# The 'Hedonistic Revolution of Everyday Life': Men's magazines, consumerism and the Japanese Salaryman in the 1960s.

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## Abstract

This article examines the ambiguous relationship between masculinity and consumerism in Japan since the Taisho period. It charts the creation of *Heibon Punch* the first post-war lifestyle magazine aimed explicitly at men. In contrast to the corporate ideological reaffirmation or passive submission to political and economic ideology an increasingly hegemonic salaryman masculinity would come to epitomise, in the magazine consumerism was presented as a means of establishing individuality, creativity, agency and self-expression. Rather than seeing the rise of men's lifestyle magazines in the 1960s as reconstituting Japanese masculinity through struggles against the deleterious, feminizing effects of mass consumption, I argue instead that there was an attempt to defeminize the act of consumption itself and establish a masculinity at ease with the new imperative to go shopping. Underpinning this was the ongoing quest for a revolution in Japanese masculinity that challenged the association, since at least the 1920s, of individual consumption with feminine traits of hedonism, spontaneity, and irrationality. In the 1960s, this quest countered the increasingly hegemonic connection of masculinity and male consumption to middle-class domesticity by offering the chance for young Japanese salarymen to envision a masculinity at ease with consumer society.

**Keywords:** Salaryman masculinity, gender, consumerism, men's magazines, postwar Japan.

## Introduction

The resistance of many Japanese young men to growing up, getting a job, or even leaving the house, apparently brought on by economic stagnation since the 1990s, underlines the fact that the salaryman ideal is no longer respected, aspired to, or embodied by the generation born after the 1980s. Fewer men marry than was true a generation ago, and most no longer covet the working lifestyle their fathers' or grandfathers' generations epitomised (Fruhstuck and Walthall 2011: 11-12). Derogatory associations in popular culture and the media only add to the sense of alienation from an apparently hegemonic masculinity challenged by economic

stagnation (Mitsutoshi and Burgess 2012). Nevertheless, the image of the salaryman as a warrior fighting an economic war at the national level, and one for everyday survival at the local, continues to inform much of the national and international discourse surrounding late-capitalist liberal democracy in Japan (Leblanc 2012). Maintaining an emphasis on character, honour, duty, patriarchy, and loyalty to the corporation that first emerged in the early 20th Century and was heightened by the process of rapid, postwar economic growth, hegemonic salaryman masculinity was crafted through upbringing, cultural milieu, and workplace relationships (Ishii-Kuntz 2003).

Already by the 1960s, according to some scholars, it seemingly referred to the 'majority of all adult male workers'; 'a good breadwinner and taxpayer' (Taga 2005: 160). The extent and pace of postwar economic growth and reconstruction undoubtedly underpinned the commitment of the salaryman to provide a secure household income (Kelly 1993). Stability, security, status, and patriarchal privilege was a mainstay of this hegemonic masculinity, structuring and structured by the political and ideological discourse of postwar Japan. As Anne Allison has noted though, by the early 2000s, with a third of all workers irregularly employed, and 77% of those classed as 'working poor', the shift from 'lifelong to liquid' employment relations signalled the disintegration of any stability, security or status that the salaryman discourse might have once offered (Allison, 2013). Looked at through the prism of social, political and economic security this hegemonic salaryman masculinity neatly encapsulated a striving for the greater good of the nation through post-defeat political and economic reconstruction that carried over into the global dominance and ideological influence of the Japanese corporation in the 1980s. It lost its appeal once that framework disintegrated.

Salaryman masculinity was consolidated 'as the ideal during the economic growth years of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s' (Dasgupta 2012: 23) and disintegrated with economic decline. Nevertheless, a closer look at the decades of consumer driven growth from the late 1950s serves to highlight James Roberson and Nobue Suzuki's observation that the transformation of salaryman masculinity 'from emergent and desired to everyday and dominant' needs to be offset by the 'multiple and changing representations, relations and realities of men and masculinities in Japan' (2002: 2). In 1969, when the Asahi newspaper sought to ascertain the prevalence of actually-existing salarymen, in answer to the question 'do you yourself identify (or do you identify your husband) as a salaryman?' the majority response of 'yeah, I suppose so, kind of', highlights the rather begrudging acceptance of the discourse in the first place (Kanezawa 1970; Asaōka 2012: 161). For want of a better moniker, 'salaryman' it was. But despite the 69% of respondents who reluctantly agreed

to agree with this definition, commentators were lamenting his demise only a few years later.

Whilst it is well known that key elements of hegemonic masculinity: being heterosexual, driven by hard-work and the needs of the company, with a stay-at-home wife and two children-directly connected Japanese state policy, elite discourse, and the needs of big business with the promotion of a 'western' level of consumerism, the historical relationship of the salaryman to consumerism has often been obscured by the prism of the nuclear family or state policy. Yet, as Yoshikuni Igarishi has recently shown, an increasingly multi-media visual culture which invited people to see themselves through an outside perspective and to continually assemble new collage-like selves from media images and commercial products was evident by the 1970s thanks to the increase in television ownership. Through its emphasis on consumerism, this media culture came to encompass most elements of everyday life in Japan and precipitated a crisis in masculinity that underpinned unsuccessful attempts to reimagine manhood outside consumer society or beyond the nuclear family breadwinner (Igarashi 2021). Nevertheless, even as early as the 1950s, the promotion of individual consumption in the written media, had begun to reshape the popular cultural landscape (Yoshida & Okada 2012). A focus on men's fashion and luxury goods followed the Korean War boom of the early 1950s, and by the end of the decade entrepreneurs such as Ishizu Kensuke (founder of clothing company Van) came together with designers Kurosu Toshiyuki and Hozumi Kazuo to seek ways to promote men's fashion to a wider demographic (Marx 2015). By the mid-1960s, with the rapid increase in spending power and the explosion of lifestyle magazines aimed at young men, wider consumption was becoming an increasingly defining element of masculinity for those who were less financially burdened than their slightly older, married counterparts.

In this article, rather than seeing the rise of men's lifestyle magazines in the 1960s as reconstituting Japanese masculinity through struggles against the deleterious, feminizing effects of mass consumption, I argue instead that there was an attempt to defeminize the act of consumption itself. To establish a masculinity at ease with the new imperative to go shopping. The fear of being swallowed up by an all-encompassing media-driven consumerism became clear in the following decade. As the government began to actively promote domestic consumption in order to 'double incomes', consumerism was presented as a means of establishing individuality, creativity, agency and self-expression in contrast to the corporate ideological reaffirmation or passive submission to political and economic ideology hegemonic salaryman masculinity would come to epitomise. By examining the creation of *Heibon Punch*, the first lifestyle

magazine aimed explicitly at men, the article highlights the ambiguous relationship between masculinity and consumerism since the Taisho period. *Heibon Punch* in its 'golden era' (1964-1972) was one of the best-selling weekly magazines in Japan. Far from representing masculinity on the margins, *Punch* offered a form of 'modern masculinity' that had been disavowed since the 1920s as individualistic, erotic, hedonistic, irresponsible, and most importantly feminine. First, I will outline the ways in which the act of consumption, particularly around lifestyle goods, became associated with traits of femininity from the early 20th Century. This nascent consumerism developed at the same time as the first iterations of the Japanese salaryman in the 1920s, but the connection to the feminine and erotic has too often meant that male consumption is absent from historical accounts. I will then discuss the context for the postwar creation of lifestyle magazines for men through the case of *Heibon Punch* to show how the rise of postwar consumerism offered an attractive alternative to the hegemonic salaryman discourse but demanded a revolution in the relationship of Japanese men to consumer goods and the act of consumption itself.

## The problem of male consumers in Japan.

These days middle-class men are no longer the invisible, unmarked gender or taken for granted core of gender studies. The deconstruction of the masculine/feminine binary in its various forms and endless capacity to reinvent and reaffirm gender difference has helped us better understand the racial, class, and sexual masculinities that reflect power imbalances among men. It is clear that the idea of 'hegemonic masculinity' can be subject to challenge and historical change (Nye 2005; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Swiencicki 1998). Nevertheless, in social and cultural accounts of the 1950s and 1960s in Japan the centrality of production, technology, and distribution to the rapid improvement of living standards has led to a clearly defined split around a gendered ideology (Franks 2009: 135). Men produce, women consume. Until recently, capitalist, material consumption by men in the postwar, high-growth era, has received little attention (Ishitani and Amano 2008). And yet, it is becoming increasingly clear that consumer advertising offered a form of liberation to women, even as it appeared to cement their roles within consumerism (Yoda 2017). The rapid growth of the market for men's lifestyle magazines in the 1960s offered much the same prospect for men.

From the mid-1950s to the early 1970s, the female consumer appears as one of the most prominent symbols of an astonishing post-war recovery and rise to global prominence-beckoning her fellow Japanese to share in the 'bright life' that would be enabled by the fruits of modern industry (Gordon 2012: 56). The state, big business, intellectuals, and advertising gurus touted consumer electronics and

their potential to transform everyday life, promoting a reordering of the household through electrical goods (Macnaughtan 2012). Companies such as Matsushita (also known as National) advertised their new machines as essential to a concept which validated the 'western-style' nuclear family and tied it directly to state discourse around 'the transformation of Japanese society into a Western-style advanced industrial economy' (Partner 1999: 149-150). Since the Taisho period, consumption increasingly appeared as the prerogative of the middle-class housewife. Even though increasing urbanisation and industrialisation in the 1920s created new classes of consumer of both genders, middle-class lifestyles came to be defined by a set of behaviours and desires centred on women (Gordon 2007: 2). This interwar period emphasis on consumerism, both in and outside the home, became connected to feminine traits of irrationality and spontaneity-the quest for a hedonistic lifestyle-and served to exclude many aspects of consumerism from dominant notions of masculinity, creating an enduring connection between consumption and the feminine that has been extensively studied (Felski 2009; Leach 1984; Young 1999; Sato 2003; Franks 2009).

Part of the appeal of consumer culture for women lay in its potentially liberating nature. Mass consumer culture seemed to offer a space for individual expression (Felski 2009). The emergence of a culture of consumption helped to shape new forms of subjectivity for women, whose intimate needs, desires, and perceptions of self were mediated by public representations of commodities and the gratifications that they promised. The growth of the urban population created an audience for popular magazines and the prospects for advertising were increasingly exploited. Newspapers, magazines, street posters, trams and trains all sported ads pushing everything from medicine, books, cosmetics, alcoholic drinks, to household goods (Takemura 1998). By 1920, this rapidly expanding urban culture brought new jobs for women-elevator girls, department store clerks, tram conductors and more. Often single, these pursuers of leisure time entertainment quickly became associated with the 'erotic allure of the modern metropolis' (Freedman, Miller and Yano 2013: 4). At the same time, there was a growing awareness that women were becoming major consumers of mass print media (Harootunian 2002). Women's magazines like *Fujin Kōron* founded in 1915 and *Shufu no Tomo* founded in 1917, were by far the most popular and came about at a critical time in the process of connecting gender to the reception of cultural and consumer products. The 'New Woman' and 'Modern Girl' 'problems' sparked much social and political debate in these magazines precisely because it was explicitly connected to the rise in consumerism (Satō 2003; Harootunian 2002).

Men's reading was an altogether more serious matter. The process of transforming samurai into salarymen in the late 19th Century had entailed the accumulation of Western material culture and the mobilisation of goods, but a national ideology of

civilisation and enlightenment came together with an ethos of self-improvement to shape Meiji era notions of masculinity and social class (Ambarass 1998). As early as the 1880s, male consumerism had become associated with immoral behaviour on the part of the political elite. Seen as injurious to public morality, and associated with effeminacy and dandyism, it became strongly associated with the corruption and degeneracy of the political classes (Karlin 2002). Early magazines like *The Sun* (*Taiyō*, 1895), *Business Japan* (*Jitsugyō no Nihon*, 1897), and *Central Review* (*Chūō kōron*, 1899) attracted an elite male audience but discussed science, politics, and other supposedly 'highbrow' subjects. In 1910, Business Japan was the best-selling magazine in the country, although still catering to a relatively small, elite audience (Yamazki 1959: 119). Male reading was designed to be purposeful and rewarding, and readers tended to be from the ranks of the bureaucracy-men from former samurai families with an elite education. This connection of men's reading with serious social and political issues and women's with the frivolous and entertaining, reinforced the association of consumption with femininity, frivolity, and desire, but, as Sarah Fredrick points out, also highlighted the ambivalent position of women in Japanese modernity (2006).

In 1925, Noma Seiji founded the magazine King which became by far the best-selling magazine in the prewar era and combined elements of popular women's and general-interest magazines with the explicit aim of appealing to both genders (Satō 2002). King's ability to tap into a new readership forced big changes in the magazine market and several established titles followed its example. Although these magazines were not explicitly targeted at men, the increasingly sexual culture that emerged during the so-called "erotic, grotesque, nonsense" period was accompanied by a growing interest in men's fashion and consumption. This was reflected in the increasing interest in and visibility of the Modern Boy and the Dandy on the streets of major cities (Roden 1990). It was powered by the increasing economic wealth of young men. Magazines like *Gendai* (1920), New Youth, *Eiga no tomo* (1923), Star, and Style (Sutairu, 1936) began to set their sights on male fashion, consumerism, and stardom from the late 1920s (Uchiyama 2020). Indeed, western-style dress became one of the biggest purchases on credit in the 1930s (Gordon 2007). As manufacturing took off thanks to the war effort, male blue-collar workers, could find themselves earning salaries equal to their white-collar counterparts. College graduates could easily afford to buy new consumer goods clothing, radios, cameras, electric irons: a made to wear suit jacket cost ten yen and rent amounted to twenty yen a month. On a salary of eighty yen a month plus a four-month bonus these goods were increasingly within reach (Silverberg 2007: 32-33). As in the 1950s and 1960s, the mass-produced material culture of housing and clothing, newspapers, books and magazines, movies, records, and spectacles (including nightlife) went along with state ideology and policy to produce a

consumer-subject (Silverberg 2007; Smith 2018). In both the Taisho and postwar periods, increasing income, set working hours and increasing free time, made leisure an aspect of everyday life for many Japanese (Tipton 2013).

It was not only as salaried breadwinners that men could participate in this consumerism. Magazines like Star published articles about men's hats, perfume, beer, watches, and coats alongside articles reviewing the latest Hollywood movies. Despite catering to a largely female readership, Style magazine, launched in 1936, began to cover male grooming and fashion. 'A brief note for the Date man', a regular column on men's fashion, proffered advice on choosing the right raincoat or the perfect English suit. The news magazine Gendai published tips on 'becoming handsome' and, between 1935 and 1936, even the Yomiuri newspaper published advice on male grooming (Uchiyama 2020). For the most part though, male consumption outside the home in the interwar period was seen as driven by superficial desires for cheap, new sensations, and a lack of 'feeling particularly deeply about anything at all' (Driscoll 2010: 145). To some extent, increased middle-class consumption masked competition for white-collar employment and forced young men, already compelled to graduate from an elite university, to conform to a narrowly defined "company man" mould (Sand 2003: 223-225), but the newfound wealth of the blue-collar worker unsettled middle-class domesticity. 'Salaryman masculinity', then, emerged to disavow social insecurity, and male consumption outside the context of the home became portrayed as hedonistic, nihilistic, and erotic.

Of course, the beginning of the war in China and National Spiritual Mobilisation brought about a combination of nationalism and austerity that criticised individualism, selfishness, and decadence. Nonetheless, the creation of the Japanese salaryman, as with 'corporate masculinity' in the US, went along with the growth of mass entertainment, mass publishing, mass advertising and the proliferation of consumer goods. This concomitant rise of young men as consumers, prefigured the notion of a 'modern masculinity', one that valued personality, youth, malleability, cooperativeness, expressiveness, and sexuality (Pendergast 1997: 56-57). The combination of rising interest in popular magazines, the domination of the market by women's magazines, rising spending power amongst young people, the increasing wealth of blue-collar workers in relation to their salaryman counterparts, and the desire for consumption amongst young Japanese men would emerge again in the late 1950s and 1960s.

## Heibon Punch and the Male Consumer.

At the end of December 1962, a young French student from the prestigious Sorbonne University in Paris, disembarked the French ship Leos in Yokohama. Bernard Perot was fascinated by the culture of Japan and spent his spare time

studying the language. This unexpected but invaluable opportunity for overseas travel was a rare chance to put his extra-curricular learning to the test. At a time when it was very difficult for many Japanese to travel abroad, Perot had had a lucky encounter in the late autumn of 1962. He had been asked to act as tour guide and translator for Shimizu Tatsuo who was in Paris looking for inspiration for his next publishing venture. In return for his help, he was invited to stay with Shimizu and his family in Tokyo (Shimizu 1964: 118-119). Shimizu was one of the most successful magazine publishers in postwar Japan-co-founder of the magazine publishing company *Heibonsha* (later Magazine House) and creator of the immensely popular youth magazines *Heibon* (published monthly) and *Shūkan Heibon* (published weekly). His trip to Paris to visit French publishing houses was part of a world tour that took in many of the most important publishing companies in Europe and the US. The trip was an indication of the increasingly competitive nature of the popular magazine market in Japan and the need to tap into an increasingly consumption oriented young male market.

The immense success of Hugh Hefner's Playboy, launched in the US in 1953, had demonstrated that marketing young male consumer lifestyles could, given the right spin at the right time, prove immensely profitable. In the spring of 1962, just before Shimizu embarked on his world tour, the Japan Magazine Publishers Association took a trip to the US sponsored by the Japan Productivity Centre. The group included some of the top names in the Japanese publishing industry-representatives from Kōbunsha, Shōgakukan and Bungeishunju. They examined the corporate histories and distribution methods of the publishers they visited-a list which included relatively new publishing phenomena such as Playboy Enterprises, along with established magazines such as Time and Forbes. They were clearly impressed by what they found, noting that Playboy had a unique and personal character, and its aim of selling young male lifestyles was “an excellent editorial stance” (Nihon Zasshi Kyokai 1963: 144-146). It is not clear whether Shimizu was in attendance when the Magazine Publishing Association presented their findings in Tokyo in 1962. Nevertheless, what is clear is that he had begun thinking about the market for, and the format of, a lifestyle magazine aimed at young Japanese men long before he undertook his world tour. At the beginning of 1961, Shimizu had registered the patent for a new magazine called *Weekly Heibon Punch.* Both the Magazine Publishing Association’s and Shimizu’s visits were an indication of the newfound importance of the race for male consumers in Japan.

The popularity of *Heibon* throughout the 1950s and its weekly version released in 1959, testified to Shimizu’s ability to create a magazine format that could attract young working people by mediating the increasing opportunities for leisure and entertainment brought about by the growth of consumer society. After the ANPO protests of the summer of 1960, *Shūkan Heibon* gradually moved away from

appealing to both genders, dropping its political articles and coverage (associated with a more masculine readership), and seeking to appeal to the young, single working women who, alongside the middle-class housewife, were the ideal consumers to spur the Ikeda government's income doubling policy (Smith 2018). A middle-aged man by the time of the inaugural edition of *Heibon Punch*, Shimizu Tatsuo had been attracted to the *Kasutori* publishing culture of the occupation period, and fondly remembered the budding consumerism of the 1920s; nostalgic for images of French poet Jean Cocteau zooming around interwar Paris on a moped. The youthful energy Cocteau epitomised in the 1920s, his 'coolness', had thrilled the young literature student. In Shimizu's opinion, the desire to do things most people did not connected the young men of early Showa Japan to those of the early 1960s. His aim in creating *Heibon Punch* was to connect to the youth of the 1960s through the unfulfilled passions of his own (Shimizu 1965: 159-160).

Yet he also understood the global nature of the transformation in consumerism that had taken place since the late 1950s and, by applying for a patent then travelling to Europe and America, hoped to get a head start in the race to entice Japanese men to consume more than just fashion. In this context, Perot's journey to Japan and appeal as a model reader for a Japanese magazine aimed at men highlights the global nature of Japan's youth consumer culture in the early 1960s, as much as Shimizu's ideas for the magazine make plain its domestic transwar elements. It was a weekly magazine 'edited around sex, cars and men's fashion'. 'In other words, the three sacred jewels of youth' (Shiozawa 2009: 192). The first edition was published on May 11th, 1964, and it quickly gained a wide readership by tailoring its content and appeal to the desires of its target audience. More than six-hundred thousand copies of the first edition were printed and by 1966 more than a million.

By inviting the young Perot to come and stay with his family in Tokyo Shimizu gained an opportunity to examine, at first hand, the desires, needs, thoughts and plans of a new generation of men born during the privations of wartime but coming of age during rapid social, economic, and cultural transformation. Luckily for Shimizu, following Perot's arrival in Japan, the household was also swelled by the addition of his daughter's fiancée from Kansai and the young Japanese man, now a 'salaryman' working for a large company, who, as an exchange student in France, had introduced Shimizu to Bernard Perot. This vibrant household created a kind of focus group on which Shimizu could try out his ideas for the new magazine. It also allowed him to gain an insight into what he believed were significant differences between men and women as consumers. Even though he had managed to build *Heibon* and *Shūkan Heibon* into two of the most successful magazines in postwar Japan, Shimizu knew he would need to become an 'amateur' all over again to do the same thing with a solely male audience (Shimizu 1970: 119). Compared

to his previous ventures too, *Heibon Punch* took a long time to come to fruition. There was no 'guidebook' to creating a men's lifestyle magazine and Shimizu and his staff spent more than a year surveying different focus groups on what would appeal to them before the inaugural edition (Shimizu 1970: 398-399).

*Heibon Punch* marked a turning point for the men's magazine market and for men's consumption more broadly. In many ways it laid the blueprint for magazines such as Popeye and Brutus that would later cement the image of young Japanese men as savvy consumers. Early on *Punch* tapped into a market for US fashion that had begun with Ishizu Kensuke (founder of the brand Van) in the early 1950s and fostered by Kazuo Hozumi and Kurosu Toshiyuki from the late 1950s through the fashion magazine Men's Club. These creators of 'Ivy fashion' had spent the late 50s and early 60s looking to the US for inspiration and by the mid-1960s were desperately seeking ways to appeal to a wider demographic and gain social acceptance for their vision of the fashionable young Japanese male (Marx 2015). *Punch* was the ideal vehicle for them to increase the range of potential consumers and eventually to create a mass market for many more clothes and fashion brands, after all the magazine's target audience was young men in their twenties, living in the city with 'an interest in looking dapper' (Akagi 2004: 136). But *Heibon Punch* also drew on the connection between male fashion, consumerism, and eroticised images of the feminine that had developed in Japan in the interwar period and on the international dimensions of the emerging youth culture of the 1960s to expand the idea of consumption beyond dress and personal grooming.

## A 'Hedonistic Revolution'.

Although one early special section challenged the reader to make a fashion choice, 'Are you pro-Van or pro-Jun?' (Kimi wa Van-to ka? Jun-to ka?) (June 15th, 1964), by 1967 *Punch Journal* pointed out that the days of following one dominant fashion style such as the 'Ivy style' were at an end. Not least because, thanks to the liberalisation of the economy, there was greater competition from foreign fashion brands. 'The core of fashion is disappearing and the tendency for customers to choose clothing styles that suit them (as individuals)' was becoming more pronounced. In the view of the head of men's clothing for Matsuya Department store, 'young men are maturing (as consumers) and fashion itself is diversifying' (Punch Journal, 11th September 1967, reprinted in Magazine House, 1996: 270-271). Not long after its arrival on the market then, *Punch* began to expand the horizons for masculine consumption beyond men's fashion and luxury sports cars. The National brand of electronics advertised heavily in the magazine. Founder, Matsushita Kōnosuke, was touted as a modern-day Japanese hero for his business sense and 'Japanese' spirit. He achieved fourth place in the magazine's readers' vote to decide 'Mr International', behind only Charles de Gaulle, Ho Chi Minh and John Lennon, and was feted for his creation of a 'Japanese electronics empire'-

taking on the Americans and 'beating them at their own game'. (*Heibon Punch*, 26th August 1968: 111-113.) Matsushita's company took up a lot of ad space in the magazine. Readers who had cast their vote in the poll stood a chance to win 2.3 million Yen worth of goods provided by his company. Dubbed "National Young Man Products", the prizes tell much about the changing focus of male consumption since the previous decade. Although five hundred winners received a *Heibon Punch* tiepin and one thousand a *Heibon Punch* handkerchief the star prizes epitomised the everyday life concerns of the magazine's readers-a stereo, bicycle, transistor television, car stereo, portable television, tape recorder, and transistor radio (*Heibon Punch*, 26 August 1968: 113, Smith 2018).

*Heibon Punch's* popularity challenged the deep association of consumerism with femininity and exposed the ambiguous nature of masculinity in postwar Japan and it was guided by the desires of its target audience. Shimizu spent a lot of time walking around Ginza with 'young cool men', taking them for dinner, and inviting them to his house to find out what appealed to them and what content would make them buy his magazine. This sparked rumours that he was homosexual, something he strenuously denied but saw as a necessary side-effect of his focus on young men and their desires (Shimizu 1970: 160). Of course, sex was at the forefront of the magazine; impossible to disentangle form the erotic associations of consumer culture. *Punch* was the first mainstream magazine in the postwar period to feature semi-nude pin-ups. At first mainly naked western women, but soon including Japanese models, these advertised the magazine as unmistakably masculine and heterosexual. Readers were enticed by 'the 3 Ss Sports, Screen and Sex' and according to one-time Editor-in-Chief Kinameri Yoshihisa, plenty of 'semi-nude models' and 'a lot of articles about cars' (Kinameri 1990: p. 70).

Yet, despite making the magazine an easy target for feminist derision and general dismissal as a publication that brought 'sex out of the dirty bookstore and into the mainstream' (Shigemitsu 2005: 562-563), the pin-ups allowed the readers to avoid the stigma of the association of consumer goods with femininity. Their masculinity would not be compromised by going shopping. Neither would it be associated with the staid domesticity of middle-class consumerism but rather youthfulness, virility and individual choice. The naked women helped of course. Many of Shimizu's wife's former school friends claimed that their husbands bought the magazine every week to 'rediscover their youth' 'because 'no matter how old a man, he still wants to look at nude women…' (Shimizu, 1970: 128; Smith, 2016). But the commodification of the feminine-literally embodied by the nudes in the magazine-worked alongside the latest goods to seduce, attract, and ultimately to masculinise the gaze of the reader. As with Playboy in the US, *Punch* deployed a variety of aesthetic codes to stress the 'masculine' character of its engagement with

consumerism' (Ogersby 2005: 100) and the *Heibon Punch* reader was a young man of means who challenged the emerging ideals of the middle-class lifestyle.

The magazine asked direct questions of the reader, often using the direct 'kimi' to address them, as with the question about Van or Jun for the fashion conscious. Yet the audience were encouraged to take a stance on social, political, and cultural issues not just what to wear. They had to 'make a decision' about their lives and avoid the passive acceptance of social, political, and even economic norms (Smith 2016). They were also pressed to make choices and express preferences for a wide variety of consumer goods. Yet the magazine understood the need for readers to change their own relationship to pleasure if they were to easily adapt to the new consumer paradise. *Punch* sought to revolutionise the daily lives of post-war young men in relation to the presentation of material goods, but it was not simply a case of presenting those goods and leaving readers to make an unthinkingly spontaneous, emotional decision to buy things-that would be too feminine. Instead, the magazine situated the imperative to consume within different ways of thinking about social and economic transformation since the end of the war.

In the global context of the 1960s, *Punch* gave revolution an everyday gloss that was infused with the ethos of consumerism (Smith 2016) and in May1966 the magazine carried a long, special section entitled 'The hedonistic revolution of everyday life: Everyday life is boring!!-Punch's advice for those in their 20s' (*Heibon Punch*, 2nd May,1966, reprinted in Magazine House 1996: 264-270). The article introduced the advice of novelists Ishihara Shintaro, Shibusawa Tatsuhiko and social-physcologist Minami Hiroshi with regard to the existential dilemma of one, self-described, 'Japanese salaryman', the twenty-seven-year-old, pseudonymous, Kuroki Shunichi. Kuroki had graduated from an elite, private university. After graduation, he started his current job working for one of the largest companies in finance with the belief that he would advance through the ranks. Two years later he entered a marriage arranged by his parents. Kuroki supressed his feelings and desires with the aim of living the right way to ensure his 'future worldly success'. Four years in though, he realised the restrictive nature of his surroundings. 'Two hundred and sixty people entered the company at the same time as me…top graduates from Tokyo and Hitotsubashi Universities…from among that number of people how many could actually achieve a satisfying high-ranking position? Maybe three of four!' (Magazine House 1996: 264-265). Kuroki soon lost hope and interest in his work and blamed his ennui on the fact that he married too early, after only one year of bachelorhood. He had 'never tasted the "pleasures of youth"' (Ibid: 265).

Kuroki believed he was luckier than most though because an inheritance from his parents allowed him to both maintain his household and spend money on seeking out those missed pleasures. He went skiing with his co-workers, took dance lessons,

and began to frequent nightclubs and gay bars. He even built up an impressive collection of erotic photographs. Yet none of this succeeded in making him happy. Noting that Kuroki was indicative of many of the magazine's readers, social psychologist Minami Hiroshi pointed out that men's desires were related to the social group to which they belonged. They could belong to the 'large social group of white-collar workers', defined by the workplace and their place within it. At the same time, they could belong to groups related to 'hobbies, economic lifestyles, social position,' and so on. Kuroki's problem was that he had been trying to copy the Playboy lifestyle of his co-workers assuming that this would bring pleasure. According to Minami the problem went much deeper. Japanese men needed a revolution in consciousness-a change from being 'work focused' to 'pleasure focused' and the pre-war adage that 'consumption is a vice' needed to change to 'consumption is a virtue'. Understanding 'the importance of play' was vital (Ibid).

To overcome his disillusion and listlessness, Kuroki (and by extension the other male readers of *Heibon Punch*) would have to look inside himself and view pleasure as something to be optimistically pursued rather than passively accepted then subordinated to the quest for social and familial stability (Ibid, 266). Happiness and well-being were different from pleasure. They were subjective. 'Throughout history the eternal dream of all men has been to eat delicious food and take a beautiful woman by the hand'. Yet ultimately, pleasure required sacrifice and a complete absorption in its pursuit not passivity. 'When you are playing, play as hard as possible, when you fall in love with a woman, fall as hard as possible, when you sleep, sleep as deeply as possible' (Ibid: 267). Novelist Ishihara Shintaro explained, 'my greatest pleasure is running…when I run thinking about the long, uphill tunnel I have to pass through it is tough, but when I'm running unconsciously and totally absorbed in running, I'm out of the tunnel before I realise it. The feeling of satisfaction is difficult to get from anything else' (Ibid). Of course, it wasn't so difficult for the salaryman to sacrifice money or his body for pleasure. For the young salarymen who read the magazine, time was the most pressing problem. According to Minami, time was something that people made for themselves, and the Japanese were not very good at this. The magazine's readers needed to rationalise their working time to make more time for leisure as an unconscious aspect of their everyday lives.

Once they had achieved this, they had to 'go out and grab their desires'. Desires were unique to every individual but, the magazine promised, the revolution from a 'work centred' lifestyle to one centred on 'play' would totally change readers' daily lives as they realised their true potential (Ibid: 270). The passive chasing of pleasurable experiences defined by belonging to and fitting in with a group needed to be transformed into an active pursuit of one's inner most desires. The readers of *Heibon Punch* should no longer think of themselves as 'Playboys' who chased

passive pleasures, but rather as Epicureans (Ibid) revelling in and actively shaping their own place in post-war consumerism.

## Conclusion

In post-war Japan, the masculinities that evolved within and alongside consumer culture became centred on personality, sexuality, self-realisation, and a fascination with appearances over character, self-improvement, or even corporate loyalty. By the late 1950s, as the country recovered from defeat, more and more men sought leisure in large, impersonal cities rather than in small towns and the market for mass circulation magazines aimed at young men rapidly increased. Something which Shimizu Tastsuo saw as an exciting opportunity. This was an echo of the 1920s but, by the end of the 1950s, new goods such as washing machines, fans, heaters, toasters, and refrigerators were within reach of most working people and new consumer goods such as stereos and transistor radios were directly designed to appeal to Japanese men. As in the Taisho and early Showa eras though, young, single Japanese men's participation in a culture of consumption challenged developing ideas of masculinity and the connection of consumption to the domestic. One side-effect of rapid economic growth from the late 1950s, as it had been in the Taisho period, was the increasing number of blue-collar workers who earned the same, or more, than their white-collar counterparts. As economist Yamamoto Susumu complained in the women's magazine *Fujin Kōron* in 1964, because of rising prices the promotion of consumption caused problems for the married salaryman with a wife and children to support. White-collar wages were not keeping up, and many were struggling when compared to the young, single workers they shared their workplace with (*Fujin Kōron*, March 1964). In the same period, these young, single white and blue-collar workers were being lost to the political left wing as unions focused on achieving a family wage (Gerteis 2011).

As the example of Kuroki demonstrated though, even young married men could begin to challenge the restrictions imposed by the neat division between the space of production-outside the home, for the nation and masculine-and the space of consumption-within the home, for the family and feminine. Because, since the 1920s, the establishment of a middle-class consumer culture had created a discourse that rendered the obsession with material goods, fashion, and conspicuous consumption, frivolous and effeminate if outside the home, or rational and bourgeois if inside, a 'hedonistic' revolution was necessary. In this sense, the masculinity created in *Heibon Punch* was in tune with the global 1960s. It spoke not of Americanism, but of global youth culture and revolution. This was a youth refracted through a consumer society that freed up formal constraints, promoted active traits of individuality, personality, flexibility, creativity, and sexuality in opposition to passive group loyalty, patriarchy, and even self-control. Because its

production, creation, sales, and content, were informed by its prospective readers and dependent on the promotion of individual male consumption, *Heibon Punch* helps us to uncover a deeper and more ambiguous historical transformation in notions of masculinity in Japan. One tied to the very nature of consumer capitalism. In the early 1960s, before the political upheaval of the student and anti-war protests, and the spectacular violence of extremist terrorism, Japan's burgeoning consumerism offered a space for a young, virile masculinity at ease with the new imperative to go shopping. This stood in contrast to the corporate ideological reaffirmation or passive submission to political and economic ideology that hegemonic salaryman masculinity would come to epitomise.

Still, by the start of the following decade, student violence in the streets and the war in Vietnam became too closely connected to this consumerist lifestyle. *Heibon Punch's* popularity waned, and the magazine became more cynical and much more tongue in cheek. The focus of men's fashion shifted from the American East coast of 'Ivy Style' to the west coast surfer chic and eco-oriented goals of projects like the Whole Earth Catalogue. *Heibon Punch* came to focus more on escapism than politics, culture, and everyday life and the magazine gave way to others from the 1970s, such as Popeye and Gulliver, which began to segment the market for young male consumers. Nonetheless, its success between 1964 and 1972 provided the evidence needed that men would read magazines related to lifestyles and could be interested in shopping. The number of magazines targeting male lifestyles rapidly increased throughout the late 1960s (*Shuheisha* launched Japanese Playboy the year after Punch's first edition hit the stands) offering much the same mix of the 3 S's (Sports, Screen and Sex). Underpinning this expansion was the ongoing quest for a revolution in Japanese masculinity that countered the increasingly hegemonic connection to middle-class domesticity by offering the chance for young Japanese salarymen to envision a masculinity at ease with consumer society and outside the increasingly standardised middle-class domesticity that hegemonic masculinity prioritised.

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