person does not know or has never seen these paintings and places. These average men would gladly tear down the ancient architecture to build western style buildings. Ango continues to explain that he himself has no personal experience with these so-called "Japanese" things. He writes:

"In spite of this, I'd like to try my hand at relating my own 'Personal View of Japanese Culture.' You may think it odd that some guy would speak of Japanese culture when he knows nothing of the traditions of his homeland and is familiar instead with nothing but neon lights and jazz. Well, at the very least, there has been no need for *me* to 'discover' Japanese culture."<sup>57</sup>

Not having to discover Japan as Taut did, Ango presents his view of Japan based on his own experiences and his ideas about the average man.

Ango views the experience of the common man as signifying the experience of the carnal body, which in turn represents the individual and the individual's choice. Ango's key statement is as follows, "I yearn for those who live true to their desires—the common man living a common life without apology, the petty man living a petty life with no regrets".<sup>58</sup> This is what he is trying to convey in "Nihon bunka shikan". By living according to one's desires and living

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<sup>52</sup> Sesshū Tōyō (1420-1506) prominent ink and wash painter during the Muromachi period. His best known piece is *Landscape of the Four Seasons (Sansui Chokan)*.

<sup>53</sup> Sesson Shukei (1504-1589) was a Japanese Zen monk and painter.

<sup>54</sup> Tanomura Chikuden (1777-1835) was a Japanese painter during the Edo period who focused on nature.

<sup>55</sup> A painter (1723-1776) from Kyoto who perfected the *bunjinga* style of painting, which was an intellectual style of painting that mainly depicted Chinese landscapes and birds and flowers.

<sup>56</sup> Tomioka Tessai (1837-1924) was one of the last artists of the *Bunjinga* style.

<sup>57</sup> Dorsey and Slaymaker, 141

<sup>58</sup> Dorsey, "A Personal View of Japanese Culture," 151.

a common life, one can find freedom, or liberation. As stated earlier, Ango is categorized in many different ways as a writer but his focus on *nikutai bungaku* is the most common thread in his writing. As stated earlier, *nikutai bungaku* is a type of writing that uses the carnal body or the flesh to express ideas that depict the human condition. Writers of this style use the female body as the *nikutai*. For the male *nikutai* author the goal was to control the woman's body through sexual encounters, giving the men control and freedom. While these male writers explore pleasure derived from the physical body of another (the woman), the women writers of the flesh generally explore freedom from within their own bodies. As we have seen, the women and men flesh writers have different foci in their writing, yet the common theme is the physical body. Besides these two distinct paths taken in writing *nikutai bungaku*, I believe that Ango takes a third path, that is distinct and that does not fit comfortably with the men or women of the flesh writing world. In my opinion, the primary difference in Ango's view of *nikutai* is that he does not find liberation only in the female body but locates liberation in the male body as well. I am not referring to homosexual relations between male characters; instead, I am referring to the way women flesh writers apply their ideas to women. According to women flesh writers, the woman protagonist finds freedom through her own body by giving into carnal desires to kill or to dominate. Ango's stories and essays share the same theme, but male desire is not limited to finding liberation through the female body but also through other means, such as getting drunk, working in the black market, or gambling.

Once we identify this extended fulfillment of desire in Ango's writings, we can see the theme of *nikutai* throughout most of his writings is not limited to finding freedom through the female body. Douglas Slaymaker describes the woman's body as "the source of the universe's

power and if mastered then is the key to the universe and oneself.”<sup>59</sup> Here, Slaymaker is commenting on what the flesh writers were intending to accomplish in the post-war years. In addition, when Ango talks about carnal desires and living a life with no regrets, I believe he is making use of the carnal body not only to find freedom and liberation but also to define the beauty of Japanese culture. He writes: “Remaining true to our most primal needs and desires is the lifeblood of Japanese culture.”<sup>60</sup> Ango believed that if people looked after their personal needs then that would translate directly to the nation’s wellbeing. By viewing Ango’s writing in this light, one can understand that *nikutai bungaku* is not simply limited to the female as being the “body”, but each person adhering to this “yearn[ing] for those who live true to their desires—the common man living a common life without apology, the petty man living a petty life with no regrets.”<sup>61</sup> This can be related to the idea of *kokutai*, which was the idea that if the collective whole of a group was healthy then the nation would be healthy. In the same way Ango desires a healthy nation, but suggests for that as long as the individual is happy and doing well, the nation will do well. The only difference is that Ango believes that a healthy nation comes from individuals dictating their actions, instead of the Emperor dictating their actions; the desired result is the same.

In this essay, Ango conducts his search for liberation by presenting a variety of perspectives on fleshly desires. For example, in the beginning of his essay, Ango recalls a time when he resided in Kyoto for a year and his friend would take him around to see the temples. While visiting these historically rich places, Ango realized how much he craved solitude. “The city of Kyoto, its shrines and temples, its famous places and ancient ruins—none of them moved me in the least. I was content just to be with the other freezing spectators, fewer than a hundred

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<sup>59</sup> Slaymaker, 32.

<sup>60</sup> Dorsey, “Cutlure, Nationalism, and Sakaguchi Ango,” 370.

<sup>61</sup> Dorsey, “A Personal View of Japanese Culture,” 151.

of them, enveloped in the stench of piss in the Arashiyama Theatre, half yawning and half laughing at the ridiculous gags.”<sup>62</sup> Although standing in a place filled with the stench of piss along with other spectators is not usually viewed as being a solitary pursuit, to Ango it was. Solitude to Ango did not necessarily mean being distanced from people but had to do with acting according to pleasing the body, whether in a crowd or alone. In the Arashiyama example, he was able to step outside of his mind (精神, *seishin*) and fully embrace his body, allowing him to achieve liberation and find solitude. In an interview “Erochizumu to bungaku”, Ango is asked if he considers himself an erotic writer. He answers by saying he does not, but he comments that he will use graphic description to get a point across. In “Nihon bunka shikan” he reaffirms this statement, remarking “my point is that there is a need for a unique kind of vulgarity.” (要は、ユニックな俗悪ぶりが必要だということである)<sup>63</sup> His desire is not to be vulgar for vulgarity’s sake, but to make use of graphic description if it helps the Japanese to understand that they do not need to adhere to the slogans of the war. This use of vulgarity is worthwhile if it will help them find freedom through *nikutai*.

In this essay, Ango also discusses how the “home,” or *ie* fits in his writing. As noted earlier Ango did not have a good experience with his family. Accordingly, Ango states that for all Japanese the home is a place full of sadness and anxiety. Ango recognizes that this statement is general, and may not fit everyone, yet Ango is trying to explain that he is not merely advocating a life filled only with pleasure. If one were able to live in a world of pleasure with no hardship or sorrow, one could not truly experience pleasure. Ango contends that the birthplace of literature is found in the human condition. If humans had no struggle, there would be no literature. In considering the home, even after a long day at work, most people will come home

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<sup>62</sup> Sakaguchi Ango. “Nihon bunka shikan”, my translation.

<sup>63</sup> Sakaguchi, trans. By Dorsey, 147.



to a wife or children and will not get a single moment of solitude; therefore, the home is filled with anxiety and sadness. Even if a person is able to live in solitude and has no obligations, this individual still cannot be free. According to Ango, attempting to remove the bad from one's life does not produce liberation. He writes, "Feelings of pleasure only are possible because there are times of suffering. If there are only times of pleasure, it is as if the entire world consists only of water, which would cause pleasure to cease being pleasurable." (苦があつて楽があるのだが、楽ばかりになってしまえば、世界中がただ水だけになったことと同じことで、楽の楽た

ゆえん  
る所以がないだろう。) <sup>64</sup> For people to actually become free when living according to their

desires, pain and hardship must be experienced for the fullness of pleasure to be experienced.

Ango expresses this even more vividly in his essay "Darakuron," which I will discuss shortly. In "Nihon bunka shikan" the home is typically viewed as the most secure place; therefore, by deconstructing the ideal security of the Japanese people, Ango is able to make his point.

According to Slaymaker the home is equated with a woman's space; therefore, he suggests that flesh writers would normally find liberation by inhabiting her space or body. <sup>65</sup> Although this logic applies to most flesh writers, Ango does not believe that liberation can be found in such a place. Beyond Ango's bitter feelings about his family or *ie*, there seems to be reasonable evidence for finding the *ie* to be a stressful location. The concept of *ie* refers to the idea of a house that is independent and separated from the rest of the world, but is also a system that requires much responsibility from the head of the household. According to Lebra, "In the traditional social structure, dependency of the aged is tied to the institutional requirement to

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<sup>64</sup> Sakaguchi, trans. By Dorsey, 153.

<sup>65</sup> Slaymaker, 38.

perpetuate the *ie*.”<sup>66</sup> There is great societal pressure linked to the *ie* system. Naturally Ango tends to rebel against such societal responsibilities.

Just as Ango’s ideas on the “home” were atypical of writings on the topic, Ango also looked at beauty from an uncommon perspective. In the final part of the essay, Ango reflects on what he sees as true Japanese cultural beauty. As Ango traveled about considering what makes an object beautiful, he came across three different objects: an ice factory, Kosuge prison, and the E-16 plane. He compared these to the places Taut pointed out as having true Japanese beauty. Instead of places like the Katsura Detached Palace, Ango elevated these more mundane objects as being the most beautiful things in Japan. The ice factory was a simple building with no aesthetic beauty. Ango describes it best when he states, “Offensive to the eye and without an ounce of beauty to recommend them [ice factory/prison/E-16 plane], yes, but being tied to the heartfelt desires of the people, there is something about them that strikes straight to the heart”.<sup>67</sup> This is why Ango was able to find beauty in these objects. Again he reiterates his love for people and for their desires being fulfilled. Human desires being fulfilled by only what is necessary is the root of beauty, as well as the root for *nikutai*. Even buildings can be a part of *nikutai bungaku* when looked at in terms of the fulfillment of human desires. The E-16<sup>68</sup> was a floater plane, not designed to look fancy but was assembled with the tools and parts that it required, nothing more nothing less. As a result, these planes were extremely useful and fast. According to militaryfactory.com, “The Aichi E16A was powered by a single Mitsubishi three-blade MK8D Kinsei 54 14-cylinder radial piston engine and could achieve a service ceiling of

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<sup>66</sup> Takie S. Lebra, *Japanese Patterns of Behavior* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976), 64.

<sup>67</sup> Lebra, 152.

<sup>68</sup> Picture located at this website: [http://www.militaryfactory.com/imageviewer/ac/pic-detail.asp?aircraft\\_id=444&sCurrentPic=e16a\\_2.jpg&sCurrentDescriptor=](http://www.militaryfactory.com/imageviewer/ac/pic-detail.asp?aircraft_id=444&sCurrentPic=e16a_2.jpg&sCurrentDescriptor=)

nearly 33,000 feet while reaching speeds of over 270 miles per hour.”<sup>69</sup> Ango’s view on beauty stems from his observation of this phenomenon, that is, the creation of something that arises out of human desire but that makes use only of the products necessary to achieve the goal. Ango applies the same idea to the prison. From Ango’s perspective, the people who constructed the building used only materials that were needed. There was nothing extra. He comments: “Beauty is not born where one is consciously trying to create it”.<sup>70</sup> Literature as well cannot be truly beautiful if one writes trying to create beauty for beauty’s sake. Ango gives yet another example, saying, “If the need should arise, we’d do well to tear down Hōryūji and put in a parking lot. The glorious culture and tradition of our race would most certainly not decline because of it”.<sup>71</sup> Basically, this means that beauty is created through necessity, not by simply desiring something to be beautiful.

In this essay, Ango asserts that the body, and the individual are the culture of Japan, not the structures that the individuals have created. For the culture to be beautiful, the individual bodies must follow their desires and live healthy lives. When Ango mentions living healthy lives, I don’t think he is talking about physically healthy people in this context. Tying together the overall themes of this essay, it is clear that the health that Ango is referring to is that of an individual “who live[s] true to their desires—the common man living a common life without apology, the petty man living a petty life with no regrets.”<sup>72</sup> In this way beauty and vulgarity fit perfectly to create the liberation that is expressed through the *nikutai*.

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<sup>69</sup> [www.militaryfactory.com/aircraft](http://www.militaryfactory.com/aircraft)

<sup>70</sup> Dorsey, “A Personal View of Japanese Culture,” 155.

<sup>71</sup> Dorsey, “A Personal View of Japanese Culture,” 156.

<sup>72</sup> Dorsey, “A Personal View of Japanese Culture,” 151.

## *Darakuron*

“Darakuron” was written in 1946 shortly after the war, and is heavily focused on Japanese culture and its people, similar to “Nihon bunka shikan.” This essay sums up Ango’s view about how the Japanese people had changed from wartime to postwar. The word *daraku* from the title *darakuron*, is defined by James Dorsey as “decadence”. According to the *nihongo daijiten*, *daraku* means to lose one’s moral sense, or to ruin oneself, corrupting one’s (moral) behavior. The idea of falling into corruption or becoming corrupt is what *nikutai bungaku* represents. As mentioned above, literature for the flesh writers is about finding salvation for people through the body. Ango says that to live and to fall into decadence is the way to salvation. According to Douglas Slaymaker, “liberation of the individual is manifested by means of a ‘fall’ from artificial structures, a return to ‘decadence’; this is his famous *daraku*, and *daraku* comprises the representatively postwar, carnal imagery of *nikutai bungaku*.”<sup>73</sup> The connection between *nikutai* and *daraku* clearly intersect in this essay, which shows how Ango represents *nikutai bungaku*. A quote from Robert Steen will give us direction regarding this essay. Talking about Ango’s focus on literature, he states:

In Ango’s essays, literature is discussed as a pursuit of the experience of being a human being, and Ango is celebrated by critics as an author who does this more rigorously than most other writers. But the human being encoded in his texts is a male gendered human being that is defined in relation to woman as mute spectacle... One reality is shown therefore excluding the other subjects reality.<sup>74</sup>

Steen is absolutely right, if we only perceive Ango through the common perspective on male flesh writers. Male flesh writers tend to use woman’s bodies to gain liberation,

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<sup>73</sup> Slaymaker, 100.

<sup>74</sup> Robert A. Steen, *To Live and Fall: Sakaguchi Ango and the Question of Literature* (Thesis: Ph. D—Cornell, 1995), 180.

leaving the woman “as mute spectacles.” From time to time Ango writes narratives of men using women, where the human exploration is male oriented. Yet simultaneously we have seen that Ango does not limit himself to exploring human nature and liberation only through women’s bodies. We have seen that Ango desires for humans, men and women, to live according to their bodily desires. In Ango’s essay “Darakuron,” we will see more examples of how he views *daraku/nikutai*. The tools he uses in suggesting how humans should fall into decadence are not all directly related to the body, but because *daraku* is a part of *nikutai bungaku* so are these topics Ango explores.

Ango’s main idea is that all humans are part of the “flesh;” therefore, we inevitably fall into decadence. By embracing this, humans all can find salvation. Ango provides four ideas that he believes have simulated this process in Japan. Two of these ideas deal with systems present during the war, and which were destroyed after the war. The other two ideas seem to be contradictions within Ango’s own experience. The first is his cousin, a young girl of only twenty-one who killed herself and as a result preserved her beauty. In order to shed light on this twisted logic, I will compare the outcome of Ango’s cousin to the outcome of the “Hiroshima Maidens,” who were horribly disfigured by the nuclear bomb. The second is Ango’s experience living in Tokyo during the firebomb raids. He found beauty in destruction, which disappeared after the war had ended.

The first topic taken up by Ango is the issue of *bushido* (the way of the warrior) and the samurai. *Bushido* was a philosophy, intended to bring virtue and honor to Japan, yet Ango portrays it as setting limitations on the Japanese people. The second topic is the emperor system, which originally was established for the use of politicians. This system

provided a shield for the politicians, by which they could use the emperor as a motivator to promote hidden agendas. This gave the Japanese citizens a false sense of security, because they trusted the emperor's name more than policy. Most Japanese citizens put their trust in the emperor, unaware of the power held by politicians. Ango explains how the Japanese tended to respond to each of these concepts during the war and the changes that occurred thereafter. The previous two examples are closely connected, as they both refer to tools used to draw the Japanese people into the war and support the government unconditionally in all its actions. Each of these ideas presented by Ango relate to human nature and desire. I will explain this and how it relates to Ango's overall theme of *nikutai*. In order to fully understand the function of these ideas in Ango's essay, it is important to introduce the setting in which "Darakuron" was written.

On August 15<sup>th</sup> 1945, the Japanese emperor announced his nation's defeat. His voice was heard for the first time through a radio broadcasting system. Many were shocked to hear the emperor, for whom they were fighting, admit defeat. However, they were also relieved to see the war end. Emperor Hirohito used this message to communicate to his "subjects" that it was his divine will and intervention to protect the Japanese people from any further harm. Several days after this statement, the occupying forces entered Japan. The old system had crumbled, defeated by the enemy through constant firebomb raids and two nuclear bombs. During the emperor's speech he characterized the defeat by saying: "The enemy has for the first time used cruel bombs to kill and maim extremely large numbers of the innocent, and the heavy casualties are beyond measure. To continue the war further could lead in the end not only to the extermination of our race, but also to the destruction of all human civilization."<sup>75</sup> The emperor is referring to the atomic bombs the United States military dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Fortunately,

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<sup>75</sup> Dower,36.

Ango did not experience the horrors of the atomic bombs, but he chose to stay in Tokyo during the firebomb raids, which brought Tokyo to its knees. Having witnessed this kind of suffering Ango gained a new perspective on human nature, of which he writes about in this essay.

Ango begins “Darakuron” by quoting a slogan recited during the war, “We, the humble shields of our Sovereign Lord, march forth. We are resigned to die at His Majesty’s side and never look back.”<sup>76</sup> He sets the tone by referring back to wartime ideologies, to show how things have changed. Overnight, it seemed that people’s attitudes changed greatly after the war, but in reality Ango says, “what has changed is just the surface of things, the world’s outer skin,” not the people.<sup>77</sup> He means that even though people’s situations changed, human nature remains the same; they will always fall into decadence. Ango used both *bushido* and the emperor system to show from where Japanese people had “fallen”. Both of these institutions are functions of the national body (*kokutai*). Similar to “Nihon bunka shikan,” Ango praises the individual, not only encouraging them to live according to their desires, but arguing that perhaps this “fall” is inevitable. The government encouraged people to sacrifice many of their individual needs in order to provide for the national body. After the war, Ango noticed how quickly people reverted to meeting their own needs instead of the nation’s.

In the section entitled *nikutai* I explained that the motivation of the flesh writers was largely based on wartime bodily suppression enforced by the government. In Ango’s essay “Darakuron,” he pinpoints two ideals and systems that fueled that sort of treatment of the body; these ideas were *bushidō* and the emperor system. Therefore I will attempt to facilitate a discussion about these two ideas in order to understand Ango’s essay with more clarity.

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<sup>76</sup> James Dorsey, “Discourse on Decadence,” in *Literary Mischief*, 175.

<sup>77</sup> Dorsey, “Discourse on Decadence,” 175.

Originally *bushidō* referred to a code by which samurai lived. Its qualities were rooted in Confucian teaching, and can be found in stories dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Although *bushidō* is an ancient code, it was not utilized in a consistent manner throughout Japanese history. The *bushidō* that Ango refers to is that which was created anew by policy makers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In 1880 *bushidō* was reestablished in response to foreign concepts that exemplified characteristics of a civilized country, such as the concept of being a gentleman. As the government became more militaristic, the concept of *bushido* was adapted to increase nationalistic sentiment. The function of *bushidō* was to convince the Japanese citizens that war was purifying and death a duty. The government encouraged every Japanese person to live by these ideals, and began teaching this code in schools. The children were taught that upholding these virtues meant that they were proper Japanese. Some of the characteristics associated with *bushidō* are courage, benevolence, respect, honesty, honor, loyalty, filial piety and caring for the elderly. Ango points out two specific sayings from the samurai code that state “a virtuous woman takes not a second man” and “the true samurai serves but one lord.”<sup>78</sup> These are the codes that Ango used to prove that after the war, people fell into decadence. He observed that only a short time after the war, women had begun searching for new relationships, whether or not they had learned of their husbands death.<sup>79</sup> In fact, it is recorded that about 1,600,000 women lost their husbands during the war.<sup>80</sup> Many of these women ignored the *bushidō* ideals and sought to fulfill their desires, thus falling away from these teachings. He also compared the kamikaze pilots to samurai, who served the emperor loyally, but as soon as they were defeated, these pilots began to sell items illegally on the black market in order to preserve their own lives.

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<sup>78</sup> Dorsey, “Discourse on Decadence,” 181.

<sup>79</sup> For a discussion on the issue of soldiers not being able to return home along with the response towards veterans refer to John Dower’s *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the wake of World War II*. p. 48-61

<sup>80</sup> Shiozawa Miyoko and Shimada Tomiko, *Hitorigurashi no sengoshi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975), 13.



The dedication of the kamikaze pilots and housewives may appear to be commendable, but according to Ango, “the code of the samurai is a list of prohibitions controlling our natural and instinctual urges and, as such, it is inhuman, even anti-human.” In this way, the Japanese people have been oppressed by their own codes. Ango also writes: “On the other hand, in the sense that it is grounded in a keen observation of human emotions and instincts, there is something altogether human about it as well.”<sup>81</sup> Throughout Ango’s literature his focus has been on understanding human nature; therefore, to some degree he expressed respect for *bushidō* ideals that were created out of an understanding of human nature. Within any society or culture there are rules, ideals and established beliefs that help enforce a certain way of life. These systems are usually born from the tendencies of the people within the society. These tendencies are a part of their human nature. For rules and ideologies to make a difference in a society, they must stem from a basic understanding of people’s nature. In the case of Japan during the war, people were taught that they were superior to western countries because of the practices that were inherently Japanese, such as *bushidō* and the emperor system. Ango contends that these practices were born from the Japanese nature and when exploited, became the driving force behind Japan’s fierce determination to fight to the death. These practices also gave the military and government leverage to impose harsh conditions on the body, as discussed in the *nikutai* section. Ango states that the oppressive nature of the *bushidō* and emperor system has caused the Japanese people to lose their individual identities and in turn lose their humanity. This is why Ango declares, “Japan has been defeated and *bushido*, the code of the samurai, is on the wane, but at last the real humans have been born from the womb of all truth: decadence. To live, and to fall into decadence –that’s the proper process. Is there any path to true human salvation

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<sup>81</sup> Dorsey, “Discourse on Decadence,” 177.

outside of it?”<sup>82</sup> For Ango, there was no other path to salvation. What he meant by decadence was for the Japanese people, as individuals, to give into every quality that opposed the code of the samurai. “The system of loyalty to one’s patrons still existed, but not by samurai or military men, it came to be in the form of *panpan* girls.”<sup>83</sup> In Ango’s essay, “Panpan garu” he writes about these women and their loyalty to wealthy Japanese businessmen and U.S. military personnel. The girls use this virtue to promote their decadence, which is why Ango views them as the “cultural symbol for the entire country.”<sup>84</sup> Ango exalted the lifestyle of individuals that lived according to their desires instead of the created virtues of old.

This decadence also applied to the emperor system. Ango describes this system in simple terms. Just as the code of the samurai was formed based on an understanding of human nature, so too was the emperor system. In the same way, this system was used to exploit the Japanese people and hinder them from experiencing freedom. Ango states: “The political utility of the imperial house was something sniffed out by politicians who had observed the idiosyncrasies of the Japanese people and discovered within them the possibilities of an emperor system.”<sup>85</sup> Ango is referring to the imperial “restoration” of 1868, when the emperor became the head of the Empire, giving him the right of sovereignty. Imperial rights included sanctioning laws as well as being the supreme commander of the Army and Navy. The significance of the emperor as the head of Japan outweighed the significance of his actual duties. Many Japanese war slogans represented the emperor as their motivation for fighting the war. Some of these slogans were, *tenno heika banzai* (long live the Emperor), *sonnō jōi* (respect the emperor, expel the

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<sup>82</sup> Dorey, “Discourse on Decadence,” 181.

<sup>83</sup> Dower, 134

<sup>84</sup> Sakaguchi, “Panpan garu,” 458.

<sup>85</sup> Dorsey, “Discourse on Decadence,” 177.

barbarians)<sup>86</sup>, *hoshigarimasen katsumade wa* (We will not want, until victory is attained), and *zeitaku wa tekida* (luxury is the enemy)<sup>87</sup>. When Ango wrote “Darakuron” it had only been one year since the last of these slogans had been heard in Japan. I believe it is important to explain the history behind the effectiveness of these slogans, that is, to show how the emperor came to hold such ideological power.

Between 1868 and 1889, “the constitution greatly elevated the emperor’s legal and cultural authority.”<sup>88</sup> This became the unifying force for communities, workplaces, and especially for the nation. In the 1930’s Japan saw another shift in government. This Fascist movement paved the way for Japan to enter into the destructive war, where the citizens were forced to live in accordance with fascist values.<sup>89</sup> As a result, the traditional bureaucracy gave way to military control. The Imperial Way faction (*kōdō-ha*) was a group where the most radical military men assembled as part of the Japanese government. Referring to the Imperial Way faction Gordon states that, “they stressed the importance of spiritual education and loyalty to the emperor as foundations of national strength.”<sup>90</sup> This type of leadership resonated with the Japanese people giving them confidence to embrace the war and subject themselves to ideals that held back their “true nature”. “True nature” describes the desires Ango yearns for the individual to embrace. The emperor was a source of confidence among the Japanese, equal among every class. This is significant because it resulted in the emperor truly being an inspiration for the entire country. Ango noticed that this was seen by all types of people bowing each time their

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<sup>86</sup> This slogan was used in the Tokugawa period around the 1850’s. It was replaced by the slogan *fukoku kyōhei*, which was used during the war. For this reason I include it in the war slogans.

<sup>87</sup> The last two slogans were motivated by following the emperors heeds to deny pleasure and luxury for the sake of the war.

<sup>88</sup> Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 68.

<sup>89</sup> Gordon, 195.

<sup>90</sup> Gordon, 196.

street cars passed below Yasukuni Shrine, where Japan's war dead were honored. According to Ango they felt the need to honor those who died in honor of the emperor.

Ango explains that when the emperor became a commoner, after the war, and Japanese people stopped worshiping him as a deity, the principle need for humans to have something to follow didn't change. Ango continues to point out that the concept for an emperor system along with the ideas of *bushido* was based on human nature. Therefore, Ango states, we all end up worshiping things that are rather ridiculous, without noticing. Humans want to have purpose and meaning in life. These systems provided this for the Japanese people during the war, but once the war was over the veil was lifted and people were free to indulge their senses, allowing many to fall into decadence.

Ango mentions his niece who took her own life at the age of twenty-one. While this was a sad occasion, Ango could not help but feel relief and gratitude for her taking her life. She preserved her beauty by dying before the world was able to corrupt her. Ango shared many others' desires "to have things of beauty forever frozen in that state."<sup>91</sup> His niece was frozen in time through death. Ango relates his niece committing suicide to a well-known event at the time. In 1932, in the town of Ōiso a student and his girlfriend committed suicide. Ango states: "When the student and his young lover committed suicide so that the purity of their platonic love would be guaranteed for all eternity, the general public was completely sympathetic."<sup>92</sup> Although Ango says he understands that true beauty comes with time, he would rather find beauty in a twenty-year-old woman than a sixty-year-old woman. In the years following the war there was a group of women called "Hiroshima Maidens." These women were all physically affected by the

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<sup>91</sup> Dorsey, "Discourse on Decadence," 177.

<sup>92</sup> Dorsey, 175. This love suicide inspired a movie, *Love Consummated in Heaven*, as well as inspired more than twenty other love suicides.

atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima at the end of the war. They were disfigured and became outcasts in the very city that was destroyed by the bomb. I am comparing these women with Ango's niece because it may help explain why Ango could justify beauty from a girl killing herself. She may have been saved from some tragedy in life, unlike the "Hiroshima maidens."

Hiroko, one of these maidens was only fourteen when the bomb disfigured her body. A description of Hiroko's face shows the devastating effects of the bomb:

The brim on the hiking cap she had worn that morning had spared the high cheekbones and wide eyes that opened her face with a placid prettiness, but the features on the lower half of her face looked as if they had been wholly reshaped. Her neat snub nose could have been smudged by a heavy thumb: Two tiny holes peeked out of mashed cartilage. Her rosebud mouth was a memory; the lipless opening that passed for a mouth now was more like a thin tear in an overlay of angry red scar tissue that stretched over her chin and clutched her throat...<sup>93</sup>

After the war, people regularly expressed that the dead were the lucky ones. They came to this conclusion because of the sympathy many felt towards the "heroic souls of the war dead."<sup>94</sup> Also, many people mentioned how lucky the dead were when they saw the effect of the radiation on those who survived. Even Hiroko's doctor reacted in this way: "upon seeing her disrobed and without her mask on, he had gasped and rather than saying, 'You're lucky to be alive,' his comment was, 'It's unfortunate you didn't die.'"<sup>95</sup> Why do people react in this way even though beauty is formed through adversity? Ango suggests that there is some desire within human nature that tends to gravitate toward untainted beauty. A beauty that does not have to be made

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<sup>93</sup>Rodney Barker, *The Hiroshima Maidens: A Story of Courage, Compassion, and Survival*, (New York, N.Y.: Viking, 1985), 31

<sup>94</sup>Dorsey, 179.

<sup>95</sup>Barker, 33.

up or created is the beauty towards which Ango gravitates. This is in contradiction to the concept of beauty being formed over time through the trials of life.

In Ango's essay "Nihon bunka shikan," he explains this same concept using inanimate objects rather than people. Beauty is found in an ice factory because it consists of a simple, functional structure that fulfills a need. It was not created to be aesthetically pleasing, but it was beautiful in and of itself. This may seem contradictory because the twenty-year-old girl was outwardly beautiful and the ice factory was plain. Yet, both the girl's beauty and that of the factory were natural, not created with that purpose in mind. Ango expresses his desire for the beauty of twenty-year-old girls, yet the society around him creates ideals causing this desire to be seen as improper. We can see this in the following statement: "If it were clear that these sentiments were proper, I'd heave a sigh of relief and be able to concentrate on chasing down some of those twenty-year-olds for myself."<sup>96</sup> On the other hand, Ango's niece supposedly preserved her purity by ending her life before being tainted, but this too is an "empty illusion, as fleeting as the froth on the river."<sup>97</sup> Although Ango's niece tried to preserve her purity, because it was not obtained through natural means, her beauty eventually became sullied. Her suicide robbed her of achieving the beauty that is formed through life's adversities. Ango's discourse on these subjects; *bushido*, the emperor system, and the twenty-year-old girl all contribute to Ango's overall theme: that no matter what ideals or systems are put into place, humans will walk along the path of the flesh and fall into decadence.

The last area of focus deals with the beauty that Ango realized existed among the Japanese people during the devastation of the war in Tokyo. The destruction brought about by

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<sup>96</sup> Dorsey, "Discourse on Decadence," 179.

<sup>97</sup> Dorsey, "Discourse on Decadence," 181.

the war opened his eyes to the real beauty of humanity. He was not directly involved in the overseas fighting, but he chose to stay in Tokyo during the firebomb raids. The air raids over Tokyo and other major cities began in 1942 and continued through the end of the war. The war torn economy was hit hard during this time and the government had to ration food, limiting the amount of food families could acquire every day. People were starving while they were under constant alert, fearing for their family's lives. Although these people suffered extreme hunger due to the rations, they continued with their daily lives, believing that Japan was going to win the war. The fact that the Japanese people were able to maintain their lives was a testament to how they viewed their situation. Ango never felt closer to his fellow human kind than when he was surrounded by the colossal destruction of these raids. He saw humans living in the moment, fighting to survive, yet the most striking emotion he felt was the anticipation of the miraculous rebirth in a new world.<sup>98</sup> People seemed to have surrendered to fate, while the bombs were falling; they had to survive, and when it was calm they looked for food and sought to help others.

Based on letters submitted to the *Asahi Shinbun* editor, I have chosen individual accounts from people who lived through the Tokyo fire bombings, to paint a clear picture. "We saw blackened bodies, half-burned bodies, people who expired even as they called out 'Water! Water!' and firemen dead on fire trucks. The swimming pool at the school was a mountain of corpses. The Sumida Park was full of the bodies of people who must have been trying to escape the fires."<sup>99</sup> This is the image of people so desperate to find shelter they jump into bodies of water to only be boiled alive. During the attacks parents would desperately try to seek shelter for their children praying that it wasn't their children boiled in the pool. This is desperation, the fear

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<sup>98</sup> Dorsey, "Discourse on Decadence," 179.

<sup>99</sup> Frank Gibney, *Senso: The Japanese Remember the Pacific War Letters to the Editor of Asahi Shimbun (Pacific Basin Institute Book)* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), 204.

of not knowing when the attacks would arrive or how close those attacks would be to home. Even before Japan surrendered, Tokyo and other major cities seemed to be defeated because of the destruction they faced. “On the way home, I thought I saw some black work gloves. When I took a closer look, they were hands that had been torn off.”<sup>100</sup> The firebombing occurred in the major cities where population was dense, therefore the casualties were high. Not only were families losing their loved ones overseas, but children lost mothers and mothers lost children right in their backyards. Funato Kazuyo was a sixth-grader and was evacuated in 1944 but returned on March 2, 1945, right before the major raid on Tokyo. Just as the family reunited the raid began, fire was everywhere. Her youngest brother was killed while their mother was carrying him on her back. The mother was burned badly but survived only to find her baby dead.

After the U.S. troops occupied Japan, the Japanese people were noted as being psychologically drained, yet they had hope in their eyes as if they were children. Ango relished this destruction because of what he witnessed in the Japanese people. In order to understand the weight of the destruction Ango must have witnessed, I would like to elaborate by examining eyewitness accounts. Ango commended the Japanese people who lived through the fire raids, saying they were surrendered even in the toughest of times. After the war he noticed that living in Tokyo during the war was much safer than after. During the war, there were very few instances of robbery and Ango felt completely safe leaving his door unlocked. There seems to be a connection between how people reacted to the attacks and Ango’s sense of safety. Ango said, “though the next bomb was a constant threat, if we could only push this from our minds, we

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<sup>100</sup> Gibney, 204.



were free to just sit back and lose ourselves in the drama of it all. I was a fool through the war, naively making a game of it.”<sup>101</sup>

How could people who suffered so much react in such an unemotional way? The conventional way of viewing the Japanese is narrow and does not provide a complete picture. In “Nihon bunka shikan” Ango echoes this sentiment, by saying to stop looking at Japan through art or temples or ideologies and simply look at the individual. He also says that this reaction shouldn’t be surprising, because people will always resort back to original truths. For some it was to sell and buy goods in the black market, for others it was to find a new love. The war may have temporarily changed the human condition, but in the end human nature remains the same; we all fall back towards decadence.

After examining the accounts of Japanese citizens who experienced this destruction it may be hard for us to accept how the Japanese people actually responded. Ango had a simple yet profound antidote; he had the chance to evacuate Tokyo and avoid all this destruction, yet decided to remain. In fact, he wrote that this was where he saw pure beauty. The beauty of the destruction also lay in how it destroyed the norms of ideas and man-made laws by which the Japanese people were manipulated. As a result of the destruction, Japan surrendered and the people were able to throw off the ideals that had hindered them and run free, into decadence. This decadence is a form of *nikutai*, and an avenue for humans to find salvation. As I have defined above, *daraku* means to lose one’s moral sense, which would allow people to give into their bodily desires. In fact, that is what people did. I believe that this sums up Ango’s view on *nikutai*. Sex was only a part of the entirety of the decadence in which people indulged. The *nikutai/daraku* that Ango refers to is about human nature; so what else is a part of this human

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<sup>101</sup>Dorsey, “Discourse on Decadence,” 182.

nature other than sex? As a means of survival, people abandoned their morals and engaged in business with illegal black marketers; this was how they fell. People finally had the freedom to indulge their bodies, and by indulging them Ango truly believed that they would find salvation. “Humans fall into decadence. Noble warriors and saintly women fall into decadence. There’s no preventing it, and prevention wouldn’t bring salvation even if it were possible. Humans live, humans fall. There is no shortcut to salvation that sidesteps this process.”<sup>102</sup> When Ango states that “there’s no preventing it”, he is referring to societies that try to save people from falling into corruption through laws and regulations. It is natural to use our understanding of a society and make rules and regulations for the benefit of that society. Yet Ango states: “Establish whatever rules you want but you can’t prevent the fall into hell. The rules we set are artificial and will not last, and soon enough decadence will come.”<sup>103</sup> Finally, without the destruction caused by the physical destruction of Tokyo, the Japanese people may have remained in the grasp of *bushidō* and the emperor system.

Ango sums up “Darakuron” by explaining that humans will inevitably fall into decadence; at the same time, because people are not immune to emotional hardship, we will create artificial rules and systems to curb the “fall.” I believe that this also sums up Ango’s view on *nikutai bungaku*. Ango states that by giving into fleshly desires people will fall to the bottom of the barrel in life, but through that process they will find salvation. As a result of falling, people are able to accurately form rules or systems to effectively move an individual or a society forward. Without falling into decadence and experiencing the lows of life, all rules and systems are artificial boundaries that will also fall in time. The fleshly desires that can lead to this salvation are the ones we have seen throughout this essay. It is not only obtained through

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<sup>102</sup> Dorsey, “Discourse on Decadence,” 182.

<sup>103</sup> Dorsey, “Discourse on Decadence,” 181.

women, but also through alcohol, cross dressing, tattooing bodies, and simply people using their bodies to do what they desire. The point of Ango's *nikutai bungaku* was to discuss the nature of humans, which he believed was rooted in individual's carnal desires. By reading the translations of Ango's work below, my hope is that readers will understand the qualities contained in Ango's *nikutai bungaku*.

## Part II: Translations

### Panpan Girls

Sakaguchi Ango

Recently I had the chance to speak with some *panpan* girls. The local mob boss showed me a café where the girls usually gathered, and I began talking to the girls there. A professional stenographer recorded the conversations. In this part of town there were five girls, known as the “Big Five,” and each had *panpan* girls as subordinates. I was able to have conversations with only one of the “Big Five” girls, two or three of the subordinates, a girl who left the life on account of marriage, and a girl who became a clerk. I didn’t go to the café to have conversations - I simply wanted to relax and drink tea - but the boss and his friends passed me off as one of their own so was able to chat with the girls. Generally, the boss led the conversation by asking questions, at which he was quite skilled. This allowed the *panpan* girls to speak without hesitation.

Overall, the demeanor of the pan-pan girls was cheerful. Compared to the prostitutes who reside in the red light district, there was hardly anything gloomy about the *panpan* girls, and they did not seem to be degenerate. Of course, they were wild, but this showed itself differently from the brothel prostitutes. The *panpan* girls were even brighter in spirit and more innocent than swindling bar hostesses.

Their cheerfulness is most likely due to having no address. The *panpan* girls have no one that they are responsible for and are not bound by anything. They are children who are free under the vast sky. They are not bound to any single location but can take their business

anywhere. They possess a natural charm that unites heaven and earth into one, and display genuinely noble characters. Because of these qualities, the *panpan* girls radiate a refreshing air.

Most of the girls were graduates from women's schools, and many of them had received above average grades. They had run away from home, not because of family issues, but because they were inspired by freedom and the opportunity of a fun-filled, enjoyable life. None of the *panpan* girls cast blame on their families, nor did they curse the world out of rebellious thoughts. In general, they were cheerful and openhearted. They had run away of their own volition, and were genuinely aware of the freedom of their bodies. Therefore, their souls had not degenerated, but remained innocent. Although I use the word innocent, people are not innocent, and so the girls were not necessarily untainted, just less so than most people.

One woman I met was not like the rest. She was thirty-five years old (although thought to be thirty) and was not naturally beautiful. She complained about how the women of the town objected to her haggard face, and she did not want to go outside in the daylight where people could see her. There is a rule that states there can be no more than ten subordinate girls to one Elder Sister. I believe this rule came about because the older women were afraid of losing business to younger girls. One beautiful subordinate named K-ko caught my eye. From what I could tell she came from a healthy family, and did not seem like a typical *panpan* girl. She was encouraged by her Elder Sister to marry, and so she did. The man she chose was a regular customer. The Elder Sister suggested this partially from generosity, but the other reason, I believe, was that it was a convenient way to eliminate one of her more exquisite rivals. But K-ko returned to her old stomping ground after only one week.

I wondered if it was possible for these girls to settle down with only one man. To this K-ko replied, "I don't know about complete unity." She said this hesitantly and without confidence.

According to the boss and Elder Sister, it isn't enough for most of the girls to have only one male supporter. There are some instances where the girl falls madly in love and will not be separated from the man. One girl that I met was married to one of the boss's men and would not let him out of her sight because she loved him so much. The boss playfully scolded her saying, "Hey you, because of your unseemly desire to cling to him, he is not being efficient at his job, and it's pissing me off! Show a little restraint!"

"Whatever!" she replied and ran away.

Another girl I met became a clerk. Every day she went to work in Yokohama. She was exceptional for owning a home in Tokyo, where her mother and father along with her five siblings resided. She felt that it was improper for her to be selling herself, so that was why she quit.

The boss doubted she had left the life entirely and said, "I bet after work she plays around on the side a bit."

"Whatever, you don't know anything," she replied.

"Ya-bo said he saw you at Yokohama Park, just walkin' around lookin' for trouble."

"That guy doesn't know what he's talking about!" she exclaimed.

The girl started to become resentful of the boss's banter. The boss described the *panpan*'s job with the word "play" instead of "work". He saw through the facade of her new life.

"Hmph, you like playing around, so you go out and play, spewing out lies about wanting to get married. You don't really want to get married; you just want to keep playing around. If you keep playin' around too much, you won't be a proper courtesan, you'll just be a whore."

"What's wrong with wanting to try out marriage once in a while?" the *panpan* girls asked calmly.

It's not as if some girls don't have one-night stands, but generally they spend the night with their regular customers at an inn. Most of the girls don't go around town picking up strange men. Usually, they arrange a time to meet their regular customers. These customers typically are not from Tokyo; they come from other provinces and venture into the city on business. They have money and are not afraid to spend it. The girls persuade the customers to buy them western-style clothing. When wearing this extravagant clothing, they do not resemble *panpan* girls. Although they have many customers, they are not obliged to any one of them. They walk around with only one man, and a casual observer would not be able to tell that they are prostitutes. They seem like any young lady. If I decided to take one of them to a news station, even a reporter with the keenest sense would not find her out of place. I would tell them that she is so and so, from so and so company and they would respond by saying, "Well, it's a pleasure to meet you. My name is—" and present her a business card. If there was a reporter who was convinced that he would be able to see through the girl, then I think I would bring a legitimate young lady to deceive and confuse him. Contrary to stereotypes associated with prostitutes, *panpan* girls do not have a melancholy disposition.

One Elder Sister I met was very dignified. She earned an average of one thousand yen a day. (There are many young beautiful pan-pan girls, which is why this older woman was heartrending.) Each day she saved 800 yen and spent the remaining 200 yen for two meals. In the morning she had her clients buy her breakfast, and when they parted, she went to the bathhouse. Around 2 p.m. she wandered into the café. I hear the girls talking about how they don't go to the movies much. I believe this is because their lives are free from boredom.

The Elder Sister told me that she was saving money to become a trader someday. She dreamed of becoming the female boss of Okinakashi district, and was confident that she could

manage handling the cargo. It seems impossible that this type of job could be enjoyable for someone her age. The Elder Sister did not want to go out to work in the light where people can see the flaws in her face. The dignity of her title is undermined by this tragic weakness, but she must push forward and continue to work. Therefore, it is not surprising that she feels fed up. The Elder Sister stated her opinion about marriage, saying, "I have no intention of marrying. The young girls say they want to marry, but from my perspective they truly aren't considering it." But the Elder Sister, in her heart of hearts, truly seems to desire a married life.

The young pan-pan girls are free and independent people. They possess a cheerful demeanor and enjoy life, but they don't necessarily have a particular philosophy about this pleasure and freedom.

These girls do not choose just any man as a customer; they purposefully select them for their wallets. K-ko who at first glance is undoubtedly beautiful, explained how she has a sixth sense. She can pick a rich man out of a crowd because of his aura. Wealth gives rich men a certain sex appeal. While a girl is young she tries to save her money, but the men she hangs around with are members of street gangs. Inevitably they end up spending the girl's money. The young girls may make a great deal of money, but they don't save much because of this situation.

At night, when the *panpan* girls gather at the corner of the bridge, they wait for customers who have already promised to meet them, instead of soliciting passersby. It seems that we poor people of Tokyo don't have to worry about being solicited by these *panpan* girls. Their regular customers are all rich, often taking the girls on extravagant vacations for a week at a time, to places like Atami, Hakone, Nikko, and Chōshi. The *panpan* girls don't own a home or receive any rations, yet they live far more luxurious lives than us. Therefore, the *panpan* girls don't give us, the people who walk the streets of Ginza, a second thought. Consequently, no one considers



the *panpan* girls as being menial and miserable. Unexpectedly, one woman decided to throw in the towel and become a clerk saying, “It’s because I am so ashamed of this business.” The reason she regarded the work as menial was because she was the only *panpan* girl who resided in a house in Tokyo. Every day she had to leave her home in order to make money. The other *panpan* girls were run-aways and, not having a place to live, they never considered the work to be menial or humiliating. Rather than calling these girls prostitutes, they should be regarded as free spirits. They are not like the warped prostitutes who are rebellious and degenerate. Compared to the *panpan* girls, brothel prostitutes are in a different category. Although institutionalized prostitution has been prohibited and the Yoshiwara<sup>104</sup> prostitutes have disappeared, the spirit of the prostitute remains, and naturally becomes special.

When one of the girls became sick they would be sent to the Yoshiwara hospital. If they had money they would pay. If they had no money the girls didn’t have to pay their medical fees. Whenever a brothel prostitute goes to the hospital, she always pays, but all the other women from the town never pay a dime.

The boss jokingly says, “Yo, you girls, it seems like it’s just you who pays your Yoshiwara hospital bills. You must have money in your wallet! People should at least pay because they are being treated. They owe ‘em.”

“I truly am grateful, but doesn’t it seem foolish to pay for something that doesn’t require payment?” one of the girls replied.

The boss is certainly right. His opinion is truly accurate. It is obvious why these *panpan* girls who are hunted down by policemen, shoved into a truck, and thrown into the hospital don’t want to pay. For those girls who have no home, have probably lost all integrity to pay.

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<sup>104</sup> Yoshiwara was a district for legalized prostitution in the Tokugawa period (1603-1867).

The *panpan* girls are not confined; they are thoroughly independent people, and I hear they are pretty frugal. Apparently, they believe the customer should be the one to pay for things, and they never give a thought to spending their own money on anyone but themselves. In spite of spending very little money, they manage to survive. They use other people's money and believe that using their money on others is foolish.

Among the *panpan* girls, there is no set duty or customs yet their system works just fine. It is certainly a convenient system, and they are able to perform their business anywhere under the sky. This kind of freedom and strength naturally seeps out and grants these girls complete, individual personalities.

Mentally they are healthy and cheerful. That is why if anyone were to ask me whether we should get rid of the brothel prostitutes or the *panpan* girls, I would tell them with utmost confidence to get rid of the brothel prostitutes. Brothel prostitutes are the deformed children of the sex trade. Both the body and the mind are warped. *Panpan* girls are free-spirited and not morally bankrupt.

Many *panpan* girls were once honor students at their respective schools; however, their transformation into free spirited individuals came at the cost of their intellectuality. The type of person who exhibits both natural and intelligent qualities does not exist. Those people who are called "Those Who Must Be Loved" do not exist either. When these women become free in both spirit and intellect, Japan will become a truly rich and cultured nation. The *panpan* girls are the cultural symbol for the entire country.

## **Master Sun-Moon**

Sakaguchi Ango

During the time that I was checked into a mental hospital, a strange rumor began that I was a drug addict. Three narcotic officers from the metropolitan police department came to the hospital. Apparently they gave the doctor in charge of me, Chitani, and the nurse a hard time. I heard that for two hours the officers subjected them to absurd interrogation. As one would expect, the Todai Hospital would not allow the police to see any patients. If they had met me, the misunderstanding would have melted away at once; however, hospital policy doesn't allow police to question patients since many become angry and fearful about the possibility of their treatment being terminated.

With permission from Uchimura, the department head, and Chitani, the head doctor, I was allowed a pass to go sight-seeing at Korakuen. On a day when Korakuen was closed, I went to consult Doctor Toyoshima Yoshio of Sendagi.

Toyoshima said, "You, you're the drug addict aren't you?"

"No, that's not true. I was addicted to sleeping pills, but that isn't the same as being an addict." I replied.

The doctor replied, "It's the same thing."

I did not argue any more.

After a while, they began to drink and the doctor passed around a bottle of alcohol which led to the discussion of Mr. Toyoshima's wife, who died last year from peritoneal cancer. She took opium for the intense pain that would often leave her screaming and just like that, the pain would subside. On hearing this, I declared,

“Opium is a drug. Dazai first became addicted to opium and pantopon. At my hospital, there is no special room for the seriously ill; therefore, if a violent patient shows up, they put them to sleep with opium and send them off to Matsuzawa Hospital<sup>105</sup>. It is a type of morphine<sup>106</sup> based drug. The sleeping pills that I overdosed on were pills that one could find on the market anywhere; they were nothing special.”

Toyoshima replied with surprise, “Really, so sleeping pills and drugs are different then?”

Even Mr. Toyoshima, a man who represents Japan’s cultural elite, said idiotic things from time to time. It was not unreasonable for him to speculate about the false rumor of my drug addiction.

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One week before I was discharged, a thirty-year-old black marketer named Ooji Kimigorō unexpectedly paid me a visit. I decided prematurely that he was a black marketeer. I believe he would object to that.

We first met during the war at a Go<sup>107</sup> parlor. At that time he was a lathe operator. I discovered later that he had been going to a *chōhan*<sup>108</sup> gambling den, although not a professional one. In need of money, he would go out from time to time, but he always seemed to lose. Often he would skip work to go to the Go parlor, discouragement written all over his face. Although he was an extremely good-natured person and always played with great enthusiasm, he couldn’t beat me in Go even if I gave him a handicap. Feelings of both excitement and discouragement stalked him at the gambling den.

If our relationship had been confined to the Go parlor, we probably would never have

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<sup>105</sup> Matsuzawa Hospital is located in Tokyo. It is one of the oldest mental hospitals in Japan, established in 1879, and still functioning today.

<sup>106</sup> It is unclear from the Japanese if the word モヒ *mohi*, is actually referring to morphine.

<sup>107</sup> Go is a Japanese board game, played with black and white stones.

<sup>108</sup> A gambling game using two dice.

become close. However, we spent many evenings together in line at the *kokumin sakaba*.<sup>109</sup> I was able to benefit from him being in the line. The head of the line was made up of about thirty professional gamblers. Ooji hung around them timidly, and when he found me, he beckoned me to join him. The parlor was crowded with true gangsters, unlike Ooji and I who had no real power. I felt out of place entering the parlor and seemed to be the one person who was dejected. However, Ooji was also a pitiful sight.

During the major air raids on March 10<sup>th</sup>, the Japanese government panicked. A large-scale evacuation was carried out in the industrial district where I lived. In just one district 230,000 houses were destroyed. The government assured people that the raids would end in about a week; however, this did not stop the intense turmoil. In one school in town the student body ripped off the roof and knocked down the pillars. Tanks were dispatched to destroy homes in order to build roads for evacuation. Dense clouds of dust covered the road as evacuees, all carrying their luggage, ran around in confusion. With everyone fleeing the district, the price of a dresser decreased to about twenty yen.

The nature of the firebombs rendered their precautions useless. The flames did not strike from a singular location, but rained down indiscriminately throughout the area, making the evacuation roads nearly worthless. The city was razed like a burned field. Every scrap of wood was burned; however, some officials who evacuated early were able to salvage some lumber and turn an unscrupulous profit by building without authorization.

Ooji Kimigorō experienced misery during the evacuation. Even though he hung out at the gambling den, and was head of the line at the *kokuminsakaba*, he was absolutely incompetent. He arranged for packages to be sent to the country, but things never went efficiently. His product always arrived later than other delivery companies. During that time I

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<sup>109</sup> A publicly owned bar established in 1944.

let him stay with me for a week.

Immediately after the war was over, he paid me a visit during a trip to Tokyo. He wanted to live in my one-room apartment, but the wreckage of my neighborhood was so great that it was as if we lived in an internment camp. There was no place for him to live. I let him stay with me for thirty-four days, then he found a new room and moved out.

Sometime after he moved out, I ran into him selling and buying goods on the street. In the aftermath of the war, markets were disorganized and still developing. Because he sold his wares on a street corner, I referred to him as a black marketeer. I saw him around for about six months, but suddenly stopped seeing him on my regular walking route.

It came as a shock when he visited me in the mental hospital three years later. My wife, who was constantly caring for me, had gone out, leaving me alone in my room. No one was allowed in my room other than those who had already communicated that they were coming to visit. If they didn't have an appointment, they would have to somehow sneak past hospital security, and manage to obtain my room number while avoiding suspicious nurses. It would be impossible to find my room this way. Even somebody as cunning as a major news journalist or photographer with the strength and skills of a ninja, would be rebuffed by the vigilant doctors and nurses and would inevitably retreat.

"I am surprised that you could get in." I said.

He snickered and pulled something out from under his coat.

"I've not been able to thank you for always taking care of me, so I wanted to bring you this as a small token of my appreciation. Surely this must be difficult, and I sympathize with you. You see, I have begun to have greater influence and so I obtained this for you."

"What is it?" I asked.

Again he started to chuckle and scratched his head. He then mimicked injecting himself with something.

“I asked, “What is it? Is it meth?”

“C-correct sir. This is the stuff. This is the drug that you use sir.”

I was surprised that the rumors had reached him, bringing about this odd turn of events.

“When you say it’s a drug, do you mean morphine?”

“That is correct. Yessir, he he he.” he chuckled. Again he rubbed his head. As he continued to snicker, an oddly affectionate look entered his eyes. He continued, “I myself never use this, but I know the drill. You overdose and get admitted to the hospital. While still receiving care, you sneak out and use a little. When I heard that you were admitted, worry melted my heart. Sir, it’s not like you’re in a gang and you have no contact with your friends, it must be tough, he he he. That is right. At this mental hospital the doors are made of metal lattices and they all have locks on them, but for me it’s a cinch to get through. All the inmates communicate with each other, so I was able to learn how to smuggle things in. All you have to do is slip the syringe and the drugs through the metal lattice. It’s no problem. In the hospital the gang members who overdose are known to quietly continue using. He he he. It’s all very civilized.”

“I see. That is civilized.” I said with admiration. His kindness made me feel overwhelmingly refreshed. His words tugged on my heartstrings, but I felt anguish as I explained to him that this was all just a rumor.

He listened to my faltering explanation with an expression of shame. I bent over backwards trying to comfort him.

He suddenly switched to civilized formal speech, saying, “It seems that you shall be discharged soon, and it is wonderful to see you in a healthy state, sir. I have probably been thinking too much, but it fills my heart with great joy to think that the days are winding down until a man of your caliber is able to join our game. It is a great honor. Once you are released, please stop by for a short visit.” After saying this he wrote down his address on a piece of paper and left.

The day I was discharged it was a little past dusk. I had some business to attend to near the amusement district where Kimigorō lived. I had never been there before. Worse, I was alone and craving a drink. However, going back to an area I was familiar with would have been a hassle. I looked around but couldn’t seem to find a bar. Then I remembered Ooji Kimigorō. This would be a perfect time to pay back his kindness, so I invited him to meet me for a drink. I found the Go parlor whose address he had given me.

“Is Ooji Kimigorō in?” I asked.

“Two women were fiddling around with the money. One shouted out, “Oh he’s talking about Kimi-chan.”

“Oh, Kimi-chan, huh?” They both laughed. “Kimi-chan isn’t here anymore. He should be at the bath house and won’t be returning today.”

“Do you know of a place where I might be able to meet up with him?” I asked.

She replied, “Yes, at the Store.”

“The Store?” I repeated.

“Oh you haven’t heard of it? It is called Café Gondola and it’s located near the middle of this alleyway. He should be leaving the bath house about now, but maybe not quite.”



I thanked them and set off down the alleyway. The area was lined with cafés and in every entryway stood a beautiful hostess. These women called out to the pedestrians who were wandering the street, and sometimes even grabbed them and pulled them into their café.

I located The Gondola and entered hastily. I figured that Ooji Kimigorō was one of the bartenders. He was not. I took a look around but there were no other customers and no other men besides the workers.

“I was told that there would be a person named Ooji Kimigorō here. He wouldn’t by chance be a regular here, would he?” I asked.

Without hesitation, a hostess answered, “You mean Kimi-chan, right? Yeah, he’s here.” One of the workers called back into the store, “Kimi-chan! You have a customer.”

What happened next was like something from a hit radio gameshow like “*Nijū no tobira*” or “*Hanashi no izumi*”<sup>110</sup>. Has everyone heard of these trivia shows? *Only thirty seconds left! If the bell does not ring each of you are more skilled than the contender, which is me.*

Sure enough Ooji Kimigorō appeared. However, I could not confidently call this person Kimigorō. It was bizarre to call him Kimi-chan, but I supposed that if an elephant at a zoo can be called Hanako-chan, then I guess Kimi-chan could work. It is not as evil as *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.<sup>111</sup>

The Kimi-chan that appeared before me was a woman, yet he also appeared to be Ooji Kimigorō. In the forest of Ueno it may be that this is already one of Japan’s exceedingly common developments. Yet for me who had known the lathe operator Ooji Kimigorō, who expressed no signs of femininity and who was a somewhat rough and short man, his entrance

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<sup>110</sup> *Nijū no tobira* and *Hanashi no izumi* are both quiz radio shows. Both began broadcasting after the war, the first in 1947 and the second in 1946.

<sup>111</sup> Although in Ango’s manuscript he writes ジキル氏とハイド氏 I have referred to Jekyll as doctor instead of Mr. because of the original English title.

was extremely mysterious and I was taken aback. I will need to be pardoned for my reaction.

Kimi-chan was certainly wearing woman's clothes, yet other than the fact that he was wearing these clothes, there was nothing else feminine about him. First of all, an average male prostitute would use a more feminine style of speech. Kimi-chan was not like this. He held normal conversations with people around while excluding me, but by watching him I could tell that he was not talking in a feminine manner.

"He he he. Thank you for coming," he said, appearing slightly embarrassed but quickly overcoming his insecurity he continued, "To tell you the truth, this is the way I make my way in this world. I am not one of those male prostitutes. I wouldn't go parading around like one of those thoughtless girls. I have a strategy that entertains people while avoiding those cliques. At first I only did this as a joke, but I wondered if people were amused by me dressing up and dancing. I guess you could say people were entertained, but it isn't widely received. I didn't have the guts to join a gang, plus I would have to associate with a specific group, which isn't really my ideal lifestyle. Nobody picks fights with me when I am dressed in these woman's clothes, so I avoid the massive bloodshed that is brought about by the moral codes of gangs. On the other hand, there aren't many customers who spring forward to give tips, but in this sorry state is where I find security. In this way I carry my black market accomplice on my shoulders. I want to thank you for the other day, although I made a mistake bringing you the drugs. I myself don't really use the stuff. It's a health hazard and not good for supporting my wife and child. In fact, my wife doesn't know about my cross dressing."

His wife was quite beautiful. On the other hand, she was a prideful and extremely cold woman. When I first met Ooji during the war, I found out that his wife's native place was a farm. Because of this, he possessed an abundance of food and was the envy of many. As a result he

couldn't say no to his wife. This caused him to think he will get rich quickly. It seemed that this was how a timid, unimpressive, good-natured person got immersed in the gambling dens. When an uncultured woman finds security in life she becomes truly spoiled and an intolerable tyrant. The type of life that was spread before her seemed to restrict her. If he didn't have a tyrant for a wife, in the past and in the present he would be an honest lathe operator, and would not be entrenched in gambling or cross-dressing to support his black market accomplice. He entered the line at the *kokutaisakaba* but all it took for him to be plenty drunk was two mugs of beer. His tolerance of alcohol was so limited that all the extra orders were given to me.

"Having changed back into his male clothes, he reappeared and said, "He he he. This evening there is a place I would like to show you. It's Ibuse's place and as long as you stick with me, no one should give you any trouble, sir. So please feel secure and come with me and experience how the lowest of the low people live."

"It's not a drug house, is it? There is no reason for me to see that," I replied.

"Not at all, but it isn't a place that the law reaches either. He he he. Sir, you seem to have an unruly fear of drugs. Wait here for a second."

He was discussing something with the hostess in the corner, but finally returned and led me back outside. I had become intoxicated from drinking the strong liquor at his bar. I was led to a new stylish building through unfamiliar streets and neighborhoods. I figured that it was a *machiai*<sup>112</sup>, but this was not the case. It was a simple inn, yet the location did not fit just as it did not seem fit for a *machiai*. With that said, the room itself did seem appropriate for *machiai* with an elegant bath. There were no other customers.

I asked, "Is this different from your side job?"

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<sup>112</sup> *Machiai* refers to a geisha entertaining room.

“I wish, but there is no way that someone like me could own a place like this, even if I saved for hundreds of years. This place is, ummm, how can I put it. The owner doesn’t think about the future much. The reopening of the bar and restaurant is happening right now. I am sure he is considering how to expand in time, but for now it remains a simple inn. Not a *panpan*<sup>113</sup> brothel. That is why there aren’t many customers other than the three or four people who know about it. It’s a peaceful place,” he replied.

As we drank, the hostess to whom he had been talking at the prior location entered. She was not ugly, but I wouldn’t say she was pretty either. She was slender and well proportioned, about 180 cm tall, yet she appeared to be a sullen and cold woman. He offered the woman some liquor. She drank it down quickly but she didn’t seem to get drunk. Her name was Yoshiko, or Yotchan for short.

“I probably should have explained the plan to you beforehand, but I thought if I explained the situation to you in front of her, it would be amusing,” he said.

Although he mostly poured drinks for others and didn’t drink much, he was already drunk. With his eyes rolling into the back of his head, he said, “This person is from the same back country area as me. Her father is an elementary school principal. After graduating from woman’s school, she decided she would study drawing. After a while, she moved to Tokyo and it just so happened that her neighbor was a famous tattoo artist. This was during the war, so times were different, but people weren’t commonly tattoo artists. He would very rarely receive customers and was a strange man. She believed that simply drawing a picture on paper was boring. She desired to draw on her body, in other words tattooing her body using her own hands. So Yoshiko became the tattoo artist’s disciple and was finally able to draw on her own body, but the results were bland. I mean it makes sense, because she tried the job with

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<sup>113</sup> A type of prostitute that emerged after WWII.

insufficient experience, so it makes sense for the result to. What do you think she finally did? She decided to cut out the tattoo from her own flesh. The section on her thigh was not overwhelmingly big so when she cut it out, she suffered only a slight faint feeling. This is the type of person she is -- her temperament differs greatly from the average. So, while being a woman, she desires with demon-like tenacity to be an artist.” Her face was motionless, even her eyebrows. His story was unbelievably bizarre, but it wasn’t that bizarre once you knew her. This was because of her personality. I essentially did not sense the dreadfulness of the artist’s demon-like tenacity. Even though she kept silent with no expression on her face she was smacking her lips from time to time. These expressions seemed to represent her entirety, making her seem shallow.

He continued, “So that’s the situation. Her temperament is her temperament. She has a negative personality plus she is fastidious. Since she is so particular about things she doesn’t have many customers and in any case she isn’t the type of person to be a *panpan*. Being of this temperament in the age of the *panpan*, it is hard for her to afford to buy food, let alone a single *kimono*. The thing about this woman is that from a while back she has been a fan of you, sir. She wanted me to take this opportunity to interact with you, sir. She has been thinking about making a living in literature so she was hoping you could give her some guidance. Although this may be bothersome to you, she asked me to come before you and ask you for this favor because she is shy and stubborn.”

I could sense sincerity in his voice. She simply did not have the nature to put in the work for an introduction. I finally noticed the intimacy between the two, and wondered if maybe they were in love.

I could not respond without carefully considering it. If I was to consider to guide

someone in literature, I would have to have a rough understanding of their ability, otherwise there would be no point. Before we agree to do this, we were talking about artistic causality, which is a raw and uncomfortable discussion. It would not go smoothly. On top of that I wondered if he was subtly telling me to make her my mistress? Although she wasn't especially good looking, her slender figure had a hint of charm, and even though she kept quiet and was rebellious and negative, I had enough lust to feel okay about messing around with her for one night. Even though I felt an intensified drunken desire, I was able to snap myself out of the spell by remembering the disturbing story about her.

"Without being endowed with artistic talent, no matter how hard you try you can't be trained for literature," I explained.

"But sir, what about as a favor? Well, maybe not a favor. A genius can also be a madman. Since a genius is a madman, they probably see things that normal people never look for. So if she is mad, then she must have plenty of talent."

I was surprised by how this mild mannered and softhearted man kept pressing this matter. I had never experienced anything like it. I smiled bitterly to myself, because I had just gotten out of a mental hospital.

I answered, "You talk about geniuses and madmen, but I just came from a mental hospital where I have seen the madman's way of life. It is a common sight and quite ordinary. Granted, it is a bit more common for them than the average person but it could be said that being discreet is the true madness. It is the same for geniuses. Just because someone appears to be eccentric doesn't mean they are a genius or a madman. Even with certain talents, the difference between a talented artist and a talented writer are inherently vast. The talented artist views things essentially using color, while the talented writer is born to only grasp concepts

through the configuration of letters. Just because someone has an extreme personality doesn't necessarily equate to having literary talent."

"But sir, just wait and see, and it will make sense. You and Yotchan are sort of like the sun and the moon. If a man is the sun, then a woman is the moon, and that is how you two are connected." He declared this decisively and hung his head.

We were told that the bath had been prepared, so I told them that I would go for a bath. With that, I was shown to a room where the linen had been laid out. The woman entered the room after I had finished bathing. By this time Ooji Kimigorō had already departed. The thought of her sleeping next to me made me feel cramped, so I spoke up saying, "Ooji kun mentioned the sun and moon, right? He says some strange things - the sun and moon. Does he mention stuff like this often?"

As I asked the woman this question, it was like all the screws came loose in her head and she began to laugh. It was as if a watch that should be silent all of a sudden transformed into a loud alarm clock, ringing away.

"How can you be taking anything that man says seriously? Are you crazy? If you want to talk about a madman, he's the madman, wearing woman's clothes... please! He isn't even a pervert, yet he still dresses up in women's clothing. The gears in his head must turn the wrong way. How in the world would he know if I tattooed my thigh and cut it out? It is nothing but his delusional idea. Here, look for yourself and see whether or not there is a tattoo or a scar from removing it."

Saying this, the woman showed me her thigh. There was absolutely nothing there. She showed me her thigh and her demeanor became like that of a mediocre *panpan* girl, which suddenly put me at ease.

“So you are not an artist in the making then?” I asked.

“Well, I do that here and there but it’s a business, you know. I have done two or three oil paintings before. You need to be careful about saying things that have no basis. In this economy, where we are vain, it is wise to see through other people’s vanity.”

As she spoke, the woman who a moment ago had been quiet and gloomy began to fade away, and she became more and more comfortable. Yet there was something I still couldn’t comprehend. From the time he had visited me at the hospital with the drugs, I hadn’t noticed any sign of madness. Yet madness is by nature undetectable. This was engraved deep within me during my stay at the mental hospital. Until the patients have a fit, they seem perfectly normal. Every person has criminal qualities; therefore, it is reasonable to assume people also have qualities of madness. It is possible that people have different limits of madness.

After being released from the hospital, I began to sleep a lot instead of my usual insomnia. I had been receiving sleeping pills from Tōdai Hospital but they wouldn’t take effect until daybreak. It was my habit to wake up to eat breakfast then go back to sleep.

After I woke up the next morning I ate breakfast and sent the woman home only to go back to sleep again. I slept well. This may have been due to the fact that I had strained myself working the previous day.

When I awoke it was already past noon. I had made a request to have the bath filled when I awoke. When I had finished bathing, I drank some more liquor. There were still no maids, just the owner and his wife, with no children.

I said to the owner’s wife, “Ooji Kimigorō surprised me yesterday. I was shocked when I saw him wearing women’s clothes, but what was even more incomprehensible was the story he told. The story about the woman who tattooed her thigh, and then not liking the result, she



ripped her skin off. I mean, he was so serious, it didn't sound like he was lying at all. It had elements of weirdness but I didn't think it was a lie. I just don't understand his intentions. He must have known that if I slept with this woman I would inevitably see that she had no wound on her thigh. She said that Oojikimi was a madman, but looking back on last night there was nothing mad about him. I thought that they were in love but it seems like she is just taking advantage of him."

The wife quietly nodded. Just as the house didn't resemble a restaurant, a brothel or even an inn, this wife didn't resemble a business lady. And yet, she had a business-like personality.

An evil smile emerged on her face but she quickly turned serious and said, "Every night Kimi-chan brings us customers. I don't really want to say this but, when you talk about madness, it is probably only one type of madness. He picks the women based on desire, the desire of the customer, or from his observation of the customer, and even sometimes his personal favorites, I believe."

Her face expressed disappointment as she spoke these words. She became silent for a moment, then continued, "Every time Kimi-chan introduces the woman to the customer, his story is the same. As you are aware he tells them that the woman tattooed her thigh and ripped it off? If I may be so bold as to ask, did he mention something about the sun and the moon?"

I was dumbfounded. "Yes, yes, he did mention that. He said the man is the sun and the woman is the moon and together we become the sun and the moon."

My discouragement was obvious. How foolish I was to even consider what he was saying about how the girl was a genius artist and I the literary genius, together becoming the sun and the moon.

"What does he mean when he says the sun and the moon?" I asked.

Again the wife, seemingly disappointed, looked down and chuckled, saying, “You could call it ‘Master Sun-moon, I suppose. It’s the religion that Kimi-chan has made up. A man and a woman, this is sun-moon. He feels that because he is a man but wears woman’s clothes he, by himself, represents the sun-moon. Other than that, he is a normal man, who is gentle and good hearted.”

She continued talking without an expression on her face.

“The fact is that Kimi-chan tattooed himself on his thigh. This is only a rumor but apparently Kimi-chan’s missus desired to eat human flesh. I am sure there was more to the story, but eventually Kimi-chan decided to cut out a piece of his flesh and feed it to her. Of course, this is only a rumor; I am not sure how true it really is.”

I was speechless. This all happened only one week after I was released from the mental hospital. My desire to confirm the truth was gone. It was like all of this was part of a horrible nightmare. I couldn’t understand the whole situation, and I didn’t want to piece things together.

Three days later, after returning home still shocked, I picked up the newspaper and read an article entitled “Drug smuggler captured”. The name of the smuggler was none other than Ooji Kimigorō. To this day I still get chills thinking about it.

## **Eroticism and Literature<sup>114</sup>**

### **Sakaguchi Ango**

#### **Rationality and the Carnal Body**

Sakaguchi: The other day I met up with Abe Sada<sup>115</sup> and had a conversation with her.

Ikeda: What was that like?

Sakaguchi: It was unusually good. She is actually quite ordinary. There isn't even a hint of perversion within her. In other words to describe Abe Sada, I would say that she is primarily a reasonable woman. She is the most typical woman there is.

Ikeda: Is there anything that's a bit off about her?

Sakaguchi: Abe Sada is not a perverse person. Ishida, her partner, was the type of person that enjoyed having her strangle him while they were together, meaning... women are subjected to whatever the man desires.

Ikeda: Her partner was a bit odd now, wasn't he?

Sakaguchi: When it comes to women, generally they are influenced by men. Perhaps there is not much room for a woman's personal character. Of course, people who have extreme personalities are different, but it probably depends more on the man the woman associates with that changes her character.

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<sup>114</sup> An interview with Sakaguchi Ango and Ikeda Michiko, published in a magazine called 女性改造 (josei kaizō). 3rd volume, issue no. 3.

<sup>115</sup> Abe Sada (1905-1970?) was a prostitute who killed and emasculated her lover (May 18, 1936) and carried around his balls in a pouch. This is the incident Ango refers to when explaining his interactions with Abe Sada.

Ikeda: I am sure that the women who have strong will, who have personalities that want to do things their way are exempt from what you are saying.

Sakaguchi: Miss Sada is the opposite of that; she is quite common. She is the type that depends on the man to make the decisions. When I asked Miss Sada, “How old were you when you first fell in love?” She responded by saying, “I have never been in love.”

Ikeda: Continue.

Sakaguchi: She said, “Before the incident with Mr. Ishida--- by the time I turned 33 years old, I hadn’t fallen in love even once. I do remember thinking that there were men I have liked”... The way she put it is intriguing. There were men she liked, but every time she was deceived. She started liking men when she was around 15 or 16 years old. Yet, it never was love. In other words, Sada did not consider one-sided love to be real love. She believed that when the man you love reciprocates that love then that is real love. If that love is not reciprocated then one falls short of actual love. Apparently, Mr. Kichi (Mr. Ishida) was the only man she actually was in love with. She also told me that she was completely blissful. She continued to explain how unfortunate it is that the majority of women in this world die before experiencing true love. And if she is able to fall in love again she would like to give it a shot. I thought she was admirable for that.

Ikeda: I guess I can understand that Miss Sada is not especially different, but murdering Mr. Ishida...

Sakaguchi: She didn’t necessarily murder him. She was strangling his neck like always, but that time they were unlucky...

Ikeda: Well, even if it wasn't a murder and he suddenly died, what happened after was ... well you know. (laughter)

Sakaguchi: Yes, what happened afterwards is very significant. I think that it is a genuine experience. Her partner died during his climax. In a world separated from others they truly seemed like one flesh. She could have left his body and run but decided she wanted a memento. Naturally she couldn't cut out his naval or cut off his arm. The reason ordinary people consider her actions intensely perverse are because they don't understand the rationality of the carnal body. There must be rationality attached to the flesh. When these people try to conceal the carnal desires and only try measuring the rationality of the mind, there is no balance to be found. The rationality of the flesh—it is crucial to humanity. Society must take notice of events such as these for they have become the stepping stones of creating culture. It is not possible to establish a culture while attempting to hide these events.

I highly value the theories of psychoanalysis, but it tries to find these taboos and totems<sup>116</sup> and try to extinguish them. It doesn't try to rationally control the taboos and totems with the concept of the flesh (*nikutai*) and intellect, but the result is warped by primitive signs of embarrassment. But in the case of Miss Sada, she broke through the warped aspects with her womanly naïvete. In other words, she is extremely naïve; we must all understand this. Miss Sada would say with confidence that, "all women share the same feelings as me." I also agree with her.

Ikeda: In other words, covering over the issue of *nikutai* and distorting it is worth discussing.

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<sup>116</sup> When Ango uses the terms taboo and totem Ango is referring to a book written by Sigmund Freud published in Germany in 1913 called, *Totem und Tabu*. It was a study using the ideas from the psychoanalysis school. The four essays included in the book were entitled: "The Horror of Incest," "Taboo and Emotional Ambivalence," "Animism, Magic and the Omnipotence of Thoughts," and "The Return to Totemism in Childhood."

Sakaguchi: I think we can talk about this candidly. We understand this through married life, and discuss these things freely with our friends. It is strange that this topic, which is discussed among friends, is not a topic of conversation among literary and philosophical circles.

Ikeda: Absolutely.

Sakaguchi: When one gets married, this carnality becomes an obvious part of life. I don't understand why people don't pursue these types of rational issues in public. Keeping this rationality within the confines of marriage does not shape a progressive culture. We must publicly and scholarly rationalize the carnal body. It is a mistake to not rationalize the issue of the carnal body.

Ikeda: The fact that people try to hide these so-called impure issues makes them impure.

Sakaguchi: Yep, it becomes extremely impure. But if we bring it out in the open, there is no way it will be viewed impurely.

Ikeda: So if we entertain the idea of carnality in literature, the reader views the story as an erotic novel; therefore, they don't consider any other way of interpreting the story. I think that many misinterpret how to read these types of stories.

Sakaguchi: Young people are different, aren't they? The youth have a sense of righteousness these days. According to Morikawa Shin<sup>117</sup> the only people who go to a show and gawk at women whose bellies are showing are old men. The young men don't gawk like this. Even in France, it seems that old men are the ones attending erotic plays. There is no censorship at all in France. Even the publication of pornographic literature is unlimited. The government listened to

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<sup>117</sup> Morikawa Shin (1912-1972) was a popular comedian and actor in the Shōwa period.

the public's criticism and good sense, which inevitably allows for this system to work. We must trust our fellow human kind. The only restrictions in France are posed by the Catholic Church, which censors what the believers can read.

Reporter: The censorship placed by the Japanese government has gone to the extreme.

Sakaguchi: We must trust our fellow human beings, especially the righteous youths. By trusting and being trusted, responsibility is born.

### **Cheerful Panpan Girl**

Reporter: After the war, people were allowed to publish anything freely; as a result, pornographic books flooded the markets, and it became a problem. This, too, can be blamed on the excessive control placed on publications. The extreme supervision created this issue, and distorted it. That is why when the restrictions were lifted, the distorted objects sprang forward like a virus. If people viewed this in a reasonable manner in the first place, we could have avoided this absurdly unhealthy development.

Ikeda: You are absolutely right.

Sakaguchi: We must trust the youths, who are pure and inspire greatness. When it comes to older men, they possess no aspiration and are absolutely perverted. The young men of twenty are all sincere. The Japanese people have limited aspiration for the future, so once a person reaches thirty years old it all is foolishness.

Ikeda: Do you think it is because their desire for progress decreases over time?

Sakaguchi: You are probably right. Since the Japanese people have low standards, even if they have dreams or a sense of justice, as soon as one negative feeling enters, they become disillusioned. Therefore, when a Japanese person exceeds thirty years old, he becomes a scoundrel. They abandon justice and purity as if it meant nothing. It is widely considered that the sense of justice among young people is naïve without being rational. For that reason it is easy to become disillusioned. I, on the other hand possess the youths' sense of justice and will trust in the youth of Japan.

Now that the war is over, even though robbers lurk about, there are no other countries that are safer than Japan. If I had to guess, I would say that out of every country that have lost in wars, Japan has the least amount of crime.

Ikeda: You think so?

Sakaguchi: There is no other place in the world where people can still live in peace after losing such a devastating war. Japan's crime rate is low even compared to the countries that won the war. It is because you people single out Japan, ignoring geographical and historical conditions and in that way you don't see the bigger picture. Looking back on the French Revolution or Germany after World War I, these were destructive and gloomy times. Japan now has experienced its greatest destruction, yet in our daily lives the destruction isn't as apparent. In one night there may be an occasion where five or six robbers rob at gunpoint, but that's it. I don't categorize situations like this as destruction. It certainly is an average time.

Reporter: Bandits and thieves are the exception, aren't they?

Sakaguchi: Japan could quite possibly be the healthiest nation in the world.



Reporter: By the way, Mr. Sakaguchi, haven't you researched and had conversations with *panpan* girls?

Sakaguchi: I have not researched them. (He smiles) I have never slept with them either. I have considered it, but I ended up not going, and I regret it very much. In the paper, I saw an article about two *panpan* girls fighting amongst themselves; that kind of thing is no good.

Ikeda: Is it true that the conflict was over territory.<sup>118</sup>

Sakaguchi: I am not really sure about that, but it is miserable and shabby. Women do not have much wisdom, which is why they try to copy men. It's a sad state. Yet the *panpan* girls who emerged after Japan's defeat represent the progress of prostitution. In the past there was a gloomy place called Yoshiwara<sup>119</sup>. Compared to the women who worked in Yoshiwara, the *panpan* of today are self-aware. They don't place blame on society or their parents. The *panpan* girls claim that they became prostitutes of their own free will. This is a major cultural development.

Ikeda: There are probably many different complicated reasons for each girl.

Sakaguchi: For example, there were many widows among the *panpan* girls who were caught. They get caught up in it but the problem remains in how the newspapers present the stories, stating that some sold their chastity to buy their children shoes, or to buy their daughters clothes. But this is simply not true. They become *panpan*'s because they want to. I think it is important to establish their free-spirited thinking. It is not good to portray them with such good reputations.

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<sup>118</sup> I am referring to territory in terms of clientele. The fight was about one *panpan* girl stealing the other's regular client.

<sup>119</sup> An entertainment district that developed during the later years of the Tokugawa period (1603-1867).

Reporter: According to a census taken by the Metropolitan Police Department, many women are curious about this phenomenon.

Sakaguchi: Instead of portraying them in such good light, reporters need to accurately observe the *panpan*'s lifestyle.

Ikeda: Considering the different girls of Yoshiwara, of Tamani<sup>120</sup>, and today's *panpan*'s, it seems to me that they had no other means of obtaining the lifestyle they desired. In other words, if the *panpan* girls had the ability to live a similar life through other means, they probably wouldn't have so readily accepted prostitution.

Sakaguchi: That's true, because there is no lifestyle like that of a *panpan* girl. All they have to do is sell their bodies, but after that they are completely free to do what they want, and I hear they make pretty good money too. There is nothing else like it.

Ikeda: It may be my sentimentalism, but I can't help feeling a little sorry for them.

Sakaguchi: There is no point in feeling sorry for them. What part of their lifestyle makes them deserve pity? By making even one mistake, even men could end up like this.

Reporter: Men are not normally sold as goods, but if they were, then they would have the same fate as the girls.

Sakaguchi: The men should realize that it would be bad to end up like this. At the same time, people must know that anyone could end up living this lifestyle. It has nothing to do with the faults of their parents. On top of this, once you enter this life you can never leave, because it is comfortable. It's the same with beggars; if you do it for more than three days, then you are stuck.

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<sup>120</sup> A red light district located in Tokyo established before World War II that lasted until 1958.

We must become aware of this kind of human fragility. We cannot afford to have our head in the clouds.

Reporter: We must accept the weakness and fragility, which represents humanity.

Sakaguchi: Absolutely, people need to humbly accept this. Isn't that what humanity is all about? We must know that we each have the chance to become like these *panpan* girls.

Literature begins through this understanding. People hide amongst their virtue, denying and avoiding topics such as these.

Ikeda: It certainly does seem like these girls have a different glow compared to the girls of Tamanoi.

Sakaguchi: In essence, they have become quite cheerful. The fact that none of them curse their circumstances is a great quality. Everybody should learn to take responsibility for their individual actions and decisions. It is true that the *panpan*'s community is an inferior and uncivilized community, but the fact that they take responsibility for their life is nothing to be looked down upon. In the past many would say, "I was sold to Yoshiwara to help my parents," but I say that the parents should be slapped behind their heads. It is with this kind of attitude that tragedy strikes the world. In this way Japan used to be ignorant. Now with the development of the *panpan* girls, past tragedy is being avoided. In other words, since Japan lost the war, it has seen an astonishing amount of development.

### **Who Are the Erotic Authors**

Ikeda: I don't mean to change the subject but, during the war Mr. Sakaguchi you were...

Sakaguchi: I was working part time at a movie company making 120 yen a month. Making 120 yen allowed for me to live a comfortable life with the food rations.

Ikeda: Where you able to write many movie scripts during that time?

Sakaguchi: I wrote three scripts but not even one was made into a movie. None of them passed the censorship test.

Ikeda: I would like to ask you about Mr. Oda (Sakunōsuke).<sup>121</sup>

Sakaguchi: Let's not talk about literature.

Reporter: I can't allow that. (laughter)

Sakaguchi: Oda is a man who formed one generation of readers so in that way his writings are good. His writing reads very smoothly, which is extremely important. One of the authors that really captures the reader right now is Dazai Osamu.<sup>122</sup> Two others authors are Inoue Tomoichirō<sup>123</sup> and Tanaka Hidemitsu<sup>124</sup>. Their stories may be ordinary but they make you want to read. You should try to read their work, and if you do, you won't be able to put the book down. I was impressed by Mine Yukie's story, "*Mōshū*"<sup>125</sup>, she is an up and coming writer.

Reporter: Mr. Sakaguchi, your essays are more captivating than your stories, am I right? You are right about Oda's writings; they are fascinating.

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<sup>121</sup> Oda Sakunōsuke (1913-1947). He is often grouped with Dazai Osamu and Sakaguchi Ango in the literary group called *Buraiha*.

<sup>122</sup> Dazai Osamu (1909-1948), he was a popular modern Japanese author.

<sup>123</sup> Inoue Tomoichirō (1909-1997) was well known for his moral stories.

<sup>124</sup> Tanaka Hidemitsu (1913-1949) was also included in the *Buraiha* literary group.

<sup>125</sup> 妄執 means "deep-rooted delusion."

Sakaguchi: Yes, I am always entertained and read it all immediately. The same goes for Inoue's writing. The reason his work sells so well is because his ability to write is so impressive; he is probably pretty rich. Every author should possess this kind of passion and ability.

Ikeda: Even if the subject is boring to talk about, it becomes enjoyable once it is written down.

Sakaguchi: They could be saying something foolish but the important thing is its readability. You can't expect to get these results over night. I thought Nishino Tatsukichi's<sup>126</sup> piece from the magazine "*Bungei*" was good, but the way it read was not as smooth as it could have been.

Ikeda: Among the older writers, Uno Kōji's<sup>127</sup> literature reads well.

Sakaguchi: He was able to capture the sense of things in the past, but for the people of the present his work is dreary. Now Uno Kōji's works don't possess the strength to hold modern readership, but in his generation it was probably perfect.

Reporter: Mr. Oda's writing styles changed from wartime to after the war. During the war his writing had rhythm and reading "Yoru no kōzu"<sup>128</sup> was so enjoyable.

Sakaguchi: I guess you could say he was in good form.

Reporter: You were too Mr. Sakaguchi, with your writings in *Kindai bungaku* about Christianity, as well as "Hakuchi"<sup>129</sup> and "Gaitō to aozora".<sup>130</sup> These works were most lively, and as I witnessed this development I was overjoyed. Authors need to continue to produce lively works.

Sakaguchi: Yes.

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<sup>126</sup> Nishino Tachiki (1916-1999).

<sup>127</sup> Uno Kōji (1891-1961).

<sup>128</sup> This translates as "The composition of night."

<sup>129</sup> Translated by George Saitō called "The Idiot."

<sup>130</sup> Translates as "An Overcoat and the Blue Sky."

Reporter: What do you think about Dazai?

Sakaguchi: He is one of the great authors. He is an author that possesses a keen observation of humans. He will most likely remain one of the world's top authors. I am very proud of the fact that Japan gave birth to Dazai. Even in France you would be hard pressed to find an author with his talents. This type of writing that observes humanity is not mainstream, but there are few in literary history able to write like him, coming from a sub-stream writing circle. With that in mind, the Japanese can take pride in him. It is possible that he is one of the greatest. I hold his works in high esteem, like *rakugo*<sup>131</sup>. I think it is the greatest, *rakugo*, and one should not speak ill of this. *Rakugo* is enjoyable and amusing. If it is a piece that extends joy eternally, then that merits being called one of the greats. Dazai is one of the greatest *rakugo* authors, therefore he will have a place in history.

Reporter: When one considers erotic authors, names such as Sakaguchi and Oda come to mind, but that's not true, is it? All that you are claiming is that people can't exclude *nikutai* from humanity. These so called erotic writers don't even use peculiarly sensual depictions. In light of this, who are the true erotic writers?

Sakaguchi: A true erotic writer is Nagai Kafū<sup>132</sup>. It is sad that the world considers his works to have great literary significance yet they consider me to be an erotic writer. It should be the opposite.

Ikeda: What about the works of Funahashi Seiichi<sup>133</sup>?

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<sup>131</sup> Rakugo is a form of Japanese story telling. The rakugo artist usually tells a long and complicated comical story, featuring a dialogue of two or more characters.

<sup>132</sup> Nagai Kafū (1879-1959), is considered a decadent writer, along with Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (1886-1965).

<sup>133</sup> Funahashi Seiichi (1904-1976), a playwright and prose author.

Sakaguchi: I haven't read it, but "Shikkaiya Kōkichi"<sup>134</sup> seems like it would be good.

Ikeda: The stories published recently by Funahashi have become more popular among general readers, making his works seem less sincere.

Sakaguchi: Funahashi has too much talent. He is certainly not a porno author. It is as if the so called porno writers of the past such as Nagai Kafū, are looking through a telescope into a pleasure quarters. It is all messed up, saying that I am an erotic writer and that Kafū's style is pure literature.

Ikeda: What is the ideal woman that you try to depict?

Sakaguchi: I can't depict my ideal woman.

Reporter: Asking about your ideal woman seems like something from a woman's magazine, so instead--- what kind of woman do you like?

Sakaguchi: Mostly I prefer amorous women. Some say that this rebels against today's society but I think more women should become amorous.

Reporter: Okay, Mr. Sakaguchi, let's have your conclusion—What do you think your next publication will be? I know that if it is about your ideal woman I would be a little troubled.

Sakaguchi: I am not sure.

Reporter: Okay, let us end it at that then.

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<sup>134</sup> This piece was written right before World War II ended in 1945.

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## Appendix

### Original Japanese Text

# パンパンガール

## 坂口安吾

私は先ごろパンパンガールと会談した。土地の親分が案内してくれて、彼女らのタマリ場の喫茶店で、あつまってくる彼女らと話をし、ひそかに速記の名人が速記をとつたのであるが、その土地にはビッグファイブと云つて五人の姐さん株がをり、各々配下のパンパンガールがあるのだが、その姐さんの一人と、配下の二三人、それからパンパンの足を洗つて結婚したもの、事務員になつたもの、それだけの方々と話をしたのである。改つて話をしたわけではなく、親分の友達、兄弟分のふれこみでフラリとお茶をのみに来たていで話しかけたもので、たいがいのことは親分が誘導的にきいてくれて、この親分がまた訊き上手だから、パンパンガールズも腹藏なく喋りまくつてくれた。

結婚したのも事務員になつたのも、いずれもブラリと偶然遊びに来たもので、よびあつめたわけではなかつたのである。

パンパンガールは総体に明るい。売笑窟に定住してゐる娼婦に比べて、暗さといふものが殆どないし、<sup>すさ</sup>荒み方もすくない。勿論荒みはあるけれども、娼家の娼婦の荒みと全然異なるもので、インチキ・バアの女給よりも、無邪気であり、明るい。

その原因はたぶん住所がないといふこと、したがつて誰にも束縛されず、係累もない、青天井の下の自然児で、その土地でなければ営業ができないといふ性質のものではなく、至るところ青山あり、どこへ行つても開業できる、天地帰一といふ妙味をおのづから体得してゐる連中だから、おのづから高風あり、爽快な涼気もあるといふ次第だらう。

たいがい女学校を卒業した家出娘で、女学校の成績は中以上、できる方の娘が多い。家庭の事情で飛び出したといふよりも、自由にあこがれ、たのしい人生をもとめて飛び出したといふ方が本場で、家出の理由を家庭の事情に罪をきせるパンパン嬢は一人もない。そんな世を咒ふやうなヒネクレた考へはミゼンもなく、概ね明朗快活、自分勝手にとびだし、かうなつてゐるだけの、素直にして自然の体をそのまゝ存してゐるのである。だから、心は荒れてはをらず、無邪気である。無邪気といつても、人間は本来無邪気ではないから、人間並には無邪気ではないだけだ。

もつとも、私の会つた姐さんは別だ。もう三十五（通称三十）元々美人ぢやないところへ、やつれて、顔が物言ふ街の女のことで、明るいうち、顔のハッキリ見えるうちはショーバイに

でられない、とこぼしてゐた。配下を十人以上に絶対にふやさないといふのも、この姐さんが自分の営業不振を怖れるせみぢやないかと私には思はれたが、姐さんの配下にK子といふ美人がある。見たところ、いゝ家のお嬢さんみたいでパンパンのやうには見えないのだが、姐御がすゝめて結婚させた。むろん相手はナジミの客なのだが、姐御の親切が半分はあつても、自分の土地から美人のパンパンが減ってくれる方が自分に都合がいゝといふ目算も含まれてゐたんぢやないかと私には疑われた程であつた。尤もK子は一週間で古巣へ戻つてきた。

いつたい彼女らは結婚して一人の男に満足できるのだらうか、私のこの質問に、さあね、どうも御一統、自信がない様子で口ごもつたが、親分や姐御の話では、大部分は一人の亭主ぢやダメらしく、小部分はひどいヤキモチ焼で、亭主のそばへクツついて放れなくなる。私の会つ

た結婚した女といふのは親分の <sup>こぶん</sup> 乾 分の一人と結婚したのだが、ヤキモチ焼で亭主にクツつき通して放したがらないから、

「ヤイ、この野郎、てめえがベタ／＼クツつきやがつて放さないから、あの野郎の仕事の能率が上らなくつて仕様がねえや。ちつとは遠慮しろよ」

親分がかう冗談に叱りつけたら、

「イゝーダ」と言つて、逃げて行つた。

事務員になつて毎日横浜へつとめてゐる娘は、この娘だけ例外的に東京に父も母もキョウダイ五人そろつてゐる家があり、人の手前もあんなショーバイしてゐちや悪いと思つたから止めたのよと言つてゐたが、

「ヤイ、今だつて、会社の帰りに遊んでゐやがるんだらう」

「イゝーダ。知りもしないくせに」

「ヤア坊が言つてたぞ、横浜公園をフラ／＼してゐやがつたさうちやないか」

「あんな奴、知つてるもんか」

親分が冗談にひやかすのを、娘の方はムキになつてフンガイに及んでゐる。親分は彼女らが「稼ぐ」と言はずに「遊ぶ」といふ。親分はたしかに真相を看破してゐる。チェッ、この野郎、てめえ達、遊びたいから遊んでるんぢやねえか、結婚したいなんて嘘つきやがれ、結婚してみてえ、と云ふんだらう、やつぱり遊びぢやねえか、遊び放題に遊びやがつて女房がつとまるもんか、とひやかす。いゝぢやないの、たまには結婚してみたくつても、とパンパン嬢も悠々たるものである。

彼女等は野天でショートタイムの営業もやらないことはないけれども、概してナジミと旅館へ泊る、たいがいナジミの客と会ふ日を約してゐて、街で知らない客を呼びとめて拾ふといふのは少いさうだ。お客は東京人よりも、地方からの商用のお上りさんで、お金はあるし、金ばなれもよい。洋服などもお客にねだつて買つてもらつて、みんな立派なナリをしてをり、ちよつとパンパンには見えないのが多い。第一営業としても、営業主に強制されたり、廻しをとつたりしないのだから、見た様子は娼婦とは雲泥の相違で、どこことなく娘々したのが多い。もしも私が彼女らの一人をつれて新聞雑誌社へ乗りこんだら、ケイ眼無類の記者諸先生も、見破る筈はない。この方は何々社の婦人記者の何さんです、とやつたら、ハア、はじめまして、私は、と名刺を差上げるにきまつてゐる。いや、見破つて みせますよ、と力んでゐた記者がゐたから、あゝいふところへホンモノの令嬢をつれて行つて、色々と雑誌社を騙しなやますことを考へて

ある。然し、実際パンパンガールは陰鬱な性質のものではないのである。

私の会った姐御は堂々たるものだ。一日平均千円の収入があり（美人の若いパンパンはもつと多い。だから姐御は悲劇的だ）そのうち毎日八百円貯金して二百円で二度ゴハンを食べる。朝のゴハンはお客にたべさせてもらひ、お客と別れてきて、お風呂へ行つて、二時頃からタマリの喫茶店へブラリと現れる。彼女らは、映画なども殆ど見ないさうで、それだけ生活に退屈してゐないのぢやないかと私は思ふ。

姐御はお金をためて、やがて貿易商になるのだ、といふ。沖仲士の女親分もやりたいさうで、荷役の指図は自信があるのだと云つてゐた。然し姐御ぐらゐの年配ではこのショーバイはたのしい筈はなく、第一、顔のアラの見える明るいうちはショーバイにでられないといふやうな、姐御といふ威厳と逆な悲劇的な弱点があり、それを押してのショーバイだから、ウンザリしてゐるのも無理はない。姐御の説では、私は結婚なんてする気はないけど、若い子はみんな結婚したがつてよ、と言ふけれども、私の見たところでは、若い子の本心は結婚などは考へておらず、姐御だけが内心は切に結婚生活を欲してゐるやうに思はれたのだ。

若いパンパンたちは、自由で、自然人で、その明るさはあるけれども、そして生活をたのしんでゐるけれども、快樂とか自然的な生活に就て、特に独自の思想があるといふ者はゐない。

がまぐち

彼女らは男を男として客を選ぶわけではなく、もつぱら 藁 口 に 狙ひをつけて客を選ぶ。K子といふ一見令嬢としか思はれない美人は、お金をたくさん持つてゐる男は後光がさして見えるわ、と言つた。お金持は色男に見える由、然し若いうちは金をためても、自然マーケット街のアンチャン連を情人にもつたりして金をまきあげられるやうなことが多く、若い子は稼ぎは多いが、たいした貯金は持つてゐないといふことだつた。

彼女らが夜の橋の袂にタムロしてゐたりするのも、お客を物色するよりも、約束の人を待つてゐる方が多いので、我々東京の貧民どもは間違つてもパンパンに呼びかけられるやうな心配はないらしい。彼女らのナジミ客はお金持ばかりで、熱海、箱根、銚子、日光、一週間も大名旅行につれて行かれるやうなことも再々で、家も配給もないけれども、我々よりも遥かに豪奢な生活をしてゐるのである。だから彼女らには我々銀座の通行人も眼中になく、したがつて、我々がパンパンに就て考へる如く、パンパンといふものを惨めとも卑屈に思ふ考へ方など全然ない。たまたま足を洗つて事務員となつた女だけが、こんなショーバイ肩身がせまいから、と云つたが、彼女だけが東京に家があり、家から稼ぎにでゝゐた、だからさういふ卑下した考へも出てくるわけで、他の住所のない家出娘のパンパンたちは卑屈なところや卑下するところはない。彼女らは娼婦といふよりも、自然人で、娼婦的にヒネクレたり、荒んだり、ゆがめられてゐるところは殆どない。

これに比べると娼婦宿の娼婦は、娼婦といふ別種の人間になつてゐる。公娼がなくなつて吉原といふオイランの型はなくなつても、娼婦の氣質は同じこと、自然に娼婦的な特別なものとなる。

病気になると吉原病院へ送られる。この医療費は、金の有る人は支払ひ、なければ払はなくともよい。すると、娼婦宿の娼婦は必ず支払ふさうだけれども、この街の令嬢方は、完全に誰一人支払つたのがないさうで、親分が、これも冗談に、

「ヤイ、てめえたち、吉原病院で一人として金を払つたためしのないのは、この土地のてめえ

らばかりださうぢやないか。握つてゐやがるくせに、病気を治してもらつたお金ぐらゐは払つてきやがれ、大恩人ぢやねえか」

「恩にはきるけどね。ほんとに有難いと思つてゐるよ、だけど、払はなくともいゝといふものを払つたらバカぢやないの」

御尤も。まったく御説の通りである。警官に狩りたてられトラックにつまれて病院へ投げこまれるのだから又特別で、お金を払ふ気にならないのも当然だが、定まる家がないといふところに、見栄を張る支払ひの觀念などが失はれてゐる理由もあるに違ひない。

彼女らは、束縛されるところがない代りに、徹底した個人主義者で、又、ケチンボであるらしい。買ひ物はお客にしてもらうもの、自分のお金を他人のために使ふといふことなどは、考へたこともない様子だ。そのくせ自分は人のお金を使はせて生活してをり、又それだから、自分は人のためにお金を使ふことがバカらしくなるのかも知れない。

姐御と配下といったつて、別に仁義、義理、人情、いたはりが有るわけぢやない。便宜の機關といふだけのこと、天地いたるところどこでも開業できる、さういふ自由さと強みはおのづから浸みでゝ、彼女らに徹底した個人主義の性格を与へてゐるのだ。

精神的には健康で明るいから、私は娼家の娼婦とパンパンとどちらをなくした方がいゝかときかれゝば、娼家の娼婦は先づなくしろと言ひたい。娼家の娼婦は畸形児だ。肉体上にも精神的にも畸形不具だ。パンパンは自然人であるが、畸形ぢやない。

然しパンパン諸嬢は元は女学校の優等生だが、自然人への変化と同時に知性の方も原始的退化をとげて、自然人たることに知性の裏付けを与へ、知性人たる 自然人に生育してゐる「愛すべき人」は一人もゐないやうである。彼女らが知性人としての自然人となるとき、日本は真に文化国となるのであらう。パンパンは一国の文化のシムボルである。

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底本：「坂口安吾全集 05」筑摩書房

1998（平成 10）年 6 月 20 日初版第 1 刷発行

底本の親本：「オール読物 第二巻第八号」

1947（昭和 22）年 10 月 1 日発行

初出：「オール読物 第二巻第八号」

1947（昭和 22）年 10 月 1 日発行

入力：tatsuki

校正：noriko saito

2009 年 1 月 26 日作成

青空文庫作成ファイル：

このファイルは、インターネットの図書館、[青空文庫](http://www.aozora.gr.jp/) (<http://www.aozora.gr.jp/>) で作られました。入力、校正、制作にあたったのは、ボランティアの皆さんです。

# 日月様

## 坂口安吾

私が精神病院へ入院しているとき、妙な噂が立った。私が麻薬中毒だというのである。警視庁から麻薬係というのが三人きて、私の担当の千谷先生や、係の看護婦がひどい目にあっただけではない。二時間にわたってチンプンカンプンの応接に苦しんだということをきいた。さすがに東大病院は、患者に会わせるようなことはしない。会えば誤解は一度に氷解するが、麻薬中毒とは別の意味で患者が怒りだし、それによって、せつかくの治療がオジャンになる怖れがあるからであろう。

科長の内村先生（大投手）担当の千谷先生（大捕手）のお許しで後樂園へ見物を許された。後樂園のない日、千駄木町の豊島与志雄先生を訪ねた。豊島さん曰く、

「君、麻薬中毒なんだろう」

「違います。催眠薬の中毒はありましたが、麻薬中毒ではありません」

「おんなじじゃないか」

私は逆らわなかった。

そのうち酒がまわり、談たまたま去年死なれた豊島さんのお嬢さんの話になった。腹膜で死んだのだ。非常な苦痛を訴えるのでナルコポンを打ったという。すぐ、ケロリと痛みがとまったそうである。

そこで、拙者が、云った。

「ナルコポンというのは麻薬です。太宰がはじめて中毒の時も、パントポンとナルコポンの中毒だったそうです。僕の病院では重症者の病室がないので、兇暴患者が現われると、ナルコポンで眠らせて松沢へ送るそうです。これはモヒ系統の麻薬です。僕の過飲した睡眠薬は、市販の、どこにもここにもあるというヘンテツもないシロモノです」

「へえ、じゃア、睡眠薬と麻薬は違うの？」

と、豊島さんは目を丸くした。

日本の代表的文化人たる豊島さんでも、こういうトンマなことを仰<sup>おっしゃ</sup>有るのである。私が麻薬中毒というデマに苦しめられたのは、当然かも知れない。

私が退院する一週間ほど前の話である。

王子君五郎という三十ぐらいのヤミ屋がヒョッコリ見舞に来たのである。私は自分勝手にヤミ屋とアッサリ片附けたが、王子君五郎氏は異論があるかも知れない。

私が彼と知りあったのは、戦争中の碁会所であった。当時の彼はセンバン工であり、同時にあとで分ったが、丁半の賭場へ通っていた。然し本職のバクチ打ちではない。お金の必要があって、時々でかけるらしいが、いつもやられるのがオキマリのようで、工場も休んで、たいが

い碁会所へ来ていたが、いつも顔色が冴えなかった。根は非常にお人好しで碁は僕に

せいもく

井 目 おいても勝てないヘタであったが、熱中して打っていた。彼氏の賭場に於ける亢奮落胆が忍ばれるようであった。

碁だけなら、さのみツキアイも深まらなかったのだろうが、夕頃、国民酒場へ行列というダンになって、私は彼氏の恩恵を蒙ったのである。行列の先頭を占めている三十人ぐらいは、みんなバクチ打ちである。その中へ彼も遠慮深くはさまっていたが、私を見つけて自分の前へ入れてくれる。これがどうも、前後左右のホンモノのヨタ者連に比べて、まことに威勢がなく、一人ションボリ冴えない感じで、入れて貰う私が、羞しく、又、非常に彼が痛々しかった。

三月十日の大空襲で、日本政府が大いに慌て、私の住む工場地帯は俄に大疎開を行うことになり、たった一つの区で、二三万戸の家を叩きつぶすことになった。これが一週間ぐらいの短時日に終了するという命令である。空襲とオツカツぐらいに上を下への大騒ぎだ。町の到る所で、学徒隊が屋根をひっぺがし、柱を搦じ倒し、戦車も出動して、家を押しつぶす。濛々たる土煙り、その中を疎開の人々が右往左往に荷物を運んでいる。この一区の大疎開によって、タンスなども二十円ぐらいに値下りしたというぐらいなものであった。

メートル

そのくせ、家を叩きつぶして百 米 道路を何十本つくって見たって、ふだんの火事と違う。火の手が一ヶ所からくるわけではなく、焼夷弾をマンベンなくバラまかれるのだから疎開道路などは一文の値打もないのである。後日完全無欠の焼け野原となり、もうけたのは町会

やけ

長とか、そういう連中で、疎開でねじ倒した材木だけ 焼 ないのがあったから、無断チャックして旬日ならずして新築した。

王子君五郎君も、哀れ、疎開の運命となった。賭場などへ通い、国民酒場の行列の先頭組のくせに、まったく能がないのである。荷造りし、それを田舎へ運ぶ段取りが手際よく行かない。荷物の発送が誰よりおくれて、そのとき、私の家へ一週間ばかり泊めてやった。

終戦直後、上京した時、さっそく私を訪ねてきて、私の一室へ住みたそうであったが、近所の罹災組がたくさんいて、まるで収容所のようなものだから、彼氏の居る場所がない。三四日泊って、ほかに部屋を見つけて引越した。

その後、まだマーケットなどゝいうものがハッキリした形で出来上らない路上で、彼が品物を売ったり買ったりしているのを見かけた。私が彼をヤミ屋とよんだのはそのせいである。それも半年ぐらいのもので、まもなく彼の姿は私の散歩区域では見かけることが出来なくなったのである。それから三年すぎていた。

精神病院で、王子君五郎氏の訪問をうけて私も呆れた。そのときは、付き添いも女房も外出して、私一人であったが、特別私とレンラクのあった人物のほかは、精神病院の錠を下した関所を越え、又、看護婦の認可という関門を越えて、私の病室をつきとめて辿りつくということは不可能なのである。忍術使いと同じぐらい腕力的な侵入方法に練達している各新聞社の社会部記者や写真班すら、みんなお医者さんや看護婦に撃退されて、あえなく退却させられていたのである。

「よく、はいつてこられたね」

と、いうと、彼はヘッヘッヘッと笑って、フトコロから品物をとりだした。

「いつもお世話になりまして、お礼もできませんで、これは私の寸志でございます。先生もさだめしお苦しいことだろうと拝察致しまして、私もマア、ちょっと、顔がきくようになりしましたもんで、どうやら手に入れて参りました」

「なんですか」

彼は又クスリと笑って、頭をかいて、それから注射の恰好をしてみせた。

「なんだい？ ヒロポンかい？」

「ど、どう致しまして。あれです。先生がお用いになっていた例の、麻薬」

私もつくづく呆れてしまった。デマの結果が、こういう珍妙な事実になって現われようとは。

「麻薬って、君、モヒのことかい」

「そうです。イエス。エッヘッヘ」

彼は又、頭をかいた。クスリと笑いつづけている彼の目に、妙に深々とした愛情がこもっていた。

「私自身は、これを用いておりませんが、よく知っているんでございます。中毒して入院する。入院中もぬけだして、ちょっと、用いにおいでになるもんですなア。骨身をけずられるようだとえ話を、マア、私もチョイ／＼耳にしておりますんで、先生なんざ、愚連隊というものじゃなし、仲間のレンラクもなく、お困りだろうと、エッヘッヘ。そうなんでございます。この精神病院なぞと申しまして、鉄の格子に、扉に錠など物々しくやっておりますが、私共の方では、お茶の子なんでございます。みんなレンラクがありまして、ワケのないことござんすよ。鉄格子から注射器と薬を差入れてやりや、なんのこともありませんや。愚連隊の中毒患者は、病院の中でいかにも神妙に、みんな用いておりますんで。エッヘッヘ。文明でござんす」

「へえ。文明なもんだねえ」

と、私もまったく感服した。そして彼の厚意に、まことに極みなく清らかなものを感じて、ホロリとするほど心を打たれたが、それだけに、デマにすぎない実情を事をわけて説明するのに、甚しく心苦しい思いであった。

とつとつ

私の 訥々 たる説明をきき終ると、彼は非常に情けなそうな顔になった。私は彼を慰めるのに骨を折ったほどである。

「御退院もお近いようで、御元気な御様子を拝見致しまして」

と、彼は急に、改って、よそ行きのような別なお愛想を言いだした。

「あんまり、つめてお考え遊ばしますからでございましょうが、又、先生が、華々しくお活躍あそばす日も近いだろうと思ひますと、私のような者でも、心うれしく、甚だ光栄でございます。御退院の節は、ぜひお立ち寄り下さいまして」

と、住所をコクメイな図面入りに書いて帰った。そこはさる盛り場の碁会所で、自分の家ではないけれども、昼間は、必ずそこにいるからと云った。

退院してまもない夕方であった。彼の住む盛り場の近所へ所用があつて出向いたが、そこは私の初めての土地で、おまけにその日は一人であり、知っている土地へ戻って一杯やるのもオックウであり、さりとて飲むべき店も見当がつかない。私は王子君五郎氏を思いだした。彼の厚意に報いるにもよい機会だから、誘いだして、このへんで一杯のもうと思ったのである。

碁会所はすぐ分った。



「王子君五郎さんはいますか」

ときくと、二人の娘がしばらく額をよせ集めてヒソヒソ話していたが、

「あゝそう、君ちゃんのことよ」

と、一人が大声で叫んだ。

「なんだ。君ちゃんか」

二人の娘は笑った。

「君ちゃんは、もう、いません、お風呂へ行った筈ですから、今日はもう来ませんわ」

「どこかへ行けば、会える場所があるんですか」

「それは、お店よ」

「お店？」

「御存知ないんですか。カフェー・ゴンドラと云いましてね、そこの露路の中程にあります。もう、出たころでしょう。でも、まだかも知れないわ」

私は礼をのべて、その露路へ行った。そこは軒なみにカフェーの立ち並んでいる所で、各々の戸口に美人女給が立って、露路へ迷いこむ通行人を呼びこみ、時には手を握って引っ張りこもうとしたりした。

私はゴンドラを見出してズカズカはいった。王子君五郎氏はそこのバーテンだろうと思ったのである。然し、バーテンダーは彼氏ではなかった。見廻したが、まだ、ほかにお客が一人もおらず、女給のほかに男は見当らなかった。

「この店に王子君五郎という人がいるときいたんですが、もしや、常連にそういう人がおりませんか」

「君ちゃんでしょう。えゝ、おります」

と、こゝでは躊躇なくズバリと答えた。

「君ちゃーん。お客様よ」

と、一人は奥へよびかけた。

これから、どういう事が起ったか、ということについては、二十の扉や話の泉でかねて頭脳練成につとめている皆さん方、お分りですか。あと、三十秒。鐘が鳴らなかつたら、皆さん方は、当事者の私よりも、御練達の士なのである。

王子君五郎氏はまさしく現われてきたのである。然し、これを君五郎氏と云っては、あるいはよろしくない。君ちゃん、である。然し、君ちゃん、と云うのも異様であるが、動物園の象に花子ちゃんとか、それで通用する世間でもあるから、君ちゃん、それでよろしいのだろう。ジキル氏とハイド氏ほど悪魔的なものではない。

現われ出でたる君ちゃんは女であつた。然したしかに、王子君五郎氏でもあるのである。上もり野の杜では、すでにオナジミの極めてありふれた日本の一現象にすぎないのかも知れないが、センバン工王子君五郎という、決して女性的ではなく、むしろズングリと節くれた彼氏を知る私にとって、この出現が奇絶怪絶、度胆をぬかれる性質のものであつたことは、同情していたゞかなければならない。

君ちゃんはまさしく女装であつたが、女装であるという以外に、女らしいものは何もなかった。第一、普通の男娼なら、女の言葉を用いるだろう。君ちゃんはそうではない。私への気兼

ねからではなく、日常そうであることは、私というものを除外して他の男女と話を交している態度を見れば察しがつくのである。

「エッヘッヘ。まったく、どうも、恐縮です」

と、はじめだけ、ちょっと、てれたが、あとは、もう、わるびれなかった。

「実は、なんですよ。これも、世を渡る手なんです。私は、例の男娼じゃありません。なまじっか、あんなことをしたり、女ぶろうとするのが、いけませんので、全然そうでないところに、皆さんが面白がって、ひき立てゝ下さるコツがあるんです。はじめは、ほんのイタズラで、まア、仮装舞踊会みたいなもので、それがマアうけたというわけですか。あんまり、うけやしません、何がして私は、愚連隊になるだけの度胸はなく、そのくせ、愚連隊のハシクレに交らなくちゃア、私なんかの生きて行かれる御時世じゃアないじゃありませんか。こうして女装してりゃ、誰も喧嘩をうりやしませんし、仲間の仁義で血の雨をくぐる必要もありませんや。その代り、チップをはずむお客もいませんが、この風態で無難に身をひそめて、まア、ヤミ屋の片棒をかついでいるというわけです。先日はどうも、麻薬で失敗いたしました、あれなんかも、私自身は、これっぽかしも用いたことがございせん。ひどく健全なるものでして、女房子供をなんとか養って、エッヘッヘ実は、女房も、私のこの女装については、知っちゃいせんのです」

なかなか

彼の細君は、却々の美人なのである。然し、それだけ、威張りかえって、非常に冷い女であった。

私が彼と知り合った戦時中、彼は細君の実家が農家であるところから、そのおかげで人の羨む食生活をしており、完全に女房に頭の上らぬ状態でもあったのである。そのことが焦りとなって、一カク千金、彼のような小心なケレンのない好人物が賭場へ入りびたるようになったらしい。教養のない女が生活の主権を握ると、まことにつけあがって、鼻持ちならぬ暴君となるもので、彼が尻の下にしかれた生活ぶりは、私には見るに忍びがたいものがあつた。女房という暴君がなければ、彼は昔も今も実直なセンバン工であり、賭場へ入りびたったり、女装してヤミ屋の片棒をかつぐ必要もなかったであろう。彼は国民酒場へ行列したが、小さなジョッキ二つのめば充分に酩酊し、余分の券はみんな私にユーザーしたほど、酒についても無難な人物であつた。

彼は男装に変わって現われてきた。

「今宵は、ひとつ、ぜひ御案内致したいところがありますんで、エッヘッヘ。いぶせき所ですが、私がお伴致しております限り、先生にインネンを吹っかける奴もありません。その点は御安心を願ひまして、人生の下の下なところを、御見学願ひます」

「麻薬宿じゃないの。そんなの見ても仕方がないよ」

「どう致しまして。国法にふれる場所じゃありませんや。エッヘッヘ。先生もいやに麻薬恐怖症ですな。ちょっと、お待ちなすって」

彼は一人の女給と片隅で何か打ち合せていたが、まもなく一人戻ってきて、私を外へつれだした。

彼の店で強い酒をのんだせいで、私も大いに酔っていたが、見知らぬ土地の見知らぬ道を曲りくねって、案内された所は、新築したばかりの、ちょっと小粋な家であつた。私は待合だろ

うと思ったが、そうではない。たゞの旅館なのである。そのあたりは、たしかに待合地帯ではなく、旅館のあるべきような地帯でもなかった。そのくせ部屋は待合の造りのようでもあり、立派な浴室があった。ほかに、客はいなかった。

「ここは君の内職にやってる店と違うのかい」

「どう致しまして。私なんかゞ、何百年稼いだって、こんな店がもてるものですか。ここは、マア、なんと申しますか、ここの主人も先のことは、目下見当がつかないのでしょう。今に料飲再開になる、その折は、という考えもあるでしょうし、何か考えているんでしょうが、今のところは、たゞの旅館、それも、パンパン宿ではないのです。だから、客もありませず、三四、知ってる者が利用する以外は、閑静なもんです」

私たちが酒をのんでいるところへ、彼が先程店の片隅で打ち合せをしていた女給がはいってきた。不美人ではないが、美人というほどの女でもない。たゞ背丈がスラリとして、五尺四寸ぐらいはあろうと思われ、ムツリした、冷めたような女であった。

彼は女に酒をすゝめた。女はグイ／＼呷ったが、却々酔った風がなかった。ヨッちゃん、ヨシ子という女であった。

「実は、先生に前もって話しておきゃよかったのですが、目の前で、ザックバラン、隠し立てなく話した方が一興だろうと思いましてね」

彼自身は人に酒をつぐばかりで、殆ど飲まなかったが、すでに酔って、目がすわっていた。

「この人は私と同じ田舎の生れなんですが、父親が小学校の校長でしてね、女学校をでると、絵の勉強をしていたのです。そのうち、これが偶然でして、この人の東京の下宿の隣家が刺青の名人だったのです。今と違って、そのころは戦争中のことで、刺青なんてものを、人がざらにやるものじゃアない。めったにお客もなかったのですが、この人が奇妙な人で、紙に絵を描くだけじゃアつまらない、自分の身体にやってみたい、いっそ刺青をやってみたい、自分の手で自分の身体にやってみたいと考えたのです。そこで隣家の刺青の名人に弟子入りして、とうとう、自分で自分の身体にやったのですが、やってみると、その出来栄えがつまらない。そりゃ、そうでしょう。ろくすっぽ稽古もやらずにやった仕事ですから、出来栄えがいゝ筈もないじゃありませんか。あげくに、どうしたと思います。刺青の部分を自分で皮をはいだんです。幸いモモのいくらでもない部分でしたから、ちょいと昏倒したぐらいで、済んだんですがね。まア、そういった人ですから、並の人とは気性も違います。つまり、女ながらも、骨の髄から芸術家の根性で、それについちゃア、鬼のような執念があるわけです」

女は眉一つ動かさなかった。話は思いがけなく異様なものであるが、話の内容を本質的に納得させるような凄味がない。それは女の人柄のせいだ。本質的に、かゝる鬼の執念を持つ芸術家の凄味というものが感じられない。ジッと押し黙って、眉一つ動かさぬけれども、いかにもそれが薄っぺらで、今にも、チェツと舌打ちでもして、それが本性の全部のように感じられる女である。

「そんなわけで、気性が気性ですから、まア性格も陰性で、それに潔癖なんです。選り好みをしますから、お客もつかず、そうかと云って、パンパンをやるような人柄じゃアない。パンパン時代に、こんな気性じゃ、着物一枚つくるところか、食べて生きて行くことだって難儀でさアね。ところが、この人が、ふだんから、先生のファンなんです。それでまア、これを機会に、先生にお近づきを願って、文学の方で身を立たいという考えもあるのですから、御指導を願

えたら、と、オセッカイのようですが、本人が黙り屋のヒネクレ屋ときていますから、私から、こうしてお願い申上げる次第なんです」

彼の言葉には、マゴコロがこもっていた。単に紹介の労をとるといだけの性質のものではなかった。私の頭にひらめいたのは、彼と彼女との交情、二人は相愛の仲ではないかということだった。

ウカツに返事はできない。文学の指導、といったって、先方の才能の見当がつかなければ、どうなるものでもなし、第一、文学の指導という結論に達するまでの話の筋が、いわば芸術的因果物というような血なまぐさい奇妙なもので、穏やかならぬものである。

この又あとに結論があつて、私の妾にしろとでもいうのであろうか。不美人という程ではなし、スラリとのびた姿態にはちょっと魅力があり、押し黙り、ひねくれて、いかにも陰性な感じであっても、一晚なら遊んでもいいぐらいの助平根性はあつた。酔っていたから、助平根性は容赦なく掻き立てられても、穏やかならぬ話にこもる凄味はさすがに胸にこたえた。

「文学の指導たつて、芸ごとは身に具わる才能がなければ、いくら努力してみたつて、ダメなものですよ。それを見た上でなくちゃア返事のできるものじゃアないね」

「然し、先生、こんなことは、ありませんか。かりにです、かりにですよ。いえ、かりじゃアないかも知れません。天才てえものが気違いだといいます。天才てえものは気違いだから、ほかの人の見ることのできないものを見ているでしょう。それがあつたら、これはもう、ゆるぎのない天分じゃありませんか」

私はお人好しで温和なこの男が、こんなに開き直つて突つかゝるのを経験したことはなかった。私は内々苦笑した。私自身、精神病院から出てきたばかりだからであつた。

「天才だの気違いだのと云つたつて、君、僕自身、精神病院で、気違いの生態を見てきたばかりだが、気違いは平凡なものですよ。非常に常識的なものです。むしろ一般の人々よりも常識にとみ、身を慎む、というのが気違い本来の性格かも知れないね。天才も、そうです。見た目に風変わりだつて、気違いでも天才でもありゃしない。よしんば、ある種の天分があつても、絵の天分と、文学の天分はおのずから違う。絵の天分ある人は、元来色によって物を見ているものだし、文学の天分ある人は、文字の構成によってしか物を把握しないように生れついているもんです。だから、性格が異常だというだけじゃア、文学者の才能があるとは云われないものです」

「然し、先生、今に分ります。分りますとも。先生とヨッちゃんは、たとえば、日月です。男が太陽なら、女はお月様、そういう結び合せの御二方です」

決然とそう云い放ち、やがて、うなだれた。

お風呂の支度ができましたから、という知らせで、私が一風呂あびてくると、寢床の敷いてある部屋へ通された。やがて女が一風呂あびて現われた。その時はもう王子君五郎氏は、この家を立ち去っていたのである。

私は、然し、女が私の横へねても、監視されているようで、ちょっと気持がすくんでいた。

「王子君は、日月と云つたね。日月とは不思議なことを云うものだ。あの人は、そんなことを、時々言うかね」

と、私は女にきいた。その時である。まるで、思いがけなく、ゼンマイのネジが狂つたように女が笑いだした。決して音のきこえる筈のない冷静な懐中時計が、突如として、目覚し時計

となって、鳴り狂いはじめたようなものである。

「あんな男のいうことマジメにきいて、何、ねぼけてんの。気違いって、あの人が気違いじゃないの。女装したりしてさ。変態なら分るわよ。変態でもなんでも なくせに女装するなんて、頭のネジが左まきのシルシにきまつてるわ。私が自分のモモにホリモノをただの、そのホリモノをえぐりとったのと、あの人が知っているわけがないでしょう。みんなあの人の妄想よ。ほら、見てごらんない。私のモモに、ホリモノだの、えぐりとった傷跡だのがあつて」

女は私にモモを見せた。まったく、何もなかったのである。そしてモモを見せる女の態度というものは、完全なパンパンの変哲もない態度であり、おかげで私は俄に安心したほどであった。

「君は、じゃア、絵描きの卵でもないのかね」

「まア、それぐらいのことは、私だって、なんとか、かんとか、それも商売よ。でも油絵の二三枚かいたこともあったわよ。あんまり根もないことを云ったんじゃア、この社会じゃア、自分が虚栄だから、人の虚栄を見破るのも敏感なものよ」

話しだすと、先刻までの押し黙った陰鬱さは薄れて、女は案外延び延びと気楽であった。

げ

然し、私には、どうも解せなかった。病院へ麻薬を持って見舞に来た時から、どこにも気違いらしい変ったところはなかった。元々気違いはそうである。私は精神病院で、それを胆に銘じてきた。発作が起きた時でなければ、見分けのつくものではないのである。いわば、あらゆる人間に犯罪者の素質があるように、あらゆる人々に狂人の素質があると考えてもよい。狂人は限度の問題だという見方もありうるほどである。

私は精神病院をでゝ以来、それまでの不眠症にひきかえて、ひどく眠るようになった。尤も、東大から催眠薬を貰っており、これは暁方になってきいてくる性質の催眠薬であった。朝食をとって、又、ひと眠りするのが習慣になっていた。

私は翌朝目がさめると、朝食の後、女を帰して、私だけ、もう一眠り、ねむった。ぐっすり眠った。その前日まで、仕事して、過労があつたせいもあった。

ひる

目がさめると、もう 午 すぎだ。私は宿の人に頼んでおいたので、風呂がわいていた。風呂からあがって、酒をのんだ。この旅館は、まだ女中がおらず、主人夫婦だけ、子供もいないのである。

「どうも、王子君には、驚いた」

私は宿の主婦に話した。

「あの人の女装にも呆れたが、ゆうべの話しぶりが、どうも、私には解せなくてね、女がモモにホリモノをして、出来栄えが気に入らなくて、肉をえぐりとった、という。これが全然嘘っパチなんだが話しぶりの真剣さは、凄味があつて、ちょっと、嘘なんてものじゃアなかったね。モモをえぐりとったという件は、女とねれば、忽ちバレることなんだし、どうも、あの人の気持が分らない。女は王子君を気違いだと云ったけれども、昨夜の一件をのぞいて、気違いらし

な

いところは見当らないのでね。女と相愛の仲かと思えばそうらしくもなし、むしろ女に甜められきっているという風なんだね」

主婦は静かに、うなずいた。この家が、旅館とも、待合とも、料理屋ともつかないものであ

るように、この主婦も、商売ずれのしたところがない。そのくせ、やっぱり商売人あがりでもあるような、わけの分らないところがあった。

主婦は間の悪そうな笑いをうかべたが、真顔に返って、

「キミちゃんが毎晩のようにお客さんをつれこんでくれますんでね。こんなことは申し上げたくないのですが、間違い、或いは、まア、間違いの一種なんでしょう かね。男のお客様によって、女はそれぞれ違うんですけれどもね。これは男のお客様の好みもあるでしょうが、キミちゃんが殿方の人柄に応じて選んだり、キミちゃん自身の好みというものもあるのかも知れません」

ここまで話してきて、主婦はちょっとガッカリした顔付をして、言葉をきった。

「でも、キミちゃんが、女の子をお客様に紹介する話というのが、いつも、おんなじなんですよ。今も仰有る通りの、モモのイレズミをえぐりとった、というんですがねえ。それから、もしや、日月なんて申しやしませんでしたか」

私はいさゝか茫然たるものだった。

「えゝ、えゝ、云いましたね。男が太陽、女がお月様、一對の日月とね」

私のショゲ方はひどかったのである。女が絵の天才、私が文学の天才、それで日月、こう思いこんでいた私の甘さは馬鹿のようなものである。

「日月というのは、なんのことですか？」

主婦は又、クスリと、ガッカリした笑い方をした。

「日月様とでも申すんでしょうか。キミちゃんが思いこんでいる宗教なんですよ。男と女、それが日月。でもねえ、キミちゃん自身、男のくせに女装して、つまり、自分が一人で日月をかたどっているという思いこんだ気持もあるんです。そのほかに、とりたてゝ変ったところもないのですし、根は気立てのよい、おとなしい人なんですけど、ねえ」

茫然たる私に、主婦はなんでもない顔付でつけたして云った。

「キミちゃん自身が、自分のモモの肉をえぐったことは事実なんです。キミちゃんのオカミさんが、人間の肉をたべたいとか、云ったとか、これは噂ですけれども、色々曰くがあったんでしょが、キミちゃんが思いつめたアゲクに、自分のモモの肉をえぐってオカミさんに食べさせたんだなんて、まア、噂ですから、真偽のほどは分りません」

私は二の句のつげない状態だった。私自身が精神病院をでゝ、まだ一週間ほどにしかならない日の話なのである。

私は真偽をたしかめたい気持にもならなかった。まるで、すべてが私の悪夢にすぎないような気持であった。私には、すべてが割りきれなかったが、割りきってみたいとも思わなかった。

そして茫然と自分の家へ戻ったが、それから三日目の新聞に、麻薬密売者の一味があげられたという記事があり、その一人に、王子君五郎という名があがっていた。私は今もなお、妙に溜息がとまらぬような思いである。

底本の親本：「オール読物 第四巻第七号」

1949（昭和 24）年 7 月 1 日発行

初出：「オール読物 第四巻第七号」

1949（昭和 24）年 7 月 1 日発行

※底本は、物を数える際や地名などに用いる「ヶ」（区点番号 5-86）を、大振りにつくっています。

入力：tatsuki

校正：砂場清隆

2008 年 5 月 10 日作成

青空文庫作成ファイル：

このファイルは、インターネットの図書館、[青空文庫](http://www.aozora.gr.jp/) (<http://www.aozora.gr.jp/>) で作られました。入力、校正、制作にあたったのは、ボランティアの皆さんです。

## エロチシズムと文学

坂口 安吾

池田 みち子

### 肉体の合理性

坂口 このあいだ阿部お定さんに会った。対談したのです。

池田 どんなふうでした。

坂口 非常にいい感じだった。もっとも平凡な女だね。変態的なところなんかすこしもない。つまり阿部定というひとは、元来そういうあたり前の女性なんだろう。いちばん女らしい、女の代表選手さ。

池田 変ったところはないんですか。

坂口 阿部定さんは変態的なひとではない。石田という相手の男がお定さんに首をしめてもらいたがるひとでね、それがつまり……女は男しだいになるところがあるから。

池田 相手のひとが変っていたのですね。

坂口 女というものは、たいてい男に支配されるものですよ。女自身の性格というものは割合にないんじゃないか。性格異常者は別だけれど、相手の男によってちがってゆくものじゃないかね。

池田 自分のほうでひきずってゆくというような、性格の強いひとの場合はそうでもないでしょうけれど。

坂口 お定さんはその逆で、もっともありふれた女、男によってどうにでもなるタイプのひとです。ぼくがね、お定さんに『あなたはいくつの年に恋をしましたか』ときいたところが、『わたしは恋をしたことがない』というのです。

池田 それで。

坂口 『石田さんとああいふうになるまで——三十三になるまで恋をしたことはない。ただ自分のほうで



好きだった男はある』……おもしろいですよ、このいかたは。好きだった男はあるが、いつもだまされた。男は十五、六の時から好きだった。が、それは恋ではない。つまりお定さんは、片恋は恋とおもっていない。自分の愛した男に愛されることが恋愛だとおもっている。愛した男に愛されない場合は恋とはいっていない。吉さん（石田）とだけはほんとうの恋をしたというのだ。それでね、自分は幸福だといったよ。世のなかの女のひとの大半は恋を知らないで死ぬから不幸だともいっていた。そうして、これからでも恋ができるならしたいとおもっているといっていた。これはぼくはえらいとおもったね。

池田 お定さんが、特別に変わったひとでないことはわかるんですが、しかし、石田さんを殺して……。

坂口 殺しゃあしないのだよ。いつものように首をしめたのが、運がわるく……。

池田 殺さないけれど、偶然死んでしまったのでしょうけれど、そのあとのことね……。（笑声）

坂口 それは、あとがなご大事なんだ。ぼくは、じつに純粹なものだとおもうよ。クライマックスに相手が死んでしまった。他人ときりはなした自分たちだけの世界、ほんとうに一身同体のような感じがするだろう。その死体を残して自分だけたち去るにあたって、なに

か形見をもってゆこうとおもえば、臍を切るわけにはゆかないし、腕を切るわけにもゆかないし、当然ですよ、あたり前じゃないか。それを非常に変態におもうのは、世間一般のひとが、肉体の合理性というものを理解していないからだ。肉体には合理性が必要だ。そういうものを隠蔽して、精神だけの合理性をはかろうとしたって平衡がとれないのですよ。肉体の合理性——これは人間に必要なんだ。こういうものが踏台になった上に、文化がきずかれてこなければならぬ。これを外へ押しつけて、隠しておいて文化をつくらうたって無理です。

ぼくは、精神分析学というものを高く評価するが、精神分析学は、タブーとか、トータルとかいうようなものを突きとめて、それをだんだんにすくなくしていている。タブーとか、トータルとかは、肉体を理知で、合理的に支配しようとはせずに、原始的な含羞でゆがめた結果のものが、お定さんの場合についていえば、女の純情でそのゆがみを破ってしまった。つまり非常に純情なんだ。そこを知らなければならぬ。お定さんは自信をもってこういうのだ。『女のひとは、みんなわたしとおなじような気持をもっているのです』と。ぼくもじっさいにそうだとおもったね。

池田 とにかく、肉体の問題をひた隠しに隠して、ゆ

がめてしまうのは考えものだね。

坂口 ぼくはやはり、あからさまにいいとおもう。そんなことは夫婦生活ではわかってのことだし、友人間では話題にしていることなんだ。友人間で話題にしていることが、思想や文学の話題にならぬというのは、じつに不自然なことですよ。

池田 まったくね。

坂口 結婚してみれば、肉体は夫婦生活のあたり前のことになるでしょう。なぜそういう合理性を公開的に求めようとしないのか。夫婦間だけの秘密の合理性などというものは、進歩的な、文化的な形態ではない。もっと公開的に、学問的に合理化してゆかなければならぬ。肉体の問題だけが合理化されないというのはまちがった話だ。

池田 それを、隠そうとするから不潔になる。

坂口 そう、非常に不潔になる。あからさまにすれば不潔になるわけではない。

池田 だから、文学の上でも、肉体を扱いさえすれば、すぐにエロ小説のように考えてしまって、どういう態度で扱っているかということは問題にしない。それだけ曲解して読まれることが多いだろうとおもうのですよ。

坂口 しかし青年は別ですね。青年は案外正義派です

からね。森川信の話だが、臍なんか出す役者をカブリツキにみにきているのはいいさんばかりで、青年はほとんどいいないといっていたよ。フランスあたりでも、エロ芝居の見物は、やはりいいさんばかりだそうですね。フランスには検閲もなにもない。文学でも、どんな猥本を出版してもかまわない。ことごとく公衆の批判と良識に訴えているのだ。それでうまくゆくはずのものなんです。人間を信用しなければダメですよ。ただ、カトリックの教会だけは検閲している。信者に読ませるものに検閲があるそうだけれど……。

記者 日本では、政府の検閲のゆきすぎで極端に歪曲してしまったのですね。

坂口 もっと人間を、とくに青年の正義感を信用すればいいのだ。信用されると責任をもつものだよ。

### 明るいパンパンガール

記者 敗戦後、出版の自由がみとめられたとなると、たちまちエロ本がはんらんして問題になっているが、これなどもかつての取締のゆきすぎに対する反動だといえる。取締のゆきすぎがこの問題を極端にゆがめてしまった。だから、いったん取締の枠がはずされたとなると、ゆがめられたままのものがとび出してきて害



毒を流す。もっと合理的に扱われていたら、こんなばかげた不健康な現象はみられなかったはずだ。

池田 そうですわね。

坂口 青年を信用すればいい。じじいとなると、希望がないから、ばかで助平ですよ。が、青年は純真で偉大なところがある。二十代の青年はみんな純真ですよ。日本人はスケールが小さいから、三十すぎるともうたかがい愚劣な……。

池田 前に進んでゆく気持がなくなってしまうのかな。坂口 つまりなんだろうな。日本人はスケールが小さいから、自分がなにか理想をもっているとか、正義感をもっているとかしても、一つに幻滅を感じると全部に幻滅を感じて、全面的に否定的になるのだな。だから、三十をすぎると、日本人というやつは、非常に不逞な悪漢になってしまう。いままでの正義や純情を一気にうらぎってしまうことになる。青年時代の正義感、はナイーヴな正義感で、理性的な正義感ではないから、そのせいもあって幻滅しやすいのだろうが、とにかく、そういう正義感があるので日本の青年男女を信用している。戦争に敗けて、強盗が出ていたって、これだけ安全な国はないよ。おそらく敗戦国のなかで、古今東西いちばん犯罪がすくないんじゃないかな。

池田 そうかしら。

坂口 こんなにひどく戦争に敗けて、これだけ安泰にくらしてゆけるところはないさ。戦争に勝っている国にくらべても、犯罪すくないほうじゃないかね。あんながたは、そういう地理的、歴史的な観念をぬきにして、日本一つだけをとりあげて勝手なことをいっているからいけない。フランス革命をみたって、第一次大戦後のドイツをみたって、破壊の時代のきたときには、じつにあんたたるものです。いま、日本には、最大の破壊の時代が訪れているのに、われわれの生活には、すこしも破壊の様相はあらわれていない。たまに、ピストル強盗が一夜に五、六人出ているだけだ。こんなものは破壊でもなんでもない。じつにノルマルな時代ですよ。

記者 強盗や追剥の出ることのほうが例外だものね。

坂口 日本人というのは、あるいは世界中でいちばん穏健な国民かもしれないね。

記者 ところで、坂口さんは、パンパンガールと対談されたり、研究もされたり……。

坂口 研究はしていないよ。(笑声) いっしょに泊りにいったことはないよ。ゆこうとおもったけれど、ゆかなかった。残念なことをした。こないだの新聞に、パンパン同志で喧嘩したという記事が出ていたが、ああいうことはよくないね。

池田 なわ張りがあるというのはほんとうですか。

坂口 ぼくは知らない。が、ああいうことは、みじめで、みすぼらしくてよくない。女というのは知恵がないから、男のあとばかり真似をするのだな。じっさい歎かわしいことだよ。しかし、敗戦後に生れたパンパンというのは、商売女の一つの進歩だね。むかしあった吉原なんというのはじつに陰惨だったが、ああいうところの女にくらべて、今日のパンパンは自意識でやっている。親のせいにもしなければ、社会のせいにもしていない。自分の意志で入ったことを公言している。これは文化的に非常な進歩ですよ。

池田 しかし、それぞれに複雑な事情もあるわけでしょう。

坂口 たとえば、未亡人なんかずいぶんつかまるでしょう。つかまってきましたが、それを新聞が、子供の靴のために貞操を売ったとか、妹の着物のためにパンパンしたとか、そんなばかなことを本気にして書くからいけない。そうではないのですよ。自分がなりたいたらなっているのです。そういう自主的な考えを確立させる必要がある。美名をつけるからいけない。

記者 警視庁の調べでも、好奇心というのが非常に多いようですね。

坂口 美名をつけることがよくないというところに気

のつく生活をしなければいけない。

池田 わたしは、むかしの吉原、玉の井、いまのパンパンの全部を通じて、そういう生活に入りたいちばん大きな原因は、ほかにくらしの手段がなかったからではないかとおもうの。つまりパンパンにしても、それとおなじ程度の生活が他の手段によってできるなら、好んでああいう生活に入らなかったらうと考えるのですよ。

坂口 それはそうさ。それはパンパンとおなじ生活なんてないからさ。からだを売っただけで、あとの時間はぜんぜん自由で、しかもそうとうな金になる。そんな生活はほかにありはしない。

池田 だけど、わたしのセンチメンタリズムかもしれないけれど、なんだか非常に可哀そうな気がする。

坂口 可哀そうなことはいね。いったいどこところが可哀そうなの。人間というものは、一步をあやまれば男だってそうなるよ。

記者 男の場合は売りものにならないからで、売りものになればそういうことになるかもしれない。

坂口 なってはならないということに気がつかなければいけない。同時に、誰でもなりうるということを知らなければならない。親のせいでもなんでもない。その上、なってしまうとぬけられない。らくなんだ。乞



食とおなじで、三日やるとやめられないというやつだ。人間というものは、そういう脆いものだということを自覚しなければいけない。美名を考えているようなことではいけない。

記者 弱さや脆さをもったものが人間そのものの姿であるということを、すなおにみとめなければいけない。坂口 そうだ。そういうことを謙虚にみとめなければいけない。それが人間の生活ではないか。自分というものも、パンパンになりうる人間であるということを知るところから文学ははじまる。あなたがたは、美名に隠れて、そういうことを拒否したり、陰蔽したりするからいけない。

池田 たしかに、むかしの玉の井あたりの女とはちがったあかるさをもっていますね。

坂口 本質的にあかるくなっている。自分の境遇を呪っているようなものは一人もない。これはいいところだね。みんな自分自身が自分の責任をもつようにならなければならぬ。たしかにパンパンの社会は低い社会、野蛮な社会ですよ。しかし、自分の生活に責任をもつという点においては、かならずしもばかにしたものではない。むかしは『わたしは親のために吉原に売られました』などといったものだが、そんな親なら横面よこつらを殴りつけてやればいい。そういうものが世のなかの悲

劇になるだけ、むかしの日本はばかだった。そういうものが悲劇にならないだけ、今日のパンパンは進歩している。つまり日本は、敗戦後、おどろくべき進歩をしているのさ。

#### エロ作家は誰か

池田 話は別ですけど、坂口さんは戦争中は……。

坂口 映画会社の嘱託で、月に百二十円もらっていた。百二十円もらっておれば、配給生活はらくにできましたね。

池田 大いに書かれたのですか。

坂口 三つ書いたけれど、一つも映画にならなかった。全部検閲が通らなかった。

池田 文学の話になりますけれど、織田さん（作之助氏）の……。

坂口 文学の話はよそう。

記者 そうはゆかない。（笑声）

坂口 織田はね、とにかく一つの時代をつくったひとだからいいところがあるね。読ませるからね。読ませるということは非常に大事なことだ。いま、作家で読ませる力をもっているのは太宰（治氏）だ。それから井上友一郎、田中英光が読ませる。平凡ながら、やは

り読ませてゆくんだ。読んでみたまえ、いっぺん読みだすと終りまで読ませる力をもっているよ。新人では、峯雪栄というひとの『妄執』に感心した。

記者 坂口さんののは、小説よりも随筆のほうが読ませるね。織田さんのはたしかにたのしませてくれる。

坂口 読んでいておもしろいのだよ。即座に読ませる。井上君もそうだね。井上君が売れっ子になっているのはあの筆力のせいでも、もっとも千万だとおもう。ああいう力は、すべての作家がもたなければいかな。

池田 口で話したらつまらないことでも、書いてあると非常におもしろい。

坂口 ばかなことをいっていてもいい。読ませることだね。これは一朝一夕にできるものではない。『文芸』に出た西野辰吉のもの、あれはいい作品だが、文章の読ませかたのピントが狂っている。

池田 古いひとでは宇野浩二さんが読ませますね。

坂口 むかしのひとの感覚に対してはね。いまのひとの感覚には退屈ですよ。いまの宇野浩二氏のもの、読ませる力はないね。あのころは、あのころの時代に対してはあったかもしれないけれど。

記者 織田さんも、戦争の前と後ではずいぶんちがっていますね。戦争後は流れにのっているという感じで、『夜の構図』なんか、読んでいたのしめる。

坂口 いわゆる調子が出ていたのだな。

記者 坂口さんもそうですね。『近代文学』に書かれたキリシタンもの、それから『白痴』『外套と青空』

と、だんだん弾んできて、その弾んでくる過程が眼にみえていてじつにおもしろいのですが、やはり作家は、弾んでこなければいかんのでしょうかね。

坂口 まあね。

記者 太宰さんはどうです。

坂口 太宰は作家ですよ。人間通の作家ですよ。おそらく世界の文学史に残りうる作家だね。日本が太宰を生んだということは、じつに誇るべきことです。フランスあたりにも、あれだけの作家はちょっとみあたらない。ああいう人間通の作家は主流の作家ではないが、傍系の作家であれだけのものは、世界の文学史にもすくないのではないかとおもう。その意味で日本が誇っているんだ。おそらく最高のものじゃないかな。ぼくはあの作品を、ある意味における高い魂の落語だとおもっている。最高の落語だとおもっている。落語をばかにしてはいけない。落語は最高の娯楽で、たのしめる。永遠に人間のたのしめるものだったら、最高のものといつてさしつかえない。太宰君は最高の落語作家だ。そして歴史に残りうるひとですよ。

記者 エロチシズムの作家というと、坂口さん、織田



さんあたりの名が出るが、ぜんぜんちがうんだね。人間というものを肉体をぬきにして考えることはできないと主張しているだけで、いわゆるエロ作家に特有な官能的な描写というものはないのだからね。そういう意味で、誰がほんとうのエロチシズムの作家なんだろう。

坂口　ほんとうのエロ作家は永井荷風だ。世間ではこれを立派な文学者だといって、坂口安吾のほうがエロだとかいっているのだから悲しいね。これはぜんぜん逆なんだ。

池田　舟橋聖一さんのものはどうですか。

坂口　ぼくは読んでいないけれど、『悉皆屋康吉』なんていいそうじゃないですか。

池田　舟橋さんのさいきんのものは、かなり読者の人氣を考慮に入れているので、純粹でないようにもおもわれるのですが。

坂口　舟橋は器用すぎるんだ。しかし決して猥作家ではない。いわゆるむかしの猥文学を書いているのは永井荷風で、これはほんとうに遠眼鏡で待合の部屋をのぞいているというやつですよ。それを純文学だといい、坂口安吾をエロ作家だなんというんだから、だいたいおかしな話だよ。

池田　坂口さんの描かれようとする理想の女というの

は、どういんですか。

坂口　理想の女なんて描けやしないよ。

記者　理想の女なんていう問いかたがすでに婦人雑誌的なので、むしろどういう女が好きか……。

坂口　だいたいにおいて色っぽい女が好きです。これはいまの世間に対する反逆なんだが、女はもっと色っぽくならなければ……。

記者　坂口さん、結論を——あなたに理想の女じゃちょっと困るけれど、これからどういうものを書こうとおもっているの。

坂口　それはわからないよ。

記者　よし、わからないというところで終りだ。