

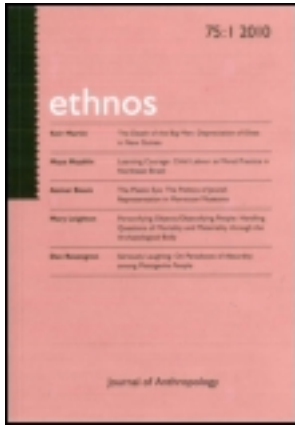
This article was downloaded by: [Dr Ho Swee Lin]

On: 28 September 2012, At: 01:29

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954

Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/retn20>

‘Playing Like Men’: The Extramarital Experiences of Women in Contemporary Japan

Ho Swee Lin ^a

^a National University of Singapore, Singapore

Version of record first published: 20 Aug 2012.

To cite this article: Ho Swee Lin (2012): ‘Playing Like Men’: The Extramarital Experiences of Women in Contemporary Japan, *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology*, 77:3, 321-343

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2011.613532>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to

date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

'Playing Like Men': The Extramarital Experiences of Women in Contemporary Japan

Ho Swee Lin

National University of Singapore, Singapore

ABSTRACT *Women's sexuality in Japan has persistently been linked to reproduction, while men's sexuality is associated with play, and the patriarchal structure of Japanese society even endorses male infidelity. In recent years, however, there are indications, especially in the popular media in Japan, that many married women are 'playing like men' by turning to extramarital activities to re-negotiate the meaning of sexuality and the bounds of marriage. While their behaviour can be interpreted as autonomous acts of affirming themselves as subjects of their own desire, dominant power structures still exist in Japanese society to restrict women's sexuality. This article examines the growing 'gender instability' in marriage in Japan as married women navigate through the morally contentious realm of extramarital activities to negotiate a new sense of self, and argues for sexuality as an increasingly embattled terrain for socio-historical manoeuvrings, media enticements, marital strategies, and personal insurgencies in postindustrial Japan.*

KEYWORDS *Extramarital relations, gender, sexuality, popular media, Japan*

Forty-six-year-old marketing executive Hasegawa Hanako¹ and her lover Uemura Shinji are in the ninth year of their extramarital relationship, which they describe as *daburu furin*² (double adultery), since both are married, though not to each other. Over the years, the mother of three has learned to 'love like a man' (*otoko mitai ni aisuru*) and be less emotionally attached to her lover in order to keep the liaison amiable and amorous, and not let the demands of a committed relationship eliminate all the love, passion, and sexual pleasure that they still share. Thirty-eight-year-old Abe

Ritsuko also believes that a woman can 'play like a man' (*otoko mitai ni asobu*) by keeping the pursuit of sexual pleasure separate from marriage. The housewife-turned-office worker had once sought and attained comfort in an extramarital liaison several years ago to take revenge on her first husband's unfaithfulness, and to ascertain that she was still desirable as a woman prior to her divorce. Despite describing her second marriage as a 'happy' one, the mother of two also has a lover, and adopts the attitude of her first husband: that 'sex is sex, marriage is marriage . . . they are two very different things'.

The two women's attitudes and strategies certainly cannot be said to be representative of those of most married women in Japan, nor can they confirm if there is indeed an 'adultery boom' (*furin bu-mu*) among women as depicted in the popular media in Japan. Nonetheless, they echo the voices of the 38 Japanese women I interviewed during 75 months of fieldwork in 2002–2011, who have appropriated this once male-dominated behaviour to re-align various asymmetries – real and perceived – in their marriages. Expectations that women perform their gender roles render marriage unable to provide some women with the levels of happiness and fulfilment – both emotional and sexual – that they desire. Extramarital relations, on the other hand, are perceived as capable of providing some women with love, romance, companionship, communication, and sexual gratification. Several others explain their extramarital activities as a means of attaining justice (*kōhei*) by enabling them to take revenge (*fukushū*) on their unfaithful husbands; while a few found comfort in extramarital relations as a precursor to divorce by re-affirming their 'desirability as a woman' (*onna no miryoku*); and many others simply perceive the pursuit of sexual gratification (*yokkyū no jūjitsu*) outside marriage as play (*asobi*).

Diverse as they are, the women's explanations represent varying types of personal strategies to deal with marital dissatisfaction, especially due to alienation from their husbands for not having been adequately valued as individuals, and as women. In actively seeking to re-define the meaning of femininity by incorporating sexual desire as an important element of feminine identity, the women are exercising what Ueno (2003: 317) described as 'their self-determination in sexuality', to project themselves as autonomous agents capable of asserting themselves as subjects of their own desire. Yet, as this article will demonstrate, dominant power structures and their embedded gender bias still restrict women's sexual behaviour in Japanese society, and interpret their sexual desire as problematic. Moreover, not all married women have equal access to resources such as time and money to appropriate this once male-dominated

activity. Those with greater economic means appear to be better able to manage their extramarital experiences and their self-image. There is indeed a lot at stake for women who attempt to negotiate a sense of self and identity through such morally contentious grounds, which accounts for why many women often feel conflicted, and experience feelings of guilt and shame. How do women cope with the dilemmas generated by these activities? How do economic concerns shape the women's attitudes and determine their ability to devise strategies to manage their extramarital activities?

In this article, I examine how married women in Japan explain their extramarital activities as a means of affirming themselves as subjects of their own sexuality. The study draws on personal interviews conducted with a total of 38 Japanese women, who are aged 30–58 years and have had at least one extramarital experience. I argue that not only are these women feminizing extramarital sex because they are separating sex from reproduction and from the bounds of marriage, but also that they are actively seeking ways to re-feminize the self and re-sexualize femininity for married women. While the sexuality of married women has persistently been conflated with reproduction by ideological and institutional constructions of gender in Japan, the women in this study conceptualize their sexuality more in line with liberating notions of love, play, and physical gratification as portrayed in the popular media and the commercial sector. My fieldwork actually began in 2002 with three women, each of whom I met through a mutual friend and who were unrelated and unknown to one another. Each woman later introduced me to a friend or acquaintance, who in turn introduced me to one other friend or acquaintance, or a friend of a friend. I have met all the women at least thrice over the years – the first time with a mutual friend, but later on my own – and a few women even introduced me to their extramarital partner. All the women live in urban areas. Thirty live in Tokyo and the neighbouring Chiba and Saitama prefectures, while four are in the Kansai region, two in Fukuoka and two in Akita prefecture. Of the 38 women, 14 are high school graduates, while 24 are university graduates. In terms of occupation, nine are full-time housewives; eight are housewives with a part-time job; eight women have a full-time job in clerical, secretarial, or sales positions; and 13 women have management-track careers. Eighteen women are still married, though 20 are divorced, and four of the divorcees have remarried. Thirteen of the married women and eight of those who are divorced have children.

Their varied profiles certainly render any effort at linking their level of education, occupation or the presence of children to their extramarital behaviour rather difficult. However, one pattern that is meaningful is that only six house-

wives have had more than one extramarital relationship, while 14 women who have a full-time job have had at least two extramarital liaisons. This perhaps suggests there is a link between the women's economic position and their confidence in 'playing' outside marriage, which I will later explain affects the degree of emotional investment the women make in their extramarital relations. Granted, the sample is indeed small, and certainly cannot be used to suggest any particular trend in Japanese women's extramarital activities. Yet, by documenting the extramarital experiences and voices of an under-documented group of women in Japan, this study hopes to provide a better understanding of how these women view their behaviour as gendered and male, and yet also seek in these activities a means of incorporating male sexual identity into a transformed female sexual identity. I interpret the women's efforts at managing resources such as time, money, and emotions as strategies to 'reclaim' their sexuality and develop a new sense of self, and contend that women's sexuality in Japan is increasingly becoming an intensely contested site of exclusion, repression, and prohibition; of conformity and compliance; and of agency capable of negotiating possibilities of resistance, intervention, and transformation.

Very few scholars have discussed Japanese women as agents in their own marriages or as desiring subjects of their own sexuality. Fewer still have addressed the topic of female infidelity in Japan, even though adultery is generally taken as a given for most men. Many scholars generally assume that the threats infidelity poses to economic security, family harmony, and social stability are strong enough to prevent women from behaving beyond cultural norms (e.g. Lebra 1984; Rosenberger 2001). Studies elsewhere have suggested that sexuality is increasingly 'freed from the needs of reproduction', and becoming closely bound up with notions of romantic love and intimacy (Giddens 1992: 2), and with the formation of self-identities (Weeks 1986: III-2). Other studies have indicated that extramarital liaisons can be empowering for women, since they are not tied to domestic obligations or gender roles in these relations as they are to the bonds of marriage (Richardson 1988); that adultery represents for many women a means of 'shifting the balance of power within their marriages' to re-align some of the asymmetries in marital relations (Lawson 1988: 277); and that while 'marriage fills that need for predictability and security' for women, 'that very stability then causes the desire for variety, change and risk-taking to emerge' (Atwater 1982: 75).

However, Howe and Rigi (2009: 299) have noted that while 'new forms of sexual liberty have emerged' and women have come to be widely recognized as subjects worthy of sexual rights, women are also ultimately sexual subjects

‘produced through histories of power and differentially married to changing particularities of “desire”’. In what follows, I will demonstrate the contestation over women’s sexuality between the Japanese state, whose official ideologies have persistently conflated women’s sexuality with reproduction since the modernization of Japan during the Meiji period in the late nineteenth century, and the popular media in Japan, which has recently begun to portray women as subjects of their own sexuality. I will then contrast these portrayals with my informants’ own accounts of their extramarital experiences, and analyse how they explain their strategies to exert control over their sexuality, and navigate themselves through this morally contentious realm in order to negotiate new possibilities of transforming their lives and develop a new gender identity amidst the tensions and contradictions induced by dominant ideological and media constructions of their sexuality.

Ideological ‘Taming’ of Women’s Sexuality and Liberation in the Popular Media

Women’s sexuality in Japan has for a long time been conflated with reproduction, unlike men’s sexuality, which is often associated with pleasure. This conflation, however, is a recent construct, dating back to the modernization of Japan during the Meiji period (1868–1912), when the rhetoric of national defence and security was used to regulate sexuality for public health (Frühstück 2003: 89). Prior to that, sexuality was ‘very much a matter of class’ (Ueno 2003: 318). During the Tokugawa period (1600–1868), commoners were allowed to freely enjoy romantic love, and even have illegitimate children (Bornoff 1991: 84). The sexual activities of certain ranks of men from the *samurai* (warrior) class were closely regulated within the four walls of the *Yoshiwara* (an enclosed area of pleasure quarters), the country’s first and only legalized area to provide facilities for men to engage in entertainment and commercial sex (Seigle 1991). Women from the elite class were expected to follow the practices prescribed in the Confucian text *Onna Daigaku* (Greater Learning for Women), which required them to be virtuous, faithful, and loyal only to one husband (Ueno 2003: 319).

Virginity and chastity later became highly valued, following the Meiji government’s promotion of the *ie* (household) system, which led to the promulgation of the Confucian ideal of *ryōsai kenbo* (Good Wives, Wise Mothers) in the Meiji Civil Code of 1898, and later to the systematic enforcement of a sexual division of labour in Japanese society, as well as the socialization of women to perform their ‘proper’ roles in society within the private realm of domesticity

as wives and mothers (Uno 1993: 296). A woman was thus the 'owner of a prohibited body for use', since her body, especially her sexuality, was the 'property' of a male owner: her father's before marriage, and later, upon marriage, her husband's (Ueno 2003: 319). Women's sexuality in Japan thus became, as Foucault (1990[1978]: 3) remarked about the regulation of sexuality by the Victorian bourgeoisie in England, 'carefully confined' and 'moved into the home', as the conjugal family 'took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction'.

A double standard also existed in state punishment for the crime of adultery (*kantsūzai*). While this was severe for both men and women, only the adultery of the wife was legitimate grounds for divorce. Women were permitted to apply for legal divorce on the grounds of cruelty, desertion, or serious misconduct, but not adultery (Fuess 2004: 117). It was not until after World War II, when the American Occupation abolished the *ie* system, and replaced the Meiji Civil Code with the Revised Civil Code of 1948, that adultery – along with malicious desertion, unknown whereabouts and marital breakdown – by either spouse became grounds for judicial divorce (Kawanishi 2003: 10).

This democratizing change, however, did little to de-stigmatize adultery or divorce for women. Neither did it go far to lessen the control exerted over women's sexuality by the state and postwar Japanese capitalist society. On the contrary, state regulation of women's reproductive functions intensified during the 1970s, when demands for a constant supply of labour by Japan's rapidly expanding economy emboldened the state to promote the 'white-collar male worker/professional housewife' (*sarariiman/sengyō shufu*) as the ideal family model, and mobilize the ideology of Japan as a 'naturally' maternal society (*bosei shakai*)³ to further reinforce the existing sexual division of labour (Yoda 2006: 247). Women continued to enjoy improvements in educational and employment opportunities, but these were aimed mainly at grooming them for marriage and motherhood, and not for pursuing a professional career (Brinton 1992: 102). Kindergarten education was also designed in such a way that it demanded the attention of a full-time mother (Boocock 1989; Borovoy 2005), while the taxation system was made more punitive against dual-income couples, and lenient with married couples living on the income of a main breadwinner (Kingston 2004: 284–90; Rebeck 2005: 120–3). Furthermore, the long working hours in most companies were not only a deterrent to many working mothers, but they also turned many married men into absent husbands, rendering marital relations a functional arrangement to suit the needs of the economy, and not a realm of conjugal intimacy (Allison 1994).

Nonetheless, attitudes towards marriage began to change following the collapse of Japan's bubble economy in the early 1990s, with more individuals delaying marriage, or choosing not to marry at all,⁴ and focusing more on gaining economic independence and the importance of leisure, and less on performing social roles. Instead of responding to these pressures for change, the state sought ways to curb the increasing threats posed to the country's social welfare and pension systems by declining fertility rates⁵ and a rapidly ageing population⁶ (Kingston 2004: 279), and adopted a direct approach to controlling women's reproductive functions by addressing the issue of marital sex.

In response to a wave of media reports⁷ in 2004 that sexless marriages in Japan were on the increase, as more married couples had supposedly developed a 'dislike for sex' (*seike no sho*) with their spouses, the Japan Family Planning Association, a division of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, conducted a rare nationwide survey of the sexual activities of 936 people in 2006. It later reported that almost one-third of married couples under 50 years old were sexless (that is, they had sex less than once a month), while one-fifth of respondents had not had sex with their spouses in the past year, and more than a third said they 'disliked' having sex with their spouses (Sato *et al.* 2008: 13–4). Conservative bureaucrats and government officials quickly declared sexless marriages a 'national problem', and a series of public debates soon ensued, along with a deluge of Internet websites, where sexless couples discussed their marital problems, and new 'experts' emerged to offer counselling for sexless couples. Once a private matter, marital sex became talked about openly, offering some new platforms to voice their marital discontent, and others alternative forms of legitimation for discussing their marital sexual problems.

While the state's concerns about sexless marriages clearly relate to the implications for the country's shrinking population, its efforts at boosting birth rates are far from consistent, in addition to being conservative and patriarchal. Reproduction, for example, is considered to be legitimate only within marriage. The country's sex education curriculum today still teaches middle-school students to exercise sexual abstinence, and warns them of the difficulties involved in premarital pregnancies (Kawahara 2000). This perhaps helps to account for why 65% of teenage pregnancies end in abortions (Sato *et al.* 2008: 7), why births outside wedlock have lingered around 1% of all childbirths in Japan in the past few decades (OECD 2010: 7), and why more than half of all marriages in the country are due to pregnancy (Ezawa 2002: 3). While these statistics strongly suggest that marriage is the dominant, if not the only, institution

that legitimizes births in Japan, some studies indicate that the Japanese state also recognizes only natural births, and limits even married women's choices to have children. Nearly half of all childless married women in Japan are believed to have undergone fertility treatment, but they are denied access to New Reproduction Technologies such as surrogacy, artificial insemination, and in-vitro fertilization by Japan's medical authorities (Ezawa 2002: 13).

Granted, social reality does not always conform to bureaucratic conservatism and ideological restrictions. Despite the persistent ideological and institutional restrictions imposed on women's reproductive functions and sexuality, which have generated deeply entrenched cultural meanings and values surrounding women's sexuality that still persist, there are signs of increasing individuation⁸ in Japanese society in the past decades, due partly to educational reforms since the 1980s, as well as to rapid advancements in communication technologies, and the growing influence of the popular media and consumer capitalism (Rosenberger 2001: 33; Ho 2008: 33).

Japan's popular media have been described as a predominantly patriarchal consumer culture of male desire that promotes the sexualization and commodification of female bodies (Ueno 1990: 53), but they are also described as 'an important source of the rhetoric of individuality, freedom, and enjoyment of life', with many magazines urging women 'toward self-centered attention on bodily adornment', and offering them the 'secrets of how to be cosmopolitan, sexually attractive, and globally competitive in the fashion world' (Rosenberger 2001: 130-1).

Despite these contradictions, the popular media have in recent years shifted their portrayals of women from objects of male desires to sexual subjects who demand the entitlement to love, happiness, and sexual gratification. Popular television dramas broadcast during the 1980s and 1990s, such as *Kinyōbi no tsumatachi*⁹ (What Wives Do on Friday) and *Shitsurakuen*¹⁰ (Lost Paradise), generally conformed to a genre of popular literature known as *hitozuma* (Other Men's Wives), which appeals to male fantasies about men 'rescuing' sexually repressed housewives (see, e.g. Horie 2005), and even killed the leading female characters to reflect the low social tolerance of women's immoral behaviours. By the early 2000s, the trend had shifted radically, with primetime television dramas such as *Konshū tsuma ga uwakishimasu*¹¹ (My Wife is Having An Affair This Weekend) and *Fushin no toki*¹² (Times of Distrust), and the immensely popular movie *Tōkyō tawā*¹³ (Tokyo Tower), which depicted women as actively seeking and enjoying love, pleasure, and sexual gratification in extramarital relationships and ended on a positive, happy note.

At the same time, a proliferation of popular literature has also emerged to document an increasing number of married women enjoying 'dangerous love' (*kiken no koi*) outside marriage (Hatano & Shimazaki 1997; Tarō & Kawakami 2004), narrate stories of how married women find sexual gratification and self-fulfilment in extramarital affairs (Kameyama 2004; Misago 2004), and even manage their extramarital liaisons wisely (Ieda 2001; Arikawa 2002). These writers – mostly women – not only avoid morally loaded references such as *kantsū* (illicit affair), *mitsū* (secret affair), *fugi* (immorality), and *futei* (disloyalty), which were used to refer to women's infidelity in the past (Ujiie 1996), and adopt instead male references such as *uzwaki* (which literally means 'light, floating feelings' of unfaithfulness) and *asobi* (play) (Kawanishi 2003: 11), but they also coin new terminologies such as *kongai renai* (romance outside marriage) and *furin no koi* (extramarital love), and apply *furin* (unfaithfulness, or adultery) equally to both men and women.

These shifts in media representations not only equalize sexual relations between men and women, they also democratize women's adultery by portraying it as an activity that is pursued by women across various social strata, and not as one limited only to women from the upper class, as it was depicted in the past. Even if what the popular media have declared a *furin būmu* (adultery boom) may not exist in practice, they have nonetheless suggested a new strategy for women to confront the ambivalence and contradiction of gender role expectations in Japanese society. If so, we might be witnessing a new willingness among women to engage in once prohibited activity, a new acceptance of women's behaviour in an important realm, or at least a new way for Japanese society to talk about it.

If the popular media are any indication, there may indeed be widespread dissatisfaction with domestic roles within the home, and within the bond of marriage in particular. Given that more women are working as company employees in Japan today than in the past, and shifting their work patterns from being family workers to becoming white-collar workers,¹⁴ it would not be unreasonable to assume that women's improved economic position has led many to develop aspirations similar to their male counterparts around legitimate expectations of social and personal fulfilment, and to form different expectations of marital relations from women in the past (White 2002: 126). Rising divorce rates¹⁵ in Japan, for example, suggest that more women are willing to file for divorce when marital relations turn bad.

Meanwhile, the commercial sector in Japan has in recent years also begun to provide a diversity of entertainment services and facilities such as host clubs and

strip bars that cater to the needs of Japanese women (Ho 2009: 202), especially working women with economic power. There are more than 38,000 love hotels across the country, which not only provide rooms for hire for 2–3 h, but also protect the anonymity of their clients, and so women today are able to engage in sexual activities with similar degrees of ease and secrecy as their male counterparts (West 2005: 176).

Granted, neither changing media representations nor the availability of commercial facilities in Japan can be adequately used as a barometer to indicate any fundamental change in people's attitudes towards women's promiscuity in Japan. As Jennifer Robertson (1998: 15) has argued, "Good Husband, Wise Father" has never been employed as a trope for social order, nor social order ever linked to a "man's problem". The patriarchal system in Japanese society still subjects women's sexual behaviour to greater social scrutiny than men's. Rising consumerism during the 1980s might have led to some form of sexual liberation for Japanese women, but it also reinforced women as objects of male pleasure. Many young women, for example, engaged in *enjokōsai* ('offering dates and maybe more in exchange for money') as it provided a relatively easy source of income to meet their consumption needs. The discrepancies between social expectations and media representations can thus generate more conflicts for women who engage in extramarital affairs, including feelings of shame and guilt, as well as psychological and emotional anxieties, as my informants' narratives will demonstrate. Women who engage in extramarital activities still face a substantial amount of risk, and are often required to devise a variety of strategies to re-allocate their time and money, alter their own moral values and standards, and even adopt a different attitude towards marriage.

In what follows, I will examine how women's perceptions and practices of 'playing like a man' can vary widely, and how, despite the seemingly democratizing portrayals of women's extramarital behaviour in the popular media, women's access to resources such as time and money plays a significant role in shaping their views about extramarital relations; the strategies they are able to utilize to manage these relations; and their ability to both overcome cultural expectations of gender roles and manage their extramarital liaisons and self-image. Yet, by no means do these suggest that women with fewer resources are more inhibited from pursuing extramarital activities, but only that they have different motivations for their extramarital activities, and face greater difficulties negotiating their limited resources to manage their extramarital relations. Women who are employed or have no children, for example, generally explain

their extramarital experiences in terms of play, physical pleasure, and emotional detachment, while those who are dependent housewives construct their extramarital relations around feminine discourses of love, communication, and companionship.

Exercising Emotional Restraint by 'Loving Like a Man'

Marketing executive Hasegawa Hanako is one of the strongest proponents of 'love' among several of my informants, who perceive love as a prerequisite of a long-term, intimate relationship; as important to loving the self; and as the main explanation for their extramarital relationships. Despite having married a man she loved against her parents' wishes, Hanako and her husband managed to realize the 'middle-class dream' that was widely promoted by the Japanese government in the 1980s by purchasing their own apartment, although they did so as a dual-income couple, and not as the ideological male breadwinner family model. However, the demands of performing a 'double shift' (*daburu shifuto*) as a marketing executive during the day, and as mother in the evening, while her husband mainly worked and did little to help with the children's welfare, gradually led Hanako to see her marriage as a realm of duties and obligations, and no longer of love and intimacy. Even though she had enjoyed receiving affection and companionship from her lover Uemura Shinji, a former co-worker, Hanako later realized that discrepancies exist between men's expectations of sexual relations and those of women, and she eventually refrained from investing too much of her emotions, and learned to 'love like a man' by keeping her extramarital relationship free from commitments. By not exerting any demands on each other, they managed to keep their 9-year relationship loving, romantic, passionate, and comfortable. As Hanako said to me, 'extramarital love' (*kongai renai*)

... is not the same as ordinary love. Women and men understand the meaning of 'love' very differently. If the sex is good, men easily confuse it with love. A woman, however, tends to enjoy sex only when she loves the man. It is not easy, but once a woman has learned to love like a man, and play like a man, she can then enjoy both love and the sexual pleasure that an extramarital relationship can offer, and also the freedom from being judged as a wife or as a mother ...

Changing her expectations of love by exercising emotional detachment is Hanako's way of not overextending herself emotionally as she struggles to keep both her extramarital relationship and marriage viable. She has learned

over the years that managing her emotions can be more difficult than managing time, especially when she also has to manage her feelings of guilt and even shame, as well as her self-image as a person and a mother. Yet, being able to manage her emotions well also enhances Hanako's self-confidence and self-image.

Managing time, on the other hand, is not a major concern for Hanako. Since she has a demanding full-time job, which often requires her to work late, she is able to explain her time away from home in terms of work. Indeed, unlike many dependent housewives, working women such as Hanako have crossed the private/public divide, moving from the *uchi* (inside), or the private realm of domesticity, to the *soto* (outside), or the male realm of paid work and play in the public sphere (Ho 2008: 45). For some women, being able to contribute to the household income enables them to negotiate a fairly egalitarian marital arrangement, and ensures economic security should they ever get a divorce. Even if Hanako also faces the risk of losing her marriage, and of incurring social disgrace should her extramarital liaison be exposed, she is able to approach her extramarital relation with a higher degree of self-confidence, and adopt a more pragmatic attitude towards love, than many women with limited economic means.

Learning to Separate Sex from Marriage from ex-Husband

Housewife-turned-office worker Abe Ritsuko is one such person who sees her contributions to her children's education and other household expenses as entitling her to negotiate with her husband for 'personal time' (*jibun no jikan*) and 'personal space' (*jibun no kūkan*) away from domestic chores. While she used to believe in sexual monogamy, her attitude changed after being betrayed by her first husband. Ritsuko was a full-time housewife for many years after her first marriage at 24 years of age, due to an unplanned pregnancy. She resumed working soon after uncovering her first husband's infidelity, and in preparation for her impending divorce. As her social network expanded, Ritsuko began her first extramarital liaison, which lasted several weeks, both as an act of retaliation for her ex-husband's infidelity, and in the hope of gaining the assurance that she was still attractive to other men before she actually went ahead with the divorce.

Ritsuko has not stopped working, despite having remarried, several years after her divorce to a man 6 years her junior, and despite also having given birth to another child. The mother of two has also not stopped engaging in extramarital activities, even though she loves her current husband, whom she describes as a 'good, responsible father'. When her marital sex life gradually

became non-existent, Ritsuko realized that having only one partner was ultimately insufficient to gratify her sexual discontent (*yokkyū fuman*), and that she owed it to herself to seek fulfilment outside marriage. Unlike Hanako, Ritsuko sees her extramarital activities as ‘play only’ (*asobi dake*), and refrains from investing her emotions in her lovers. As she said to me:

Only men used to work in the past, while most women stayed at home. Ever since I started working, I began to understand why it was easy for men to play outside. I also have my ex-husband to thank, for teaching me that one can have sex with someone and love someone else simultaneously. Sex is sex, and marriage is marriage, and that the two are very different things . . .

The change in Ritsuko’s attitude and behaviour may have been motivated initially by her experience of unfairness and betrayal by her former husband, but it was later facilitated by having returned to full-time employment. Work not only gives her greater access to the public sphere and expands her social circle, but it also changes her views about women’s sexuality and marriage. By separating sex from marriage, and creating another realm for intimacy outside marriage, Ritsuko is thus practising a ‘de-territorialization of sex’ (Ho 2008: 51), or the de-privatization of sex from the privacy of the home and situating it outside the bounds of marriage and in the public arena, enabling her to realize her desire and be recognized as an individual whose sexuality forms an important part of her subjectivity. Furthermore, as other working women among my informants have also said, many Japanese men find economically independent women attractive as extramarital partners for the obvious reason that they are able to focus on play and pleasure without worrying about any threat that the women will become economically dependent on them. Other men even interpret their ability to attract capable and successful women as a measure of their own personal success.

Managing Money When Playing Outside to Stabilize Marriage

Business consultant Fujiwara Fumiko’s economic position and independent status certainly make her as an ideal ‘play friend’ (*asobi no tomo*), and the 39-year-old’s ability to ‘play outside’ (*soto de asobu*) is further enhanced by her freedom from motherly duties, since both Fumiko and her husband decided before getting married that they would lead a carefree married life without children. Given that her husband is also often away on business trips, Fumiko has a considerable amount of ‘free time to play’ when she is not busy with work.

Yet, Fumiko keeps a set of rules, which she learned from various self-help books, about managing both her emotions and money when she plays. Fumiko keeps her extramarital liaisons casual, uncommitted, and free from expectations by not revealing the identity of her employer, the area where she lives, or any details about her marriage. Far more important than these precautions is her insistence on splitting equally, and even paying for, all the costs of hiring love hotel rooms, and the short trips she sometimes takes. Fumiko sees her desire for sexual pleasure as a choice, and paying for pleasure as an assertion of her individuality and her equal status with her male counterparts. As she explained:

I make the choice to play, and so I want to pay for my own pleasure. It is not only fair, but it also makes me feel good, since I can enjoy sex without having to feel as though I have been paid to have sex with a man.

For Fumiko, paying for her share helps her maintain a sufficient distance from her lovers, whom she considers as mere 'play friends' to fulfil her desire for sexual fantasies. More importantly, she says that helps to stabilize her marriage as she maintains her image as a 'normal' person for her husband. Fumiko had sought 'play friends' on the Internet several years ago after being chided by her husband for being 'indecent' (*ijarashii*) when she attempted various 'techniques' in the hope of instilling some fun into what she describes as an otherwise 'predictable and boring' marital sex life.

Commercial Sex Improves Marital Sex

Like Fumiko, nearly a third of my informants have said their extramarital experiences have helped improve their marriage in various ways, and some thus feel justified in buying themselves into previously masculine pleasures such as visiting host clubs, where male hosts entertain and serve female clients, and strip bars, where the strip dancers are male (Ho 2008: 45), and even paying for sex with male prostitutes. Thirty-nine-year old Sakamoto Shizuka, for example, not only does not view her pursuit of sexual fulfilment outside marriage as conflicting with her married life, or with her role as a mother, she also perceives her extramarital activities as personally fulfilling, and as enriching her family life.

The housewife-turned-freelance writer said her marital sex life used to be 'totally boring' until she had a 'romantic and passionate love affair' in 2002 with a married Japanese businessman Kamate Seiji, whom she met while on an overseas assignment, and later met regularly in Japan for a year. A significant

improvement in her marital sex life, which in turn also stabilizes her marriage, prompted her to engage in more sexual encounters, with other Japanese men – both single and married, and including male hosts and male prostitutes. Paying to be entertained by men in host clubs, and paying for commercial sex, are contractual agreements that involve no obligations, and which Shizuka describes as ultimately empowering. As she explains:

It makes me feel good about myself to be able to pay for pleasure. When I pay, I am the customer, and I am in control. It is only business, and no one has to worry about anything once the transaction is over. Many Japanese men think that only they know how to have fun, while women have few sexual needs and perhaps no sexual fantasies. Well, they are wrong. Women also have similar needs and desires. Why do you think there are so many entertainment places available today for women?

For Shizuka and many of my other informants, it is not only the popular media in Japan that have played a significant role in reinforcing the importance of the pleasure of sex for women, but the commercial sector too has contributed to the commercialization of sex for women by offering a paraphernalia of services, which range from sado-masochistic clubs, host clubs, strip bars, and venues that provide ‘gentlemen’, or male prostitutes, for women.

Access to resources such as time and money certainly shapes women’s attitudes towards marriage and extramarital relations, their self-perceptions, and understandings of sexual fulfilment. Being employed and economically independent clearly provides many women with the ability to demand egalitarian marital arrangements and personal time, as well as the economic means to engage in various types of consumption. How then do women with limited resources deal with their extramarital relations?

Navigating Through Limited Time

Housewives Matsuno Mizue and Kaneda Kazumi are among the seven full-time housewives whose pursuits of love, companionability, and sexual gratification outside marriage required considerable efforts on their part to skilfully re-arrange the limited time and money they possess. Forty-two-year old Mizue overcame her initial hesitations about having an extramarital liaison when in 1999 she met sales manager Takeda Hiroshi, who made her ‘feel like a woman again’ (*onna toshite wa kanjirareta*). Having given up a challenging job as manager of a retail store and devoted 12 years of her life to child-rearing and care-giving, Mizue became increasingly frustrated that her efforts

at being a dutiful wife, mother, and daughter-in-law were not only unappreciated by her family, but that she was also neglected by her husband who no longer perceived her as a woman (*onna toshite wa mienakatta*). Mizue had married a man she loved, unlike her mother, who had married her father after meeting him several times through a family friend. However, Mizue and her husband gradually drifted apart after several years of marriage, and became just like her parents, who shared very little in common, and even lost any desire to have sex with each other. Their daily conversations were brief, and focused mostly on the welfare of their children, or of her elderly mother-in-law who still lived with them. As a result, Mizue felt justified in pursuing a 'fulfilling life' (*jūjitsu shita seikatsu*) by 'trying out' an extramarital relationship, which demanded that she re-arrange her daily schedules and change other aspects of her life.

For 4 months, she met Hiroshi secretly near love hotels located far from her home, on the pretext that she was attending 'flower-arrangement' (*ikebana*) lessons twice a week. Given the limited amount of free time she had, Mizue worked harder and faster at organizing her domestic tasks, in order to allocate some time each afternoon to gathering information from Internet websites to create a convincing syllabus and sample exercises for her fictitious *ikebana* lessons. The stress of having to remember all the lies she had fabricated soon became so overwhelming that Mizue developed insomnia, fell seriously ill, and stopped seeing Hiroshi altogether. Despite having consulted the works of several popular writers, whose documentations of how many women in Japan managed their extramarital liaisons had enabled Mizue to imagine the existence of a 'community' out there who shared her experiences of pleasure and conflicts, no amount of reading could alleviate her anguish, dissuade her from evaluating her self-worth based on culturally inscribed standards for evaluating a 'good woman', alleviate her 'feelings of guilt' (*zaiakukan*), or prevent her from reprimanding herself for being selfish in putting her own interests before her duty as a mother.

Paying Too Much for Extramarital Love

While 45-year-old Kazumi also experiences a similar time limitation, her difficulties relate to money-management, that is, of having to manage her extramarital liaison with no income on her own, but by taking from the household budget and her meagre savings, despite feeling justified for seeking revenge for her husband's infidelity. The thought of revenge had crossed Kazumi's mind in the past, but the opportunity first arose when she met

Kuwano Sanchiro, a charming but philandering man 10 years her junior. Kazumi later developed genuine feelings for him, especially after hearing stories about his abusive father, and his struggles to make ends meet after dropping out of school at 16 years of age. Partly out of pity, and perhaps also because of her fear that Sanchiro might lose interest in her, Kazumi supported his extravagant tastes in food and clothes, and even paid for an expensive course to help Sanchiro realize his dream of becoming a sommelier. Given the age difference between them, Kazumi also incessantly agonized over how to maintain her attractiveness to Sanchiro, and constantly adorned herself with fashionable clothes and jewellery. For nearly a year, Kazumi tightened her domestic budget by purchasing cheaper household necessities, and ploughed into her meagre savings. She eventually became a better financial planner, but also a more frazzled person when she realized she could not sustain the luxury of an extramarital liaison any longer. As she recalled:

My husband works and has the money to play, but I have very little to play with. If marriage is not about love, and one has to pay a lot to obtain love, does that mean that women who are poor simply cannot have love, and must tolerate living a loveless married life?

For many of my informants such as Mizue and Kazumi, having love, romance, meaningful communication, and companionship is important to improving the quality of their lives. However, given that this entails a considerable amount of strategizing and investment with only limited resources, these women also tend to develop high expectations of their extramarital liaisons and hence experience higher levels of stress and anguish over time as these pursuits eventually take a toll on their emotional and physical health, as well as damage their self-image.

Unlike working women, housewives such as Mizue and Kazumi must constantly 'calculate and check their balances', so to speak. Had they prolonged their extramarital liaisons, they could seriously risk losing their marriages, and perhaps also find themselves in a worse economic position. Divorce is hardly a viable economic option for these women, and they are only seeking in extramarital liaisons ways to compensate for what they perceive as elements that are missing in their marriages, which they also need to help provide them with some form of social status. Postwar changes to Japan's divorce laws may have enabled women to liberate themselves from the fetters of marriage – by initiating divorce on the grounds of their husbands' adultery, for example – but many women often face the threat of economic poverty, given that the state rarely

ensures that husbands meet their alimony and child support commitments,¹⁶ and it also fails to provide adequate financial support for single mothers (Fuess 2004: 158–9).

Moreover, their rather idealistic view of love, which encompasses not only physical pleasure, but also commitment, communication, and companionship, invariably also leads these women to experience a similar gender hierarchy to that which they encounter in marriage. As many other women have said, women's expectations are radically different from those of their extramarital partners, who tend to focus on play and pleasure, and not love or commitment. While the illicit and secretive nature of extramarital relationships can certainly generate heightened experiences of excitement and thrills, it can also be demanding for women with limited means to sustain liaisons that are ephemeral and unstable in nature in exchange for feelings of love and romance. No matter how liberating these women's experiences of love and sexual gratification may be, and however much these experiences may have helped them find self-fulfilment and challenge conservative, repressive, and gendered institutions, many eventually find themselves facing similar inequalities as in their marital relations. This is because their efforts to affirm themselves as subjects of their own desire are ultimately at odds with, or are frustrated by, their extramarital partners' intentions of treating women as mere objects of male desire. Those women who insist on actualizing their desires may eventually experience such intense distress, disappointment, and disillusionment that it leads to a deterioration of their self-esteem instead of empowering them.

Conclusion

This article has established that women's understandings of 'playing like men' not only mean more than the attainment of mere physical gratification, but also encompass the symbolic interpretation of women's sexuality as a complex combination of love, pleasure, freedom, fairness, and self-appreciation that defines their self-identity and gives them a sense of self-worth. Whether their personal strategies relate to the management of time, money, or emotions, they represent attempts at fulfilling individual self-interests, as well as efforts in re-aligning various forms of marital asymmetries.

Yet, even as these women feel justified and entitled to 'play like men', many are constantly having to manage their self-image, either by adorning themselves in order to maintain their attractiveness to men, by changing their attitudes to cope with feelings of guilt and shame, or by exercising emotional detachment from their lovers. This indicates the extent to which women have been

socialized into internalizing the culturally accepted way of evaluating what constitutes a 'good woman' in Japanese society, which prompt many to consciously and unconsciously discipline their bodies as 'bearers of tradition, harmony and familial and social honour' (Martin 1991: 485). Even if many women work and make economic contributions to the home, they are still expected to perform domestic duties, including caring for children. Many often ask whether they are still good mothers despite feeling justified in pursuing love, sexual gratification, and justice. There is indeed a lot at stake for many women, which perhaps accounts for why very few of my informants have confided in their close friends about their extramarital liaisons, but have instead shrouded them in secrecy, or turned to strangers on the Internet to discuss their experiences and problems, for fear of incurring the criticisms and judgements of others.

Women with access to resources such as time and money are certainly better equipped than those with fewer resources to conduct themselves with more self-confidence in pursuing the empowering experience of the 'de-territorialization of sex' (Ho 2008: 51), by actualizing the imaginations and fantasies propagated by the popular media, and utilizing the facilities provided by communication technologies and the commercial sector. However, this does not prevent many women from feeling guilty about their behaviour, and in some cases, from experiencing conflicts in their self-identity and sense of self-worth.

Nonetheless, the diversity of the women's discourses and practices represent still what Maila Stivens (1998: 2) describes as 'strongly voiced social anxieties', particularly about women's place and women's sexuality in Japanese society, and their growing dissatisfaction with being evaluated as 'asexual, fixed gender role-fulfilling beings' (Kim 2004: 43). Their extramarital experiences thus represent moments of 'gender instability' (Stivens 1998: 2) in marriage in Japan. While the women's extramarital pursuits may be construed as, to borrow Annette Lawson's (1988: 28–9) words, the 'masculinization of sex', they are also active moves by women to 'de-privatize' sex, by turning what was once 'private' into a 'public' activity; attempts at 'feminizing' extramarital sex, which was once symbolic of masculinity; and efforts at politicizing sexuality as a site for the re-negotiation of new identities and new senses of self beyond the conservatism and patriarchal constraints of in Japanese society that restricts women's daily lives, in order to reclaim their sexuality, and re-define subjectivity to include the fulfilment of their physical and emotional needs and desires.

Acknowledgements

This article is indebted to too many to name individually since its inception as part of my Masters dissertation at Sophia University (Japan), and later as part of my doctoral research at the University of Oxford. Just to name a few, I am grateful to Anne Allison, Peter Cave, James Farrer, David Gellner, Roger Goodman, Kim Hyun-Mee, David Slater, and Ueno Chizuko for their valuable input. I am also grateful for the financial support provided by the Sophia University Scholarship, Adachi Scholarship, and Watanuki Foundation in Japan, and the Bagby Scholarship from the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Oxford. Most of all, I would like to thank the editors and reviewers of this journal for their support, suggestions, and comments.

Notes

1. I have used pseudonyms for all the informants' names to preserve their anonymity.
2. The Japanese word *furin* means 'adultery', and *daburu* means 'double'. *Daburu furin* is used in Japan to describe an extramarital relationship in which both parties are married, albeit each to a different partner.
3. Japanese psychologist Doi (1971) likens the inter-dependent nature of social relations in Japan to the natural bond between a mother and an infant.
4. The average age of first marriage was 25.9 years for men, and 23 years for women in 1950, but the figures rose significantly to 30.2 years for men, and 28.5 years for women in 2008 (MHLW 2009: 16). Marriage rates in Japan, on the other hand, declined from 10% per 1,000 of the country's population in 1970, to 5.8% in 2008.
5. Japan's fertility rate fell from 4.3 children per woman of childbearing age in 1947, to 1.75 babies in 1980 (Kingston 2004: 279), and to the lowest rate ever recorded of 1.26 in 2005 (MHLW 2009: 14).
6. The number of people aged 65 years and above accounted for 22.1% of Japan's total population of 127.69 million in 2008. This segment of the population is projected to comprise 39.6% of a significantly reduced total estimated population of 95.15 million in 2050 (MHLW 2009: 11).
7. The British company Durex (2004: 10) reported in a global survey in 2004 that sexual intercourse among married couples was less frequent in Japan than in any other of the 41 OECD countries. This later triggered many media reports on sexlessness in marriage in Japan by The Yomiuri Weekly and The Mainichi Daily in Japan; The Guardian in the United Kingdom; and The Sydney Morning Herald in Australia.
8. A proliferation of discourses began to emerge in educational reforms and corporate policies in the 1980s to encourage individuals to pursue 'one's own kind of lifestyles' (*jibunrashii seikatsu*), 'self-discovery' (*jikohakken*), and 'self-realization' (*jikojitsugen*), which were a part of the Japanese state's efforts to raise corporate profitability by pushing the cost of staff-training on to individuals (Mouer and Sugimoto 1986: 196).
9. This drama, based on a novel by the same title by Kamata (1986), was broadcast by Tokyo Broadcasting Station between 2 November 1983 and 13 May 1984.
10. This drama is based on a novel by Watanabe (2004), which was initially published as a series of short stories in the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* (Japan's equivalent of The Financial Times).

11. This drama is compiled from 'conversations' among anonymous individuals in an Internet chatroom, where a Japanese man expressed his frustrations and fears about his wife's infidelity.
12. The drama is produced from a novel by Ariyoshi (1968).
13. This movie is based on a novel by Ekuni (2001).
14. In 1975, 40% of Japan's total female workforce of 19.3 million were self-employed and family workers, while nearly 60% were company employees (MIAC 2008). By 2006, only 14% out of Japan's total female workforce of 25.5 million were self-employed and family workers, while 86% were company employees.
15. Japan's divorce rate rose from 1.51 per 1,000 of the population in 1983, to 1.99 in 2008 (MHLW 2009: 16).
16. Fuess's study of divorced mothers in Osaka showed that approximately 10%–20% of fathers had historically contributed to the support of their children, prompting women to accept a lump sum final settlement instead of alimonies paid in instalments even though the total amount of the latter was greater.

References

- Allison, Anne. 1994. *Nightwork: Sexuality, Pleasure and Corporate Masculinity in a Tokyo Hostess Club*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Arikawa, Hiromi. 2002. *Furin no Koi no Hōki* [Laws and Regulations on Adultery]. Tokyo: Daiwa Shobo.
- Ariyoshi, Sawako. 1968. *Fushin no Toki* [Times of Distrust]. Tokyo: Shinchosha.
- Atwater, Lynn. 1982. *The Extramarital Connection*. New York: Irvington Publishers.
- Boocock, Sarane Spence. 1989. Controlled Diversity: An Overview of the Japanese Pre-school System. *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 15:41–65.
- Bornoff, Nicholas. 1991. *Pink Samurai: An Erotic Exploration of Japanese Society*. London: Grafton Books.
- Borovoy, Amy. 2005. *The Too-Good-Wife: Alcohol, CoDependency, and the Politics of Nurturance in Postwar Japan*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.
- Brinton, Mary C. 1992. Christmas Cakes and Wedding Cakes: The Social Organization of Japanese Women's Life Course. In *Japanese Social Organization*, edited by Takie, Sugiyama Lebra. pp. 79–107. Honolulu University of Hawai'i Press.
- Doi, Takeo. 1971. *Amae no Kōzō* [Anatomy of Dependence]. Tokyo: Kōbundo.
- Durex. 2004. 2004 *Global Sex Survey Report: What Did You Get Up to?* London: SSL International.
- Ekuni, Kaori. 2001. *Tōkyō tāwa* [Tokyo Tower]. Tokyo: Magazine House.
- Ezawa, Aya Elise. 2002. Motherhood, Family, and Inequality in Contemporary Japan. Unpublished: Doctoral Thesis for the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- Foucault, Michel. 1990 [1978]. *The History of Sexuality, Volume One: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Frühstück, Sabine. 2003. *Colonizing Sex: Sexology and Social Control in Modern Japan*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.
- Fuess, Harald. 2004. *Divorce in Japan: Family, Gender, and the State, 1600–2000*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- Giddens, Anthony. 1992. *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Hatano, Yoshiro & Tsuguo Shimazaki. 1997. Nippon (Japan). In *The International Encyclopedia of Sexuality, Volume II, India to South Africa*, edited by Robert T. Francoeur. pp. 763–842. New York: Continuum.
- Ho, Swee Lin. 2008. Private Love and Public Space: Love Hotels and the Transformation of Intimacy in Contemporary Japan. *Asian Studies Review*, 32:31–56.
- Ho, Swee Lin. 2009. Work, Money and Drinking: The Friendship Networks of Women Managers in Contemporary Japan. Unpublished: Doctoral Thesis for the University of Oxford.
- Horie, Tamaki. 2005. *'Hitozuma' no Kenkyū* [Studies on 'Other Men's Wives']. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō.
- Howe, Cymene & Jakob Rigi. 2009. Transnationalizing Desire: Sexualizing Culture and Commodifying Sexualities. *Ethnos*, 74:297–306.
- Ieda, Shōko. 2001. *Furin no ru-ru* [Rules of Adultery]. Tokyo: Daiwashuppan.
- Kamata, Toshio. 1986. *Kinyōbi no tsumatachi* [What Wives Do Every Friday]. Tokyo: Rippu Shobo.
- Kameyama, Sanae. 2004. *Otto towa Dekinai Koto* [What I Cannot Do With My Husband]. Tokyo: WAVE.
- Kawahara, Yukari. 2000. Diverse Strategies in Classroom Instructions: Sex Education in Japanese Secondary Schools. *Japanese Studies*, 20:295–311.
- Kawanishi, Masaaki. 2003. *Bunshi to Kantsū* [The Adulteries of Literary Figures]. Tokyo: Shueisha Shinsho.
- Kim, Hyun Mee. 2004. Feminization of the 2002 World Cup and Women's Fandom. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 5:42–51.
- Kingston, Jeff. 2004. *Japan's Quiet Transformation: Social Change and Civil Society in the Twenty-First Century*. London and New York: Routledge Curzon.
- Lawson, Annette. 1988. *Adultery: An Analysis of Love and Betrayal*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lebra, Takie Sugiyama. 1984. *Japanese Women: Constraint and Fulfillment*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Martin, Emily. 1991. The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles. *Signs*, 16:485–501.
- MHLW. 2009. *Population (Statistical Handbook of Japan)*. Tokyo: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan.
- MIAC. 2008. *Nihon Tokei Nenkan (Japan Statistical Yearbook)*. Tokyo: Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan.
- Misago, Chizuru. 2004. *Onibabaka suru Onnatachi* [The Trend of Women Becoming Demonic Hags]. Tokyo: Kōbunsha.
- Mouer, Ross & Yoshio Sugimoto. 1986. *Images of Japanese Society: A Study in the Structure of Social Reality*. London, New York, Sydney and Henley: KPI.
- OECD. 2010. *Gender Brief*. Paris: The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- Ohata, Tarō & Sumie Kawakami. 2004. *Tsuma no Koi* [Wives' Romance]. Tokyo: Asutura.
- Rebeck, Marcus. 2005. *The Japanese Employment System: Adapting to a New Economic Environment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Richardson, Laurel. 1988. Sexual Freedom and Sexual Constraint: The Paradox for Single Women in Liaisons with Married Men. *Gender & Society*, 2:368–384.
- Robertson, Jennifer. 1998. *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.
- Rosenberger, Nancy. 2001. *Gambling with Virtue: Japanese Women and the Search for Self in a Changing Nation*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Sato, Ryuzaburo, Noriko Shiraishi & Rieko Bando. 2008. *Induced Abortion in Japan: A Demographic Analysis of Its Trends and Causes*. Tokyo: National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.
- Seigle, Cecilia Segawa. 1991. *Yoshiwara: The Glittering World of the Japanese Courtesan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Stivens, Maila. 1998. Theorizing Gender, Power and Modernity in Affluent Asia. In *Gender and Power in Affluent Asia*, edited by Maila Stivens. pp. 1–34. New York: Routledge.
- Ueno, Chizuko. 1990. *Kachōfūsei to Shihonsei* [Patriarchy and Capitalism]. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- . 2003. Self-determination on Sexuality? Commercialization of Sex among Teenage Girls in Japan. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 4:317–324.
- Ujiié, Mikito. 1996. *Fugi Mitsū* [Adultery]. Tokyo: Kodansha.
- Uno, Kathleen. 1993. Death of 'Good Wife, Wise Mother'? In *Postwar Japan as History*, edited by Andrew Gordon. pp. 293–322. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.
- Watanabe, Junichi. 2004. *Shitsurakuen* [Lost Paradise]. Tokyo: Kadokawa Shōten.
- Weeks, Jeffrey. 1986. *Sexuality*. London: Routledge.
- West, Mark D. 2005. *Law in Everyday Japan: Sex, Sumo, Suicide and Statutes*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- White, Merry. 2002. *Perfectly Japanese: Making Families in an Era of Upheaval*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Yoda, Tomiko. 2006. The Rise and Fall of Maternal Society: Gender, Labor, and Capital in Contemporary Japan. In *Japan After Japan: Social and Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present*, edited by Tomiko Yoda & Harry Harootunian. pp. 239–274. Durham and London: Duke University Press.