Queer Asia

Memoirs, activism, fiction, and fun.

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1. Male: Magazine for make a big friend have a great fun. Vol. 7. Bangkok: Male, 1993. 9p., glossy covers; articles in Thai (plus want ads) and physique photography, always with a strategically placed object blocking the crucial point. Covers lightly worn. (#227032) $20.00

2. Queer Lala Times / Ku la shi bao 酷拉時報 Vol. 1. n.p.: Huaren Lala Lianmeng / Chinese Lala Alliance, 2014. 172p., very good in wraps with slight shelfwear, text almost entirely in Chinese with an introduction in English. Text is in the simplified characters used on the Mainland. (#207963) $45.00
From the introductory statement: "We are Lala (LBT); we are not dissoluble under the umbrellas of 'women,' 'gay,' 'homosexuality.' We are queer; we are not content with the binarism of gay/straight, men/women, normal/pervert. We seek diverse narratives that speak to the complexity of the world, and we seek a more diverse reality. We are activists; with many others, we are committed to the gender/sexuality identity activism in China. The experience of changing convinces us that a change in mind is the ultimate pursuit in activism..." Articles on queer theory, history, and the status of the movement and particular difficulties faced in Chinese society. This is a hard copy, purchased in Hong Kong and perhaps printed there, of the publication that circulates in Mainland China primarily by electronic means.


Author is a professional motor-boat racer, born in Osaka. The book explains the author’s early sense of being male in spite of being born biologically female and traces his successful attempt to relaunch his racing career as a man. Throughout the autobiography, the author frames his Gender-Identity Disorder as a disease and explains how he has received a diagnosis from a doctor (there is a publisher’s disclaimer about this choice of phrasing). The designation as a disease provides the grounds upon which the author mounts a successful attempt to change his gender with the authorities running the Japanese motor boat competition, allowing the author to participate in the races as a male athlete.

Presented as a comic (B&W and some color), the book discusses sekumai (sexual minorities) in Japan focusing specifically on gender. Author and
manga artist Arai grew up as female, then a chromosomal analysis revealed she was intersex; now lives as male. Includes discussion of friends of Arai who illustrate various types of gender and sexual identity.


Paperback with intact obi (noting that the book is adapted from a blog that is about a true, and forbidden, story). Based on the story of a Japanese woman in her early 30s who lived in Tokyo, the mother of two girls (five and two years old), who one night seven years into her marriage discovered that her husband had a male lover, a younger co-worker. She started writing the blog because she could not deal with the matter on her own and wanted an outlet and others' advice. The book traces her confrontation with her husband and the young man, how she learned about homosexuality in the process, how she came to terms with her situation and figured out with her husband (and the young man) how they are going to proceed. In the process, she became interested in and sympathetic to the young man, with whom she also corresponded and met regularly.


11. Haga, Kuro 波賀九郎. Bon: Haga Kuro shashinshu 梵: 波賀九郎写真集. Tokyo: Daini Shobou, 1973. [110p] 12x8.5 inches, thoroughly illustrated collection of Haga's homoerotic photography, almost all in b&w with a few color plates at front, men in loincloths in forest scenes, some rope bondage, the occasional full frontal shot unfortunately airbrushed in the sensitive area in accordance with Japanese law, very good first edition in cloth and unclipped dj. (#184146) $250.00 Haga's work was, ahem, seminal in shaping the genre of Japanese homoerotic physique photography.
A suspense novel, one of the first in Japan to take up the theme of gender ambiguity, hermaphroditism, and intersex.

13. Heianna, Yuki and Megumi 平安名祐生; 平安名恵. Search kimi ga ita: GID (sei dōissai shōgai) futari no kekkon [Search: there you were: a marriage between two with GID (gender identity disorder)] Search-きみがいた：GID(性同一性障害)ふたりの結婚. Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten 徳間書店, 2000. 266p., very good hardcover in dj, text in Japanese. (#172923) $35.00
The authors were born biologically female and male respectively, but now live as male and female. In this memoir the authors offer their experience as encouragement to others with GID who struggle with feelings of isolation. Illustrated with B&W photographs, as well as a copy of the authors' official family register (showing the biologically female as the “wife,” but with a male name; and the biologically male as the “husband,” but with a female name).


Hirata is said to have been the first Japanese to publicly declare that he had AIDS. The focus of this book is on Hirata's experience with realizing he is HIV+ and how his life changes subsequently. Hirata is gay and apparently contracted HIV while in Japan - in contrast to many gay Japanese who may have contracted it abroad; he reflects on his experience coming to terms with his sexuality as well. The author is a tanka poet and the text is interwoven with poems he wrote about his experiences.

Engaging first person narrative by a young man about what it's like growing up gay in contemporary Japan; in more recent years Ishikawa has become a very rare example of an openly gay politician in Japan. Ishikawa appears in a large photograph on the cover and uses his real name. He discusses his experiences as teenager, first thoughts about being gay, terror on a junior high overnight school trip, etc; coming out experience as college student; first love; forging connections with gay activists - in this last chapter, Ishikawa discusses his co-ordination with Ito Satoru and Yanase Ryuta, who are activists providing workshops and outreach to kids in Japanese schools about sexual diversity. Ito and Yanase are a couple and have authored several other books about being gay since the mid-'90s - but the tone of this book by a member of the next generation is
lighter and less preachy. Ishikawa became an assemblyman in the Toshima Ward, and in 2015, he ran for a seat in the Lower House but lost.

The author was born biologically female, but identifies as male. The text discusses how he came to realize his "Gender Identity Disorder" and accepted himself. Recalls the reaction of his parents, his experiences coming out, his thoughts about transsexuality and homosexuality, the meaning of “pride” and other issues. Includes advice about coming out and a chapter devoted to frequently asked questions, including "is transsexuality a ‘disorder’?"


Features a girl who is adopted and raised as a boy.

A memoir written at the age of sixty by Carrousel Maki, who became famous in the late 1960s and early 1970s as the first Japanese to undergo sex-reassignment surgery. She subsequently had a successful career as an actress and showgirl. The memoir begins with discussion of a scandal in which she was (falsely she says) accused of marijuana possession in 2001 – narrating the torment of being detained before she was cleared on the charge. The main focus of the book is her experience getting sex reassignment surgery in Morocco, living in Paris, and her life in show business. Discusses her interactions with several famous Japanese actors, writers, and cultural figures. Includes numerous B&W photographs of her at various points in her career.

Carrousel Maki became famous in the late 1960s and early 1970s as the first Japanese to undergo sex-reassignment surgery. She subsequently had a successful career as an actress and showgirl. The title reflects the fact that it took many years for her gender to be officially changed on her identity records, while also speaking to the content of the book, which is mainly advice for women on how to remain beautiful, healthy, and happy into old age.
The author ran a theater company founded in 1980 called "Daisan Erotica" (The Third Erotica) and has produced several productions with titles like Freaks and Cocksucker Blues (presumably based on the Murakami Ryu novel), and one that resets a classic 19th century novel in the world of Shinjuku's gay bars. He went on to study in New York and produce experimental theater in Chicago and elsewhere. This book is the script for an avant-garde theatrical production he produced in Tokyo in 1988 - it is set in "the medieval period. Tokyo. In 1999." It features characters representing diseases like "the plague" and "AIDS" and a variety of "shades." The book also includes also an essay by novelist and literary critic Shimada Masahiko entitled "Eizu no tomodachi" [Friends of AIDS] which describes Shimada's experience visiting a friend studying AIDS as a physician at Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York.

"Identity workshop: integrating theory and activism through lesbian/gay/PHA identities." (PHA=People Having AIDS). Includes photos of speakers from workshops in Amsterdam and San Francisco.

One of the first books on what it means to be gay and Muslim, by a Pakistani-American writer.

Yaoi graphic novel.

26. Langley, Noel, drawings by Regina Tor. The rift in the lute: a gay story of innocence at bay. New York: Coward-McCann, 1953. 188p., illustrated with line-drawings, ownership name, lightly-worn but very good first US edition in quarter-cloth over boards with vignette decoration, unclipped but worn dj. (#34726) $25.00
Novel set in China by the author of the 'Wizard of Oz' screenplay. Young 2235

Author discusses how she married a German man, with whom she lived for 20 years. But one day he came out to her and everything changed.

The author is a high school social studies teacher from Kyushu who identifies as a "part-time transgender" (photos show the daily ritual of transformation from male to female). We are introduced to the author's conservative Kyushu upbringing and resistance to stern parental discipline and traditionally masculine gender roles. In a discussion of sexual harassment by subway molesters the author describes complex feelings: detesting being objectified but also thoroughly enjoying passing as a woman. Goes into complications of marriage when the wife figures everything out.


Early Japanese work on AIDS surveying the identification of the disease and risk groups, the contemporary situation in various countries around the world, and the development of AIDS policies. Includes a 12-page section on differences between Japanese and "Western" homosexuality, with the implications for future strategies in the fight against AIDS.


Cover story on Shanghai.


Transgender autobiography.

Sasano was a musician active in the late eighties and early nineties as the vocalist of a band called "Tokyo shonen" (Tokyo Boy). She launched a solo career in the 1990s, releasing two albums. With this book, she came out as a lesbian, and the tone of the book’s epigraph indicates the momentousness of that decision at this point in Japanese history: "I, Sasano Michiru, with this book hereby come out as a lesbian." After the book, she released an album called "Girl Meets Girl," and continued to perform as part of the "Kyoto Chonaikai Band." The book includes her musings about love, her relations with women, how lesbian relations differ from straight relations, and how she discovered her sexuality in an all-girl’s junior high school. Ends with a section of dialog between Sasano Michiru and one of the other nationally prominent lesbians in the 1990s, Kakefuda Hiroko, in which the two discuss being lesbian in Japan and compare it to New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.


Deals with the erotic as well as the thespian fates of pre-revolutionary Chinese boy actors.

The author is a graduate student at Waseda University who was born female but has always identified as a male. Among other activities, the author is a competitive fencer who has represented Japan on the national team at various international events. Describes the author’s overseas experience as a student in Vancouver, BC, and in Hawaii. Illustrated with black and white photographs.

Author Torai is a leading FTM activist in Japan, publisher of the newsletter FTM Japan. Discusses experiences dealing with official situations and identity documents that list his sex as female.
Discusses transsexual issues in Japan with a focus on the activities of the author, the founding editor of FTM Nippon, established in 1994. The first half of the book consists of nearly all of the articles appearing in FTM Nippon that Torai wrote between 1994 and 2003. A second part contains an essay by Osanai Mieko (the scriptwriter of a popular television miniseries on the topic), discussing how this miniseries changed popular attitudes. A third section includes a transcript of a conversation with Andō Hiromasa (an professional boat-racer who received permission to compete professionally after FTM surgery). The final section discusses social change in perceptions of Gender Identity Disorder. Illustrated with several B&W photographs and a timeline of trans issues in Japan.

Author Torai is a leading FTM activist in Japan, publisher of FTM Japan, a newsletter. Torai sought gender reassignment surgery in the US in the late 1980s. This book is a travel diary of a week spent mainly in “his second hometown” of San Francisco in 1999 working with transgender activists, talking with them about trans issues, discussing hate crimes and other issues.

Torai is a leading FTM activist in Japan, publisher of FTM Japan, a periodical newsletter. He reflects on his experience identifying as a man but being in a woman’s body; notes how he decided to seek gender reassignment surgery in the US, and his efforts to have his status recognized in Japan. Discusses subsequent developments in Japan: including the decision of one Japanese hospital (in Saitama) to recognize gender reassignment surgery as a viable medical procedure. Discusses the visit to Japan of Jamison Green, FTM activist and scholar.


Autobiography of the transgendered author, with photos showing her development from little boy to adult woman.
A reader on AIDS for political cadre in the Chinese Communist Party.

46. Watanabe, Tsuneo 渡辺恒夫. Transu jenda no bunka: isekai e ekkyo suru chi [The Culture of Trans-Gender: the knowledge needed to cross the border to another world] トランス・ジェンダーの文化: 異世界へ越境する知 a thousand years of Japanese homosexuality. Tokyo: Keiso Shobo 勁草書房, 1989. 219p., very good hardcover in dj, text in Japanese. (#203072) $35.00
A comparatively early work using the perspective of contemporary thought and philosophy to address transgender issues. The author is an academic psychologist who is particularly interested in issues of gender and sexuality. Contains discussion of configurations of gender and sexuality in various cultures and time periods, including berdache and hijra; also analyzes contemporary comics on these questions.

Cover says the book will answer question of why AIDS suddenly appeared now, why it spread among "homos and drug users," will show how AIDS is a disease of modern civilization that serves as a warning to modern people who are living an unnatural life. Contents: AIDS reveals America's underside (lit. "naughty bits"); why did AIDS appear now? ; The sexual revolution and the gay liberation movements and how they spread AIDS; 20 pp section on AIDS among Japanese homosexuals that ends with "Homosexuals should restrain themselves"; how AIDS is supposedly rare in Europe and common in America since the latter made mistake of allowing sexual revolution; a chapter on viruses and how mankind cannot violate the principles of nature; a chapter on how AIDS reveals the deviations of modern society - some discussion of discrimination against AIDS patients, also how homos are hidden in Japanese society; a chapter on AIDS policies in Japan (testing, clinics, Ministry of Health, etc). Author is freelance writer.

Hirata Yutaka is said to have been the first Japanese to publicly declare that he had AIDS. The authors collaborated with him, as he was going blind, to record his last words and turn them into a book. The work discusses his coming to Tokyo, his school and sexual experiences; his experiences as a performer, and his life in Shinjuku Nichome. The text also includes Hirata' s poetry.


Author was born Kunimi Rika. Describes growing up in the Osaka area as the only girl among five brothers. It contains extensive discussion of Yukichi’s experience working in the “water-trade” (mizu-shobai); commercialized host/hostess clubs. Yukichi worked as a host in an onabe club (onabe are biological females who identify as male or present themselves as male).

