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The Emergence of a New Sexual Ideal: A Case Study of Yuki Maiko's Pornographic VCDs in Hong Kong

Hoi-yan Yau*

Heung-wah Wong**

ABSTRACT

This paper explores why a female Japanese adult video star, Yuki Maiko, was so popular among men in Hong Kong during the late 1990s. We argue that the image she embodies is very similar to that of an emerging sexual ideal among the Hong Kong new middle class in the early and mid 1990s. Her image of being sexual and orgasmic but ultimately passive in her sexuality is arguably the idealisation of this kind of emerging sexual symbol in Hong Kong. Through our analysis of interview data with 17 men in Hong Kong, we contend that this emerging sexual ideal is closely related to the changing class structure and cultural trend with regard to femininity. As this paper will show, the contradictory terms inherent in the identity formation of the new middle class in 1980s' Hong Kong explains why many new middle class young men would identify with Japan in general and Japanese culture in particular as a symbol of their new identity. The resulting submersion in Japanese culture in turn allows them to find favour with the "cute and gentle" female ideal, an alternative femininity to the previous aggressive model, which has become popular in Hong Kong since the mid-1990s.

Keywords: Japanese pornographic adult videos, cultural production/ appropriation, local female sexual ideal, class structure, Yuki Maiko

* Ph.D., Department of Anthropology, University College London

** Associate Professor, Department of Japanese Studies ; Head of the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, The University of Hong Kong

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新性感女神典範之興起：夕樹舞子色情光碟在香港之個案分析

邱 愷 欣*、王 向 華**

摘 要

本文旨在探討日本色情錄影帶女優夕樹舞子為何在 1990 年代末能獲得香港男性廣泛的青睞。咎其原因，筆者認為夕樹舞子所代表的形象與始於 1990 年代初香港中產階級中的新性感女神形象不謀而合。夕樹舞子那種既豪放卻又被動的形象可以說是此新性感女神形象的最佳示範。通過分析與 17 位香港男性的訪談資料，筆者認為此種新性感女神形象與社會階級結構之轉變及男性審美眼光之變化有著密不可分的關係。本文將會指出，1980 年代香港新興中產階級身分認同中的矛盾元素是許多新興中產年輕男性以日本及日本文化作為他們身分認同之重要原因。而此種對日本文化的嚮往更使得他們捨棄早期「主動」的女性形象而鍾情於在 1990 年代中出現的「可愛及溫柔」之新性感女神形象。

關鍵字： 日本色情錄影帶、文化生產／挪用、本土女性性典範、階級結構、夕樹舞子

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* 英國倫敦大學學院人類學系博士。
** 香港大學日本研究學系副教授及現代語言及文化學院學院主任。

INTRODUCTION

On 12 April 1997, eight thousand Hong Kong Chinese men packed into a small section of Mongkok in order to catch a sight of their latest "*neui san*" (goddess), Yuki Maiko, a prominent Japanese adult video actress, who was about to hold an autography campaign in a nearby shopping mall (Apply Daily 1997; Law 1997:42). Contrary to the previous generation, these young men, many of whom were arrayed in suits and some in school uniforms, were no longer frightened to be publicly identified as "*haam chung*" (literally salty worms; sexually avid persons) (Law 1997:42). The commotion caused by her public appearance in Mongkok even caught the attention of the Hong Kong Police who sent a team of officers to the site to maintain order. The immense popularity and commotion caused by Yuki Maiko in fact marks the emergence and concretisation of a new kind of local female ideal among the emergent middle class in Hong Kong.

Yuki Maiko is certainly not the first and only porn actress who won great acclaim with men in Hong Kong. But she differs from previous local porn actresses in significant ways. Due to the strict censorship of genital regions in public media in Hong Kong, local porn actresses in the 1960s and 1970s often appeared coquettish, flirtatious, and sexually aggressive in an effort to make up for the absence of real sexual intercourse in the movies (Yeh 1997:194). The image of porn actresses as coquettes continued to dominate many of the early Category III (i.e. pornographic) films since the late 1980s. For instance, Yip Ji-mei, a prominent sex symbol of Hong Kong cinema in the late 1980s and early 1990s, was portrayed as coquettish, naughty, and vulgar. Lee Wah-yuet even appeared more sexually aggressive by proclaiming to have "real" sexual intercourse in the movies and to have had sex with an eel. In other words, porn actresses at that time predominantly adopted a coquettish female image on-screen. However, Yip Yuk-hing and Yung Hung, the former Miss Asia Pageant contestants, and Lee Lai-chun, the former actress famous for her role as a cute, innocent young woman, are no longer that aggressive or coquettish. As a matter of fact, their phenomenal success in Hong Kong during the early and mid-1990s lies precisely in the contradiction between their elegance as Miss Asia Pageant

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contestants or innocent femininity as the girl-next-door and their final debut as porn actresses (Wang 1995:224-5). In other words, an alternate sexual ideal portraying women as innocent instead of aggressive has been underway since the mid-1990s. This paper explores why Yuki Maiko was so popular among men in Hong Kong during the late 1990s. We argue that the image she embodies is very similar to that of the new sexual ideal mentioned above. Her image of being sexually approachable and cute but ultimately passive in her sexuality is arguably the idealisation of this kind of emerging sex symbol in Hong Kong. Through an analysis of interview data with 17 men in Hong Kong, we contend that this new value with regard to what is meant by sexually attractive in Hong Kong is closely related to the changing class structure and cultural trends with regard to femininity. As this paper will show, the contradictory terms inherent in the identity formation of the new middle class in 1980s' Hong Kong explains why many new middle class young men would identify with Japan in general and Japanese culture in particular as a symbol of their new identity. The resulting submersion in Japanese culture in turn allows them to find favour with the "cute and gentle" female ideal which has been available to them since the 1980s.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF JAPANESE AVS

Japanese AVs represent a kind of softcore pornography that took shape in Japan in the early 1980s. Historically, Japanese AVs are said to derive from *pinku eiga* (pink movies) and *binibon* (plastic-wrapped books). Pink movies comprise a style of low-budget softcore pornographic film from the 1970s which displayed naked torsos and buttocks (Alexander 2003:156-7), whereas *binibon* is a kind of softcore magazine from the 1980s which portrayed female models in transparent panties with their legs wide open (Natsuhara 1995:167).

Since the mid-1970s when the market for pink movies declined, pink movie makers began to put their movies in various motels across the country as "videotape" programmes to make up for the decline in theatre profits (Inoue 2002:14). This was arguably the "prototype" of Japanese AV, though it had not yet been called so (ibid.). Japanese AV had become an established form of pornography in Japan in the early

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1980s when the ownership of VCRs became widespread in Japan. Since their first appearance in the early 1970s, family-use video recorders gave rise to a new mode of pornography use (Inoue 2002:16), which offered cheaper prices, privacy and greater peace of mind which were otherwise impossible in public cinemas (Tora 1998b:28). By the mid-1980s, AVs had almost completely replaced the pink movie; and the largest pink movie maker closed in 1988 (Alexander 2003: 159). This success attracted *binibon* publishers to tap into the lucrative AV business (Natsuhara 1995:175). Many major AV makers were former *binibon* publishers, who brought characteristics of *binibon* to AVs and employed former *binibon* models as AV actresses (Suitsu 1998a:2) such that some of their early Japanese AVs were called "moving" (*ugoku*) *binibon* (Nishino et al 1999:12).

In early 1983, the Nihon Ethics of Video Association (hereafter NEVA), a self-regulatory body established in 1977, officially released the operational regulations for adult video rental services, prescribing that the genital areas including pubic hair be mosaicked out in all Japanese AVs (Nishino et al 1999:13).[1] By the end of 1983, the number of AV makers had increased to over 50, and the annual number of AVs endorsed by the NEVA exceeded 1,000 titles (Nishino et al 1999:13), with an estimated monetary value of ¥100 million (US$1 million) for that year (Suitsu 1998a:3).

Japanese AVs have two major styles of production: *tantai* AV and *kikaku* AV (Suitsu 1998a:2). *Tantai* refers to the style of production that employs a single actress. Usually she has a very nice face and figure, and is the key female featured throughout the whole video. For this reason, the term *tantai* often links with *bishōjo* (beautiful young woman), a prototypical genre in the Japanese AV industry, because being a beautiful young woman is the basic requirement for a *tantai* actress. *Bishōjo* often features the actress in a naive way, and later in the "courtly and decent" way (Yau & Wong 2008:35). *Kikaku*, by contrast, emphasises context and story line and there may be many actresses in the same video. In the 1990s, there were roughly 20 themes in *kikaku* videos, such as rape, sadomasochism, wives, nymphomaniacs, elderly women, huge breasts, incest etc. The images of women portrayed in *kikaku* AVs are very

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diverse and multivalent (Fujiki 1998a:152).

However, the AV market in Japan entered a deep recession in the early 1990s (Suitsu 1998a:6). In 1991, sales dropped across the board. Almost half of the rental shops went out of business and many makers went bankrupt as well (ibid.:7). The sale of *tantai bishōjo* AVs, which had been dominating the market until then, dropped sharply and most of the makers switched to the production of *kikaku* AVs. By the early 1990s, *tantai* AVs constituted only 30% of the whole market, while the remaining 70% was taken up by *kikaku* AVs (Azuma 1998:97). This, as many Japanese commentators have contended, was due to the fact the *bishōjo* genre could no longer satisfy the diversifying taste of Japanese viewers (Suitsu 1998a:8).

Yet *kikaku* AV's share of the adult video market in Japan has gradually diminished since the mid-1990s, as too many videos were being produced, thus saturating the market (Suitsu 1998a:8). It is against this background that non-mainstream AVs, which are unsupervised by the NEVA and thus known locally as "indie movies"[2] (the truncated term for independence), began to take root in the Japanese AV industry. Indie movies not only departed from the mainstream AVs by stressing "individuality," but also contravened the NEVA's regulations in that they showed pubic hair and used semi-transparent mosaic, to the effect that genitalia were partially visible. As fully mosaicked Japanese AVs were produced for rental service, indie movies makers ventured into sales and, for this reason, their videos came to be known as sales (i.e. vending) videos, as opposed to the rental videos (Inoue 2002:18). Since then, Japanese AVs can be obtained via rental shops as well as retails shops located throughout Japan.

This brief history reveals that Japanese AVs are fundamentally a kind of softcore pornographic material, as opposed to the hardcore Euro-American pornography.[3] Even though indie movies employ a thinner mosaic, their penetration scenes including views of genitalia are all airbrushed in the same way as the traditional sale AVs. This is especially true for the early *bishōjo* AVs. Some of these movies did not even have coitus scenes (Yasuda & Amamiya 2006:94) and some actresses such as Kobayashi Hitomi, an AV queen, even overtly admitted that they did not have "real"

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sex in the movie (Suitsu 1998:72). In fact, many of the *bishōjo* AVs including the ones we are going to discuss below in fact have their coitus scenes out of the frame.

The same brief history also shows that Japanese AVs are primarily a kind of domestic product with no international outlet. It must be stressed that Japanese AV makers have hesitated to export their products to overseas market (Yasuda & Amamiya 2006:187) and have never exported to Hong Kong. As we shall see shortly, all the Japanese AVs in Hong Kong are of the so-called "pirated" variety.

Finally, this history testifies to the fact that Japanese AVs are a kind of heterogeneous product. While there were 20 genres in the 1990s, we observed 80 genres on a Japanese pornographic website known as Bump Online Shop in 2004. One reason for this explosion in the number of genres is that website operators tend to specify the content of the genre in a very detailed way. For instance, we can find three different genre types given for the singular example of breasts, namely, "Beautiful Breasts," "Big Breasts," and "Bombing Breasts." The emergence of these ever-new genres is in fact a result of the capitalist mode of production which invents distinctions in order to attract new viewers. We need to realise that the invention of ever-new genres is meant to exploit all possible social differentiation by a motivated differentiation of taste (Sahlins 1976:185). Consequently, more and more genres are invented to attract unserved viewers over the course of time. However, the interesting thing is that while the number of genres keeps increasing, the images of women portrayed are nevertheless rather limited.

THE IMAGES OF WOMEN PORTRAYED IN JAPANESE AVS

Three different general images of women can be found in Japanese AVs, namely the girl-next-door, woman as victim, and sexually aggressive woman.

The Girl-next-door

The girl-next-door, one of the most prevalent female images in Japanese AVs, refers to a wholesome and unassuming femininity. The girl in question is often a sweet-tempered girl seen innocuously and daily by men, a great "pal" friend, and a

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sexual virgin, and this image is remarkably prevalent in *bishōjo*, the prototypical genre mentioned above.

In *bishōjo*, women are usually presented in either a cute or a courtly way. In the early 1980s, Cosmo Plan, one of the oldest AV makers developed a label known as "Cosmo *bishōjo*" (Tora 1998c:119). The Cosmo *bishōjo* often appear "in a one-piece cute dress and a straw hat, and with dimpled cheeks" (Tora 1998c:119), or in a sailor suit which is imbued with a sense of amateurishness (Azuma 1998:94). Likewise, Shimamura Yukibiko, an AV director, created a variant label known as "high-class *bishōjo*" in 1989. The high-class *bishōjo* is instead arrayed in splendid and usually white lingerie and at times, even decorated with jewellery crowns, amounting to "*ojōsama*" (upper-class lady) (Azuma 1998:95). Yet, no matter whether these *bishōjo* are cute or courtly, their personalities are after all simple and straightforward.

Other genres which depict women as the-girl-next-door include "*seifuku mono*" (costume play), "*joshi kōsei*" (young schoolgirls), and "*shojo*" (virgin). Costume play refers to the interest in uniform wearing, for instance nurses, flight attendants, waitresses, department store girls, and race queens (Saito 1998b:164). The genre of young schoolgirls portrays a pure, sexually innocent young girl who is the ideal for men, and occassionally a more causal girl who would engage in "*enjokōsai*" (compensated dating), or "*yarikon*" (a sex party), for money or fun (Saito 1998a:162). By contrast, the genre of virgin features the deflowering of virgin girls, who are sexually inexperienced, shy, and helpless. Very often, their "fresh" bodies and youthful skin make them look like "dolls" (Udagawa 1998c:186).

Central to these "girl-living-next-door" styles is the theme of the consumption of virgins or/and sexually inexperienced women. To deflower a virgin certainly signifies the possession of this woman. To have sex with a sexually inexperienced woman means that the man can dominate the whole process. Behind these styles, we can also see the male sexual attraction to Lolita, a style of women who are gorgeous, but sweet and even babyish, and act completely innocent and naïve.

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Woman as Victim

In the genres of "*reipu*" (rape), "*kankin*" (imprisonment), "*chikan*" (a molester on the train), and "*mensetsu*" (interview setting), women are portrayed as victims. In *reipu*, women are invariably made to do fellatio, but while they initially cry in response to the act they soon after become sexually aroused by it (Sawaki 1998a:168). Equally, the genre of *kankin* features the confinement of a woman in a very small, enclosed apartment, where she is raped, and scenes where she is fed like a dog or made to excrete in the sink are standard. Its central aim is to arouse a sexual impulse that is obtained through the control of women (Udagawa 1998a: 170-171).

The practice of men groping women on trains, known as *chikan* (a sexual molester), is common in AVs, just as it is rampant in real-life Japan. An anonymous assailant is pushed together with other people just like him, hiding their faces in pornographic comics, while taking advantage of the stifling congestion to molest hapless young OLs (office ladies) or school girls, who are too meek to protest (Udagawa 1998b:180). Similarly, the *mensetsu* (interview setting) refers to the idea of sexually violating women who wish to star in AVs. These videos are set in a real office space where a girl-applicant is brought for the ostensible purpose of an interview. What follows then is that she will be suddenly pushed onto the sofa by the male-interviewer, and forced to have sex with the latter on the desk, at which he usually has to answer business phone calls (Kurata 1998:188). Both of the genres are characterized by the temptation of some men to control and humiliate women.

The above genres show one consistent pattern: women are portrayed as victims of patriarchal dominance and their misfortunes are unavoidable. More crucially, these genres deliver an important message to male viewers that even should women resist, they will eventually succumb to their bodily pleasure and the male mistreatment.

Sexually Aggressive Woman

The genres of "*hitozuma*" (wife), "*gibo*" (foster mother), "*kifujin*" (noblewoman), and "*jukujo*" (mature women) describe the excessive sexual desires of the adult, mature woman. The attractive nature of these genres lies in the aspect of a

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"change" in these mature women, from being reserved to sexually aroused (Hanii 1998:176).

Another genre which represents women as sexually aggressive is "*chijo*" (female molester) which refers to the sexual seduction of men by flirty girls. Here, these female molesters are similar to the Western femme fatale, who ensnares men in public places such as toilets, offices, and streets in the city in bonds of irresistible desire, often leading men to "fall" (Sawaki 1998b:178).

Bearing a resemblance to *chijo* but not exactly of the same fashion is a genre called "*kateinai sōkan*" (family incest). On the surface, family incest seems to portray women (mothers, sisters, or daughters) as victims of patrilineal desires. A deeper look into it, however, reveals that these women are active participants who, for whatever reason, desire their family members in the first place (Fujiki 1998b:172).

Inherent in the above genres is the insatiable desire of women. No matter what social categories they occupy (be they young girls, wives, married women or middle-aged women), they uniformly have strong carnal desires. Once their desires are stirred up, they will be driven into various amatory adventures and have their desires satisfied at all costs.

Our male informants, as will be shown below, invariably identified with the girl-next-door image, and in particular the *tantai bishōjo*. More crucially, they even conflate this genre with Japanese AVs as a whole. How can this possible? But now let us first examine how Japanese AVs made their inroads into Hong Kong during the 1990s.

JAPANESE AVS COME TO HONG KONG

In Hong Kong, Japanese AVs take the form of video CD (VCD). It must be noted that "Japanese pornographic VCDs" do not exist in Japan. Created in 1993 by Philips and Sony, VCD is a standard digital format for recording motion pictures on compact discs (Wang & Zhu 2003:108). However, Philips and Sony were reluctant to promote VCD, because from the outset they were well aware of the pending arrival of

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the high-density DVD and the threat it would bring to the VCD (Wang & Zhu 2003:108). While VCD has never gained a foothold in the United States, Europe, and Japan, it is very popular throughout East Asia due to its ease of duplication and the negligible cost of the media. When Japanese AVs were coming to Hong Kong in the late 1990s, the change of media from videotape to VCD was necessary for two reasons. First, VCD had already overtaken "tape videos" to become the dominant media form in Hong Kong during the 1990s and the cost of a VCD player is extremely cheap. The second reason is cost reduction. Since VCDs are lighter and more compact than videotapes, the transportation and storage cost will be greatly reduced when smuggling such materials into Hong Kong (Yau 2001:29).

The Japanese VCDs distributed and sold in Hong Kong are "*douban*" (pirated) versions (Yoshida 1998:136), and many pirated Japanese pornographic VCDs circulated in East Asia are hardcore (i.e. without mosaic). While most of these pirated versions of Japanese AVs came from the underground Japanese AV industry, some came from "unedited" (i.e. genitalia have not yet been airbrushed) master videotapes sent out by AV producers to AV companies for inspection and editing. In Japan, these unedited versions of the legal AVs are referred to as a "leak-outs" (Nishino 1999:168). These leak-out versions often result from the bankruptcy of AV companies when employees take these unedited master tapes to make up for their remunerations or retirement compensation (Nishino 1999:170). Alternatively, employees might steal these unedited master tapes with the intention to sell them and supplement their income (ibid:170). For whatever reasons, these videos leaked into the market and were further sold to interested parties abroad (Yau 2001:29).

Making and selling *douban* versions of Japanese adult videos is illegal but very profitable in Hong Kong. In 1999, the daily sale of pirated versions of Japanese AVs in Hong Kong, according to a local magazine, was estimated to be around HK$810,000 (US$100,000) and the daily net profit could reach as high as HK$610,000 (US$76,250) (Lee 1999:16). The attractive daily net profit is no doubt the main incentive for triad members to take the risk of producing illegal adult VCDs. Many triad members manufacture VCDs of the *douban* version of adult videos from

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Japan, Europe, and the U.S. in mainland China and Southeast Asia and smuggle the finished products into Hong Kong. Triad members then distribute these pirated VCDs to wholesalers – although they, in many cases, are simultaneously the wholesalers – and in turn the retailers. The number of pirated Japanese pornographic VCDs circulated in Hong Kong is estimated to have reached 3 billion discs in 1998 (Yoshida 1998:137).

In the mid-1990s, when retailers started to sell Japanese pornographic VCDs, they did so in the form of street stalls (Wong 1999:1). Gradually, retailers moved their business into small shopping centres, which have recently been developed into major shopping venues for Japanese popular cultural items such as comics, TV game software, fashion magazines, and so on. This development occurred during the boom of Japanese popular cultural products, which emerged in the 1990s. All these small shopping malls are located in the major retail areas of the Kowloon peninsula, which are usually flooded with young shoppers, especially during weekends.

According to the aforementioned local magazine, there were roughly 90 retail shops that were exclusively selling Japanese pornographic VCDs in four major shopping malls in the Kowloon peninsula in 1999 (Lee 1999:14, 16). Management of these retail shops takes three forms. First, the wholesaler may employ drug addicts to run the shops as "owners." However, these managers only receive about HK$200 (US$25) as their daily salary, and therefore almost all of the profit goes to the mastermind. The advantage of this type of undertaking is that if the Hong Kong police come to search the shop, it is these drug addicts, rather than the masterminds, who will be arrested. Second, the retailer may borrow his capital from the wholesaler and they split the profits, according to a certain ratio previously agreed upon by both parties. Finally, the retailer may fund the operation by himself and source the merchandise from wholesalers (Lee 1999:14-5).

At the beginning, the wholesalers-cum-makers (mainly triad members) were unable to determine which videos should be copied, either because they did not know the "taste" of Hong Kong consumers, or because their language skills prevented them from understanding the content. They just copied whatever was available to them; i.e.

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they dubbed both the *tantai* and *kikaku* videos (Wong 1999:2). However, the *kikaku* AVs, it will be recalled, had already taken over the *tantai bishōjo* AVs as the dominant form, making up 70% of the whole AV productions from the early 1990s. Logically, the wholesalers in Hong Kong should have copied more *kikaku* than *tantai bishōjo* AVs, because more *kikaku* AVs were available to them. However, the fact that Hong Kong viewers, as we shall see shortly, still go for the *bishōjo* genre rather than *kikaku* AVs, suggests that their embrace of the *bishōjo* genre can hardly result from a case where it is the most popular one in Japan and thus the easiest to gain access to. In order to attract customers, the wholesalers also made their own covers for the VCDs. However, either because they did not understand Japanese, or simply because they did not bother to know whether the cover matched the content of the VCDs, most of the covers had nothing to do with the content. In other words, the wholesalers did not have a clear strategy to market Japanese pornographic VCDs in Hong Kong (Wong 1999:2).

However, as Hong Kong consumers gradually developed their own "taste" in Japanese pornographic VCDs in the mid-1990s, wholesalers became better informed about which videos should be copied. For example, when Hong Kong consumers became "crazy" about a Japanese AV actress, Matsuzaka Kimiko,[4] wholesalers then not only intentionally copied a whole set of her videos to sell in Hong Kong, but also specifically designed covers for her VCDs (Wong 1999:3). In other words, consumer "taste" played a role in the process of production, distribution, advertising and packaging of Japanese pornographic VCDs in Hong Kong. But what are the consumer's tastes?

THE CONSUMER "TASTE" OF HONG KONG VIEWERS

In order to better understand the consumer taste of Hong Kong viewers, one of the authors conducted intensive in-depth interviews with 17 Hong Kong men between April 1999 and June 2000 (Table 1). It must be added that interviews were also conducted with Hong Kong women. However, most of these women reported that they were not interested in pornography. Or else, they had no clear idea of

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pornography, because they had no experience in watching it. Even those who reported watching pornography occasionally could hardly be counted because they used pornography with their boyfriends rather than on their own. Most of them therefore could not tell why and what kind of pornography they watched, because they did so according to the likes and dislikes of their boyfriends. In other words, their consumption of pornography is heavily mediated by men. This gender difference in pornography use is also supported by similar research conducted by the same author in Taiwan. That research found that women in Taiwan use pornography simply because their boyfriends/husbands want them to watch.[5] A recent study on the pornography use among Danish adults reported that men and women vary widely in the context for pornography use and preference in pornographic materials (Hald 2006:577). Given that men and women differ prevalently in pornography use and consumption patterns, it is methodologically sound to study men and women separately. The current study deals primarily with the male use of pornography, and another study, which is already underway, will deal with female use of pornography.

Informants were primarily solicited through the author's personal network. Many of them are the author's friends, co-workers, and former university classmates. Getting people to be interviewed on this topic is always difficult because people might reject simply due to shyness, or reluctance to disclose their pornography use and consumption patterns. We realise that gathering informants via one's own personal network could produce a bias by ending up with a fairly homogenous group of informants. Given that the author herself is a university graduate and was reading for her MPhil's degree at that time, it is no surprise that the informants she solicited might also have fairly high educational levels. However, this bias turns out to be an advantage because this paper focuses precisely on the consumption tastes of men from the newly formed middle class in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, the author deliberately did not take people whose occupations are too similar, in an effort to make sure that the sample can be as diversified in occupation as possible. As Table 1 shows, informants in this study are the younger cohort born between the late 1960s and late 1970s. They are relatively better educated with more than half of them having university qualifications, and many of them work in the service sector rather

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than the manufacturing sector. Finally, these 17 men must be thanked for their generosity and candidness in sharing with the author their private lives, and many sensitive secrets. The fact that most of them knew the author for years and that they regarded the author as a "harmless" female researcher is one of the main factors contributing to their willingness to disclose sensitive information.[6]

All of the interviews were all done face to face, recorded and later transcribed. Interviews with each individual informant normally ran up to 2 hours. In addition to asking their biographical backgrounds, our interviews had three major focuses, namely their preference between Japanese AV and Euro-American pornography, their favourite Japanese AV genre(s), and finally their ideal sexual woman.

Table 1: Our 17 male informants[7]

IN	Name	Age	Education[8]	Occupation	Date	Place
1	Angus	22	Undergraduate	Student	Jun 15, 2000	UK
2	Ah Him	23	Postgraduate	Student	May 5, 2000	UK
3	Ah Po	24	University graduate	Sales engineer	Apr 10, 2000	Hong Kong
4	Carl	26	Form 5 graduate	Clerk	Dec 27, 1999	Hong Kong
5	Charles	28	Form 7 graduate	Insurance sales	Dec 18, 1999	Hong Kong
6	Chris	29	University graduate	Business manager	Apr 7, 2000	Hong Kong
7	Davy	23	University graduate	Teacher	Jan 20, 2000	Hong Kong
8	Eddie	28	Senior High School	Salesman	Apr 18, 2000	Hong Kong
9	Eric	30	Form 5 graduate	Salesman	Apr 20, 1999	Hong Kong
10	Francis	32	Form 5 graduate	Cleaning worker	Dec 15, 1999	Hong Kong
11	Jacky	21	Undergraduate	Student	Dec 19, 1999	Hong Kong
12	Joe	29	Form 7 graduate	Merchandiser	Apr 28, 1999	Hong Kong
13	Kelvin	29	Form 7 graduate	Hair dresser	Apr 19, 2000	Hong Kong
14	Matthew	26	University graduate	Insurance sales	Apr 23, 2000	Hong Kong
15	Samuel	24	University graduate	Government officer	Apr 16, 2000	Hong Kong
16	Simon	24	Postgraduate	Student	Dec 29, 1999	Hong Kong
17	Stanley	25	University graduate	Salesman	Apr 16, 2000	Hong Kong

With regard to the first major focus, almost all of our informants reported that they prefer Japanese AVs to Western pornography. Their familiarity with "yellow" skinned actresses, Asian faces, tiny figures, Chinese femininity, and their dislike of sexually aggressive women in Western pornography are the most commonly given reasons. In addition, some regarded Western pornography very "coarse." Some others thought that Euro-American pornography is defiantly vulgar and corporeal. Still

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others thought that the implanted breasts and body piercings commonly found among Western actresses served only to turn them off, because these body modifications pointed to their sexual autonomy or agency and thus threatened to effeminate them as men. However, one informant reported that watching Western pornography and actresses bolstered his "Asian male identity." He playfully stated that he could "conquer" not only Asian women, but also Western women.

For the Japanese AV genre itself, 14 out of the 17 informants show a preference for *tantai bishōjo* AVs. As expected, only a few of them were aware of the difference between *tantai* and *kikaku* AVs, however, they invariably reported that they favour "*mei siu neui*" (i.e. *bishōjo* as pronounced in Cantonese), "OL," "*hok sang*" (i.e. students), or "*dzai fau siu neui*" (i.e. costume play). Their taste for these cute women can be further supported by the unprecedented boom of pornographic and outré films in Hong Kong in the late 1990s which employed not only Japanese AV girls but also Japanese sexual elements (Ng 2008:157). Notable examples are the "the seduction of uniform series" directed by Wong Jing, a famous local filmmaker whose style is often seen as loud and crass.

Their taste for the *bishōjo* genre is also reflected in their own "criteria" for choosing an AV movie. Fifteen out of the 17 informants reported that the basic criterion for choosing AVs is that the actress must be pretty, while 14 of them thought that having a good figure is imperative. In more concrete terms, eight out of 17 informants specified that the actress must be "sweet" (*ho ai*), while the rest said that the actress must look "*shun*" (pure), "*shun ching*" (pure, naïve and uncomplicated) or *gwaai* (good-natured). Having a sweet voice, especially the sort that Westerners would typically regard as infantile or babyish, is another important criterion. Interestingly, their criteria precisely match those female images portrayed in the *bishōjo* movies.

By contrast, 13 out of the 17 informants reported that they do not like videos involving sadomasochism, sexual molestation or rape because the violence directed at women made them uncomfortable. Further, 14 of them reported that they do not like sexually aggressive women, such as female sexual molesters, nymphomaniacs,

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wives, mature women, and elder women. Their logic for disliking these sexually aggressive women is similar to that which they apply to Western pornography, because they appear "cheap"[9] and the female aggressiveness serves only to threaten their male identity and thus dampen their desires.

When asked what their ideal sexual woman is, most of our informants failed to give us a precise answer. Some explained that they did not know how to articulate it even though they had it in their mind; others thought that it was impossible to describe the quality of an ideal sexual woman in words, because it is just a "feeling." However, when asked which AV actress or movie star serves to represent their ideal, 12 out of the 17 pointed to Yuki Maiko and claimed that the reason for citing her is due to her *dak e* (cuteness), and most crucially, her *shun ching*. Some of them explained that in general almost all Japanese AV actresses have a good figure, but some look "cheap" or "vulgar" (in the sense that they desire sex in a lascivious way). However, they argued that Yuki Maiko is an exception, as one noted, "Yuki Maiko looks very *shun ching* and sweet, especially in her early AVs; she is so cute, like a schoolgirl, but she is such a beauty and her figure is just perfect." In addition to Yuki Maiko, our male informants reported that they also find Ozawa Madoka, Kanezawa Bunko, Kawashima Azumi, and Asaoka Mirei – all are *bishōjo* actresses – sexually attractive. The popularity of the *bishōjo* genre among men in Hong Kong even caused many of our informants to conflate this genre with Japanese AVs as a whole. When asked whether he watched Japanese AVs in general, one of our informants replied: "you mean those *mei siu neui* porn movies, right?"

The above ethnographic data reveal that a process of selection was underway among our informants. Our informants did not uniformly absorb all kinds of pornography. When presented with American pornography and Japanese AVs, they first ruled out the former because they regarded it as aggressive, coarse, bawdy, and self-effeminising. Even for the latter, our informants did not accept all, but rather selectively identified with *tantai bishōjo* to the exclusion of *kikaku* AVs. *Kikaku* AVs such as SM, rape, sexual molestation, mature women, nymphomaniacs, and old women were variously rejected for being vulgarly aggressive, sexually unpromising,

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and inducing uncomfortable feelings, a logic similar to their distaste for Western pornography. That is to say, the "sweet and gentle femininity" of women appears more attractive to our informants than the images of "women as victim" and "sexually aggressive woman."

Findings also reveal that among many *tantai bishōjo* actresses known to Hong Kong viewers, Yuki Maiko is by far the most popular one with our informants. Almost all of them are familiar with her, and many of them are her "loyal" fans. While they could not articulate the image of their ideal sexual woman, most cite Yuki Maiko as the near-equivalent. They thought that Yuki Maiko is "sweet," "*shun ching*," "small," "naïve," and pretty and that is why they continue to watch her VCDs. It is no wonder that a Japanese AV commentator remarks, "the pornographic media and market in Hong Kong is by and large dominated by Japanese *bishōjo* actresses" (Yoshida 1998:137).

The popularity of Yuki Maiko, as we shall see in the sections that follow, is not confined to our 17 male informants. The sensational popularity of Yuki Maiko in the late 1990s' in Hong Kong even allowed her to re-debut in the Japanese AV industry in 1998, making a few more AVs in which she yet again stars as a cute and innocent girl. Seen in this way, it is methodologically sound to examine her pornographic VCDs to see what images *tantai bishōjo* signify, and how these images help account for her immense popularity in Hong Kong in the late 1990s.

YUKI MAIKO AND HER PORNOGRAPHIC VCDS

Given the popularity of Yuki Maiko among Hong Kong viewers, in this section, we analyse nine different pornographic VCDs featuring Yuki Maiko, which were (re)produced at different times by different local illegal wholesalers (Table 2), in order to explain what a *bishōjo* AV is and show what images of women Yuki Maiko represents in her VCDs. Note that in the process of reproducing her AVs into VCDs, local illegal wholesalers substantially revised the titles and sometimes even gave her movies completely new and often vulgar titles. In addition, given the strict media censorship in Hong Kong, illegal wholesalers often edited out her entire lower body

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and thus all coital scenes in order to avoid prosecution. If hardcore scenes are unavailable, what then are the attractive features of these pornographic VCDs?

Table 2: The pirated pornographic VCDs of Yuki Maiko

Title of the VCDs	Year
Yuki Maiko: Loss of Virginity (*Xishu wuzi zhunian shizhuji*)	1996
Yuki Maiko: Breakage of Hymen (*Xishu wuzi poguaji*)	1996
Yuki Maiko: Blow Job (Xishu wuzi zhi yichui tongzhang)	1996
Yuki Maiko: The Sexual School Life (*Xishu wuzi Final,*)	1997
Yuki Maiko: Hooker Princess (*Xishu wuzi zhi huoshang jiayou*)	1997
Yuki Maiko: New Hamaccyo Banana (Xishu wuzi chunu shengchungong)	1997
Yuki Maiko: Treasure (Xishu wuzi mizani)	1998
The Beauty of Yuki Maiko(Xishu wuzi zhi tianzi guose)	1998
Yuki Maiko: Uniform Idol (*Xishu wuzi zhifu*)	1998



Fig 1 & 2: The Covers of *Loss of Virginity* and *Blow Job*

Yuki Maiko is a prolific AV actress, starring in nine videos in her rather brief AV career, from 1995 to 1996.[10] Seven of her movies belonged to the label of "Tiffany" (a high-class *bishōjo* as directed by Shimamura) while the remaining two belonged to Cosmo Plan.[11] That is to say, all her videos are *bishōjo* AVs. In her videos, she is thus often ornamented with beautiful basque or otherwise extremely innocent underwear; her hair is neatly combed and styled; her face is beautifully made up, and sometimes even decorated with a bejewelled crown, and she is surrounded by elaborately

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gorgeous settings. Even though there are slight differences in the style of one from another, six out of our nine sample VCDs contain similar introductory scenes.

For example, in the introductory scene of *Loss of Virginity*, Yuki Maiko is pictured wearing a white basque, with white suspender-belts and a pair of red high-heels. In moving to the bed by her side, she stares innocently at the camera. Now lying on the bed, while she posits herself in some inviting positions, she nonetheless portrays herself in a naïve and youthful fashion by grinning at and making an air-kiss to the camera. This introductory sequence and Yuki Maiko's characteristic behaviour within it seem to be a common occurrence in her other videos.

After a brief introduction, the camera moves back to the story. Usually at this point Yuki Maiko is fully dressed either in childish clothes or in a swimsuit. As the story unfolds, she then stands naked or is shown in partially removed underwear for a while, which is then followed by sexual intercourse. In her VCDs, there are at least two sex scenes.

A standard part of all her VCD's is the sex scene that shows the male character performing a prolonged nipple-sucking on the "innocent" Yuki Maiko, who lies passively on the bed. She will be often asked whether she feels good, or else she will be calmed and told that it will not hurt. Rubbing her vagina over her panties is another common motif in her VCDs. She will be asked or encouraged to do this by herself, and will abide by shyly rubbing her vagina, with the guidance and help of the male character. While the use of cunnilingus and fellatio exists, fellatio is relatively rare in her early productions. As a whole, cunnilingus performed by the male characters prevails in all of her VCDs. Moreover, the duration of foreplay is considerably longer than that of penetration. In our sample VCDs, the average duration of foreplay is about 5.26 minutes long, while that of sexual intercourse lasts only 2.48 minutes. Foreplay in general refers to mutual sexual activities between partners, but in the foreplay of Yuki Maiko's VCDs, it is almost always the male characters who perform, while she just remains passive and extremely shy – she does not do anything, except waiting to be touched, groped, and kissed.

Her passivity is further highlighted by the predominant use of the missionary

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position. While our VCDs occasionally display Yuki Maiko "on the top," it is still the male actors who control the movement from below. In the sample VCDs, only one out of 27 sex scenes portrays Yuki Maiko as a sexually forward or aggressive woman, who takes off the actor's clothes or putting his penis in her vagina.

The sexual intercourse in her VCDs always ends with coitus interruptus and male ejaculations either on her breasts or somewhere else on her body. External ejaculation is common in all pornographic videos, since it signifies the ultimate climax for men and for each heterosexual sex act represented. It is also significant for the viewer to see that orgasm has really taken place. Another standard feature is that Yuki Maiko experiences an orgasm almost every time. Her orgasm even coincides with the male ejaculation, and she almost always plays with the semen after the ejaculation of the male actor.

At the end of these VCDs, there are often monologues in which Yuki Maiko is shown dressing in a school uniform or childish clothes. She ends her movie by saying "Thank you for viewing this video" or "I hope you can continue to support me in the future."

We can see from the above brief sketch that Yuki Maiko is often portrayed as a passive, innocent recipient who is however sexual and orgasmic. We can identify seven important elements in her VCDs, which can arguably be applied to other typical *bishōjo* AVs and account for their popularity in Hong Kong. The first is childishness. Yuki Maiko wears a sailor school uniform in nearly every VCD. Childish clothing and behaviours, like pulling wide-eyed silly faces and sticking out her tongue, are commonplace in her VCDs. In *Breakage of Hymen*, she is presented in overwhelmingly colourful fluffy dresses. In her later VCDs, her association with childishness is lessened, yet she is still presented as a "cute" and "sweet" woman.

The second element is virginal shyness. In her early productions, Yuki Maiko is closely associated with qualities such as shy, naïve, innocent, and sexually inexperienced. In many of her VCDs such as *Treasure*, *Sexual School Life* and *Breakage of Hymen*, her underwear is predominantly white in colour. At times, she even wears a sports bra, which speaks to her sexual inexperience. The frequent

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appearance of white lingerie or a sports bra in her VCDs, in a sense, points to the obsession that Japanese men have with the ideas of female virginity and purity.

Thirdly, Yuki Maiko's image of being cute is a recurrent theme throughout her videos. Typical presentations include an infantile way of speaking and puerile facial expressions. For instance, in *Sexual School Life* and *Hooker Prince*, she always smiles and whispers with dewy-eyed innocence. It is crucial to note that her image of being cute is not only constructed in the main content of the VCDs, but is also portrayed outside of this. For example, in the epilogue of *Loss of Virginity* where she is supposed to act herself, she is still highly associated with the fashion of making silly faces, pulling her eyes apart, pushing her blouse up to reveal her breasts, making fun of others or behaving foolishly. In the epilogue of *Blow Job*, Yuki Maiko playfully paints her front teeth with black ink. This sense of cuteness is exceptionally prevalent in her early productions. It is of interest to note that being "*kawaii*" (cute) is one of the indispensable female elements in Japanese society. Hence, we find that many Japanese young girls try to become "*burikko*" (fake innocent, flirtatiously childlike) as they exhibit high-pitched voices and always squeal, "*kawaii*!" in a cute manner (Kinsella 1995; White 1994:186).

Fourthly, in *The New Hamaccyo Banana*, Yuki Maiko is featured as a wilful young girl who is bored with her life. She wants to have a boyfriend in order to kill time. One day she invites Mr. Kato to her place as a play-partner. They play the role game of "mother and infant," by dressing Mr. Kato in an infant's diaper. She then asks the Kato-infant to imitate a baby sucking her breast. Suddenly Mr. Kato becomes fed up with all her requests and decides to leave. Yuki Maiko then regrets what she has done and apologises to Mr. Kato: *Gomennasai wagamama deshita* (Sorry! I have been very wilful!). In Japan, *wagamama* is a term mainly used to describe spoiled people, especially young women who are often considered childish and irresponsible. Similarly, in *Loss of Virginity*, there is a monologue in the middle of the video where Yuki Maiko is pictured wearing a sailor's uniform and she admits that she is *wagamama*. Yet *wagamama* is not considered totally negative. To a certain extent, many Japanese middle-aged men find a *wagamama* young woman sexually

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attractive, especially since this spoiled teenager image is often pictured as being full of freshness and innocence.

The fifth element is obedience. In *Hooker Princess*, Yuki Maiko is asked by the male actor to perform fellatio, and even though she does not want to, saying she is "*tsukareta*!" (I'm tired!), she acquiesces and finally performs fellatio for him. Within her VCDs, Yuki Maiko is always portrayed as a dutiful woman.

Sex is enjoyable in Yuki Maiko's VCDs. "*Soko*" (that place, the genitalia of the actress), "*dame itchau*" (no...! It comes!), "*ikuiku*" (it is coming!) and "*kimochi ii"* (good feeling!) all represent her standard expressions. She often says these phrases as she groans and moans. When the actor ejaculates on her body, she expresses her feeling by saying "*ikuiku kimochi ii*" (literally this means "orgasm comes and it is a good feeling")

Finally, sex taboos are more relaxed in Yuki Maiko's VCDs. In *Blow Job*, a man called Mr. Sato arrives at the hotel where Yuki Maiko works and pretends to be the hotel inspector in the area. In order to please this man, Yuki Maiko uses her body in exchange for a good evaluation. Similarly, in *Loss of Virginity*, being unable to stand loneliness, Yuki Maiko calls her male friends to become her temporary boyfriends. Within this framework, sex is not something that needs to be hidden, restrained, or constrained by cultural morals.

We can see as this section has just showed that Yuki Maiko, whom our male informants tend to identify with, is childish, virginally shy, cute, wilful, and obedient, but ultimately approachable and open. In what follows, we shall show that this set of images embodied by Yuki Maiko in her pornographic VCDs is in fact very similar to the emerging sexual ideal of Hong Kong men since the mid-1990s, and for this very reason, we should not be surprised that many men in Hong Kong found favour with Yuki Maiko during the 1990s.

A NEW SEXUAL IDEAL: SEXUAL-CUM-INNOCENT

As the above descriptions illustrate, Yuki Maiko has portrayed a wide array of

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"feminine" images in her VCDs, namely childish, virginally shy, cute, wilful, and obedient. However, she is also presented as sexually ready and open, as she always enjoys sex without any guilty feeling. This female image in which Yuki Maiko appears approachable but ultimately passive departs tremendously from the previous local porn actresses. Local pornography in the 1960s and 1970s was commonly called as "*haam pin*" (literally, salty movie; pornographic movie). Since the portrayal of genitals was strictly prohibited, porn actresses at that time were often portrayed as coquettish, flirtatious, and sexually aggressive, in order to compensate for the fact that actual sexual intercourse was absent. For instance, Hu Chin, a porn queen in the 1970s, is famous for her coquettishness and her seductive gestures. In the so-called nude scenes, she was in fact substituted by a stand-in and all she needed to do was to appear "coquettish" and groan "aggressively" (Hung 2007). Likewise, Tien Lie is famous for her sexy "*fengyan*" (phoenix eyes) and Shaw Yinyin is well-known for her "*moumei*" (dainty and charming) on-screen presentation. Since most of these porn actresses did not offer any real sex scenes in the movies, they were expected to "act out" their "lasciviousness" and for that reason were recognised as having higher acting skills than the latter Category III film porn actresses (Yeh 1997: 195).

Category III films are products of the Hong Kong government's introduction of a film ratings system in 1988 which classifies films into a three-tier system. Since then, "Category III film" has become an umbrella term for pornographic and generally outré films in Hong Kong. While considered graphic in local society, these films are at best on par with movies rated "R" or "NC17" in the United States but not with those marked "XXX." Yip Ji-mei is one of the earliest actresses who achieved fame via starring in Category III films. *Erotic Ghost Story* (1990) was a breakthrough film for Yip Ji-mei, who went on to have a career starring in similarly sexy roles such as *Sex and Zen* (1991), garnering a cult following of fans in the process. Both of these films enjoyed surprising box office success in Hong Kong, grossing over HK$ 10 million and 30 million dollars respectively (Ng 2008: 154).

While Yip Ji-mei became one of the most popular actresses in Hong Kong and many other parts of Asia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, she reported in an

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interview in 2006 that there were not many memorable roles during her acting career, because apart from her lithe frame and disproportionally big breasts, she was after all portrayed as "vulgar, naughty, and debased" to add bawdy humour to the movies (Xinhuanet 2006).

However, what was even more sensational during the early 1990s was the debut of Yip Yuk-hing. Yip Yuk-hing was the second runner up for the 1985 Miss Asia Pageant. While the Miss Asia Pageant is commonly regarded as secondary to the Miss Hong Kong Pageant, winners of the former are still seen as wholesome, dignified, educated, and elegant in the eyes of many Hong Kong people. Yip challenged this mainstream value by starring in adult films. Together with the fact that she came from a rather well-off family, her debut in the Category III film *Take Me* (1991) caused a great sensation in Hong Kong. Within the same year, she starred in two more Category III films, *Pretty Woman* (1991) and *Hidden Desire* (1991). All three films were huge commercial successes, establishing Yip Yuk-hing as the Category III film queen in Hong Kong (Wang 1995:225). However, she differed from previous porn actresses in that she managed to make a quick transition from Category III film into mainstream entertainment (Yeh 1997:210). Between 1992 and 1997, she starred in more than twenty mainstream movies and many of them were critically acclaimed in the Hong Kong film market. She was even nominated for the Best Actress and the Best Supporting Actress for her in roles in *A Roof in a View* (1993) and *Red Rose and White Rose* (1994) in the Gold Horse Film Awards (Yeh 1997:210). In 1996, she made a surprising decision to retire from the entertainment industry entirely and married Wu Siu-ming, a rich businessman based in the United States.

Her phenomenal success has given rise to a new trend in Hong Kong where mainstream actresses attempt to achieve fame through temporary appearances in Category III films. For instance, Yau Yuet-ching, the winner of the 1987 Miss Asia Pageant made her debut in the Category III films *Friday Gigolo* (1992) and *I Love Miss Fox* (1993) (HKMDB). Chan Bo-lin, who entered the 1990 Miss Asia Pageant, but failed to place among the winners, also took part in Category III films, such as *Queen of the Underworld* (1991) and *Erotic Ghost Story* III (1992). Obviously, the

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success of these porn actresses lies not just in their beauty, but also in the fact that they are former Miss Asia Pageant contestants (Wang 1995:225). The crucial message is that porn actresses are by no means the so-called "bad" (*wai*) women or women coming from the low-class. As a matter of fact, many of these actresses had rather brief pornography careers. Once they achieved fame or stardom, they retired from the pornography industry by either moving onto the mainstream entertainment industry (Ng 2008:155) or getting married with rich and established businessmen (as Yip Yuk-hing, Lee Lai-chun, and many others did). We can see that, in addition to the sexual-cum-aggressive female ideal, there is a new female image taking shape in Hong Kong since the early 1990s.

This trend underwent a subtle but vital transformation when Yung Hung debuted in Category III films. As the winner of the 1989 Miss Asia Pageant, her debut in the Category III film *Can't Stop My Crazy Love for You* (1993) was a commercial success. However, she soon earned fame for her special temperament and "innocent" outlook after starring in *Chinese Torture Chamber Story* (1994), in which she was portrayed as a "fragile, gentle, and pitiful" woman (Yeh 1997:211). This new female image is even more obvious in the case of Lee Lai-chun. Lee first earned her fame by debuting as a young innocent girl or *yuk neui* (literally jade girl) in *Happy Ghost* (1984). She continued to perform as young teenager in the 1980s until the early 1990s. Although she began to take roles as the main actress in movies such as *Final Victory* (1987) and changed her innocent image by appearing in more daring films such as *Summer Lovers* (1992), her popularity began to wane. In 1993, she made a bold decision to take her clothes off and star in the Category III film *Spirit of Love* (1993), which opened the way for the "*mei siu neui*" (beautiful young woman) trend in Category III films (Yeh 1997: 213). The fact that she had been famed for her the girl-next-door image and genteel outlook made this film a phenomenal success, attracting extensive media coverage not only in Hong Kong but also in Taiwan, mainland China, and Japan (Yeh 1997: 213). In the years that followed, she continued to show her body in *Crazy Love* (1993), *Girls Unbutton* (1994), and *Sex and Zen II* (1996). In 1994, she released her first and only Mandarin album entitled *Naivety* (1994). In 1996, she retired from the entertainment industry as she married Hui Yuen, a famous musician

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in Hong Kong.

Lee's debut in Category III films was significant because it completely overturned mainstream taboos by offering an alternate female ideal: innocent *mei siu neui* with genteel outlook could also be immensely sexual. The combination of these two contradictory images into one, as noted, made her a huge success in many Chinese societies. Seen in this way, the immense popularity of Yuki Maiko in Hong Kong during the late 1990s is arguably the concretisation of this kind of new female ideal there. Of course, we do not mean that the sexual-cum-innocent image embodied by Yuki Maiko is the only female ideal model in Hong Kong. Chan Bo-lin, the abovementioned Category III actress, soon began to star as a femme fatale who is alluring and seductive (Yeh 1997:212). Likewise, Lee Wah-yuet starred as a sexually aggressive nymphomaniac in a number of Category III films between 1992 and 1995, culminating in her self-directed films *Trilogy of Lust* (1995) and *Trilogy of Lust II* (1995) in which she is proclaimed to have had real sexual intercourse. However, the immense popularity Yuki Maiko managed to acquire in Hong Kong during the 1990s points to the concretisation of the sexual-cum-innocent female image among men there.

In the section that follows, we will try to locate our informants in the social structure of Hong Kong to show that the emergence of the new sex ideal embodied by Yuki Maiko is class-specific.

CLASS AND THE NEW SEXUAL IDEAL

As the autograph episode mentioned at the beginning of the chapter shows, many of Yuki Maiko's fans are students or young blue-collar workers in suits. Equally, as we have shown, our male informants are young, aged between 21 and 32. More than half of them attained university qualifications. More importantly, most of them work in the service sector. According to the research done by Lui and Wong (1992), Yuki Maiko's fans appear to be members of the newly formed middle class in Hong Kong.

Lui and Wong (1992) conducted a mobility study in Hong Kong at the beginning

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of the 1990s. Based on the survey data, they constructed a complex seven-tier class scheme, along with a simplified three-tier class version (Table 3). Lui and Wong (1992:50) discovered that more than 60 per cent of the members of the rapidly expanding service classes did not originate from a service class background. In other words, a good number of people in Hong Kong managed to achieve class mobility through education alongside hard work in the past twenty years.

Table 3 Hong Kong's class structure

7-tier Class System	Brief Description	N	%	3-tier Class System
I	Upper Service Class: Higher-grade professionals, administrators and officials, managers in large establishment, larger proprietors	81	8.6	Service
II	Lower Service Class: lower-grade professionals, administrators, higher-grade technicians, managers in small business and industrial establishments, supervisors of non-manual employees	107	11.3	Service
III	Routine non-manual employees in commerce and administration, personal service workers and shop sales personnel	90	9.6	Intermediate
IV	Petty Bourgeoisie: small proprietors, artisans, contractors, with or without employees	132	14	Intermediate
V	Lower-grade technicians, supervisors of manual workers	150	15.9	Intermediate
VI	Skilled manual workers	149	15.8	Working
VII	Semi-skilled and unskilled workers, agricultural workers	234	24.8	Working

Sources: Lui Tai Lok and Thomas W. P., Wong, (1992:30).

Lui and Wong (1992:32) further delineated class-related socio-economic differences in education and housing. Eighty per cent of the service class respondents to their survey had attained upper secondary qualifications or above, with half acquiring tertiary education, while only 18 per cent of working class respondents had achieved secondary education or above. When it came to housing, they found that more than 60 per cent of service class respondents were living in self-contained private housing, while only 43 per cent of the working classes and routine non-manual class resided in private housing. Moreover, 65 per cent of the service classes owned their accommodation, while only 24 to 33 per cent of the working classes and

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routine non-manual class did so (Lui and Wong 1992:33).

Obviously, almost all of our informants would be classified as members of the service or the intermediate class in Lui and Wong's class scheme. Other than Francis, who worked as a cleaning worker, all other informants belong to either Class II (Chris, Davy, and Samuel), or Class III (Ah Po, Carl, Charles, Eddie, Joe, Kelvin, Matthew, and Stanley) – note that Angus, Ah Him, Jacky, and Simon, who were undergraduates or postgraduates at that time, are highly likely to work in the service sector when they graduate from university. In terms of education, seven out of the 17 informants acquired tertiary educations and two even had master's degrees. The rest of them are either Form 7 (upper secondary educations) or Form 5 (secondary educations) graduates. In terms of housing, more than half of them lived in self-contained private or rented apartments. We can therefore conclude that almost all of our informants belong to the emergent middle-class in Hong Kong.

As we can see from the above interview data, our newly formed "middle class" informants often rejected American pornography in favour of Japanese AVs, and in particular the *bishōjo* genre. Recall that their logic for disliking American pornography is that it is coarse, defiantly vulgar, aggressive, corporeal, and effeminising. In fact, this logic can be likewise applied to their switch from the sexual-cum-aggressive to the sexual-cum-innocent female image and hence their ultimate identification with Japanese *bishōjo* AVs in general and Yuki Maiko in particular. That is to say, the reason they dislike American pornography is more or less the same reason they dislike the sexual-cum-aggressive female image because what American pornography embodies, as the above interview data have shown, is exactly a sexually aggressive and coquettish female image. Seen in this way, we might arrive at the following three pairs in parallel:

Table 4: Two Contrasting Female Ideals in Hong Kong

Japanese AVs	American pornography
Sexual-cum-innocent	Sexual-cum-aggressive
Yuki Maiko	Previous Category III film actresses

We might now conclude that the young, educated, middle class cohort of Hong Kong society tend to identify with the sexual-cum-innocent female ideal embodied

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by Japanese AVs in general and Yuki Maiko in particular, because they think that American pornography as well as Category III films are cheap, vulgar, aggressive, and effeminising. If they rejected Category III films, the popular form of pornography among men in Hong Kong during the late 1980s and mid-1990s, as cheap, vulgar, aggressive, and effeminising, it is not unreasonable to say that they did so to mark their class mobility and thus differentiate themselves from their previous working class background.

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS: AN IN-BETWEEN GENERATION

We would contend that Japan in general and Japanese culture in particular is an important symbol of the emergent identity of Hong Kong people. For instance, we (forthcoming 2010) argue in a joint-paper that the image of Yaohan, a Japanese supermarket, as something not quite Chinese or Western, matched the cultural logic of identity formation of the *Heung Gong Yahn* (Hong Kong people) of the new middle class in the 1980s and thus made Yaohan successful in Hong Kong. According to that paper (forthcoming 2010), most of the new middle class were born in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and had grown up in the 1970s. The 1970s is a very important period in modern Hong Kong history since during this decade, Hong Kong society changed rapidly and radically. Incomes and living standards improved considerably, with the result that working class children no longer needed to quit school early and work to support their families. Now, their families could afford to send them to secondary school and even to university. Most would be the first member in their families' history to enter university. Meanwhile, the sectoral shift from manufacturing to finance, trading, and services created opportunities for these well-educated young people to leave the working class and join the service class.

The 1970s also saw the implementation of a series of social policies aimed at improving living standards, such as the Ten Year Housing Programme, initiated under Governor Murray MacLehose, who arrived in 1972. MacLehose also worked to make society fairer. For example, he established the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) to curb the corruption that was a general phenomenon in Hong

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Kong in the 1950s and 1960s. The ICAC proved to be very successful not only in curbing corruption but also in inscribing the British (Western)/modern values of fairness and justice, especially within the new middle class, through its many educational programmes. The new middle class thus absorbed a British (Western)/modern ethos of fairness and social justice, which did not exist in their parents' generation. Nonetheless, they could not completely shed the influence of their parents' Chinese/traditional value system. Consequently, the new middle class developed a worldview that combined their parents' Chinese/traditional/old value system with their Western/modern/new one, which came to constitute the cultural logic of the identity of the new middle class.

THE NEW TASTE AMONG THE MIDDLE CLASS

We would suggest that the identity of the new middle class essentially amounts to that of *Heung Gong Yahn*. For Hong Kong society, its people and various social phenomena are always described in terms of the blend between East and West, between traditional and modern, and between old and new. Evans and Tam (1997: 5) have pointed out that the theme that "Hong Kong is a place where 'East meets West,' but where 'Chinese tradition' still holds sway" has been the way whereby people in Hong Kong commonly construct their identity. As they have observed, "Hong Kong Chinese, when they encounter mainlanders, are able to explain their differences from them by their 'Westerness', when they encounter expatriates they can explain their differences from them by their 'Chineseness'" (ibid.: 5). These observations demonstrate that the identity of *Heung Gong Yahn* lies somewhere between West and East, traditional and modern, and old and new.

Consequently, the new middle class, unlike their parents, did not identify themselves as pure Chinese immigrants who tended to regard Hong Kong as a place of temporary shelter. On the other hand, they were influenced by an ever growing sense of community attachment to Hong Kong and had gradually become suspicious about the unquestioned welcoming of Western culture. They identified themselves with Hong Kong, their home.

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We (forthcoming 2010) argue that it is this new identity of *Heung Gong Yahn* which explains why Yaohan was so popular in Hong Kong during the 1980s, because Yaohan represented a new shopping format that well matched the lifestyle of the new middle class. First of all, Yaohan offered locational convenience to its customers who could buy their products on their way home. Second, since Yaohan was a general merchandising store including in its store a textile department, a variety department, a supermarket, and a food arcade, customers could therefore finish all of their shopping in one place. Finally and more importantly, Yaohan offered a new retail format which differentiated itself both from other Japanese department stores and the local department stores in terms of business model and image. Yaohan could offer one-stop shopping to customers. Neither *gwok fo gung si* (department stores selling exclusively Chinese-made products) nor local department stores and supermarkets could provide such a service for their customers. Local supermarkets only sold fresh food stuffs and daily necessities, while *gwok fo gung si* and local department stores could only provide non-food merchandise. In addition, Yaohan's supermarkets were generally larger and cleaner, offered a wider range of merchandise, and were able to manage merchandise better than local supermarkets. *Gwok fo gung si* did not have supermarkets or food arcades, and paid less attention to customer service than Yaohan. The differences in business models between Yaohan and *gwok fo gung si*, local department stores, and supermarkets lead to the differences in images. *Gwok fo gung si* had a strong image of Chineseness, while Yaohan did not; open markets were closely related to tradition, while Yaohan was associated with modernity; and local department stores had an image of conservativeness and the old, while Yaohan represented something new and advanced. Therefore, Yaohan represented something between Chinese and foreign/Western, tradition and modern, old and new: an image that matched the cultural logic of the identity formation as *Heung Gong Yahn* of the new middle class in the 1980s.

The success of Yaohan during the late 1980s not only made Yaohan a household name in Hong Kong, but also gave a fresh impetus to the second wave of Japanese popular culture there. It is second because Japanese popular culture was once very popular in Hong Kong during the early 1980s. For instance, Japanese singers such as

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Matsuda Seiko, Nakamori Akina, Koizumi Kyoko, and Kawai Naoko took Hong Kong by storm in the early 1980s (Nakano 2002:233). Their phenomenal successes even turned many of their Japanese songs into "cover versions" sung by local singers (Wong & Yau 2008:24). However, the emergence of local idol-cum-singers such as Alan Tam, Leslie Cheung, and Anita Mui in the mid-1980s meant that foreign singers were no longer needed to fill the local music market. Consequently, the Hong Kong music market during the second half of the 1980s was no longer dominated by Japanese but local singers. Seen in this way, the success of Yaohan in the late 1980s and early 1990s in fact renewed the local interest in Japanese things. Recall that Yaohan was a general merchandising store, offering Japanese food, daily goods, stationery, sundry goods, clothing, cosmetics, and so on to local customers. At its peak, Yaohan had nine outlets in Hong Kong (Wong & Yau 2008: 22). The offering of a wide array of "Japanese" products to a large number of people in Hong Kong arguably rekindled the early local interest in things from Japan.

Since the late 1990s, Japanese popular culture such as TV dramas, popular music, entertainment series, cartoons, *manga*, fashion, and cosmetics began to engulf Hong Kong (Yau & Wong 2008:24). Of particular importance is the "idol phenomenon" (Aoyagi 2005). Matsu Takako, Tokiwa Takako, Matsushima Nanako, Hirosue Ryoko, and so on at once rose to prominence and took many Hong Kong teenagers, boys and girls alike, by storm. The femininity embodied by these actresses resonates powerfully with the female image portrayed by Matsuda Seiko and the like. Note that these actresses or singers are in fact the so-called "idols", referring to mostly "*shōjo*" personalities who are in their teens and early twenties and considered "particularly cute and pretty" and that the image they adopted is precisely that of the pure and cute look prevalent in Yuki Maiko's pornographic VCDs. As a male informant of another project who is now in his 40s told us, to many men who grew up during the 1980s, Nakamori Akina and Matsuda Seiko were their "*neui san*" because they were the perfect combination of purity and beauty. These *neui san* are so pure and beautiful because *shōjo*, as Robertson (1989:56) perceptively argues, "implies heterosexual *inexperience* and homosexual *experience*" and "the emotional life of the *shōjo* is essentially narcissistic in that it is self-referential as long as the *shōjo* is *not*

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employed productively in the sexual and capitalist economies (Treat 1993:364).

We suggest that the above identity of *Heung Gong Yahn* constitutes an important background against which the popularity of Yuki Maiko in Hong Kong in the 1990s can be better understood. The contradictory terms inherent in the identity formation of *Heung Gong Yahn* made Japan and Japanese popular culture a symbol of their emergent identity. That is why they would identity with Yaohan and make the company a huge success in Hong Kong. The success of Yaohan in turn rekindled the early local interest in things from Japan, contribuing to the explosion of Japanese pop culture since the mid-1990s. Through extended exposures to various Japanese pop cultures ranging from TV dramas, music, cartoons, fashion, comics, and amination, "the young generation in Asia [and Hong Kong] has developed a high level of literacy in regard to Japanese visual narratives" (Nakano 2002:233). Literacy, as Nakano (2002:233) pointed out, refers to their "ability to infer systematic and yet dynamic links between symbols and meanings, and appreciate various elements of style." But this literacy also refers to their ability to gradually appreciate and embrace the emergent *shōjo* female ideal which is cute, pretty, and gentle.

As mentioned above, an alternate female sex symbol was taking shape in Hong Kong since the early 1990s. Yip Yuk-hing, when compared with Yip Ji-mei, was no longer so aggressive and vulgar. Yung Hung even appeared fragile and pitiful. And this new sex ideal culminated in Lee Lai-chun who even appeared innocent. Her immense personal success marks not just the transformation from the sexual-cum-aggressive to the sexual-cum-innocent but also the rebirth of the early sweet and cute femininity as embodied by Matsuda Seiko and the like in Hong Kong. For that reason, the cultural sphere of Hong Kong society was bombarded with this kind of sweet and gentle femininity during the second wave of Japanese popular since the mid-1990s. Equipped with the literacy to appreciate Matsushima Nanako, Tokiwa Takaka and Matsu Takako, Kato Koyuki and the like, we should not be surprised that Yuki Maiko would be so highly received in Hong Kong in the late 1990s, because she is just an extension of this kind of sweet and gentle femininity.

More importantly, we need not forget that Lee Lai-chun is after all not a

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"proper" porn actress but an opportunistic actress who wanted to achieve fame through temporary appearances in Category III films. Consequently, while she might be innocent, her performances in the movies were hardly sexual. Not only because real sex scenes were totally absent, but also because she, as one of our informants succinctly noted, "just took off her clothes and did not act sexually." That is to say, Lee did not appear to her audience as though she engaged herself in the sexual scenes. More importantly, as a Taiwanese film critic notes, *Crazy Love* (1993) was a slipshod piece of work and required audiences who were hoping to see Lee's body to be very focused, for otherwise they would miss her sex scenes where she just flashes her body in front of the camera (Wang 1995:226). Without even showing her body, let alone any hardcore penetrative scenes, Lee's porn movies are at best softcore erotica and thus "sexual" only in a very limited sense. However, Yuki Maiko is a formal porn actress. Her movies are not Category III films but "*haam pin*" (pornographic movies). For that reason, her body including her ample breasts and outer pubic area is clearly shown. Likewise, while cute and innocent, she appears to fully engage herself in the sex scenes. Although many of her penetrative scenes in the VCDs, due to censorship regulations, are airbrushed out or placed out of the frame, she manages to reveal her intense sexual pleasure, as the above textual analysis has shown, through vivid facial expressions, gestures, and pleasurable groaning and lines (such as *ikuiku*, *kimochi ii* and so on). Seen in this way, Yuki Maiko is the "perfect" example of the emerging sexual ideal in Hong Kong which is at once innocent and sexually orgasmic, which in turn explains her immense popularity in Hong Kong during the late 1990s.

CONCLUSION

This paper examined the popularity of Yuki Maiko among men in Hong Kong during the late 1990s. Through an examination of her pornographic VCDs, we demonstrated that what our male informants have identified in Yuki Maiko is a female image which is childish, cute, virginally shy, wilful and obedient but simultaneously sexual and orgasmic. We found that this image as embodied by Yuki Maiko is very similar to that of the emerging sex ideal since the mid-1990s. Local

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pornography has long been dominated by a female image which we termed as the "sexual-cum-aggressive." However, there was a new female ideal taking shape in Hong Kong in the mid-1990s. The debut of Yip Yuk-hing alongside other former Miss Asia Pageant contestants as Category III porn actresses in the early 1990s first challenged the mainstream assumption that porn actresses are women with low-class backgrounds. Yung Hung's appearance in Category III films as sexual but gentle, fragile, and pitiful paved the way for the emergence of an alternate female image. But it is Lee Lai-chun who acted out this new female ideal. As the actress famous for her girl-next-door image, Lee's debut in Category III films in the mid-1990s opened the way for the *mei siu neui* trend in Category III films, giving rise to a new female sex ideal which we termed as the "sexual-cum-innocent." We argued that the image as embodied by Yuki Maiko is the very extension of this new sexual ideal.

Our research has shown that the sexual-cum-innocent image embodied by Yuki Maiko is favoured by a particular cohort of men, who are younger, better educated, and work in the service sector rather than the manufacturing sector. In other words, their taste for this new sexual ideal is class-based and thus historically specific. We argued that their identification with the sexual-cum-innocent female image is closely related to the changing class structure and cultural trend with regard to female model. Growing up in the endless confrontations between Chinese and Western, traditional and modern, and old and new, the new middle class have longed for something in between. Japanese culture, which is neither Western nor Chinese, neither traditional nor modern, and neither new nor old, has become a symbol of their new identity, as we have also seen in the popularity of Yaohan among the middle class in Hong Kong during the 1980s. Yaohan's success in turn rekindled the early local interest in Japanese pop culture. The immersion in Japanese pop culture of which the *shōjo* female model is an indispensable part rekindled the early female model portrayed by Matsuda Seiko and equipped many young middle class men with the necessary literacy to appreciate and identify with this cute, gentle, and fragile femininity. All of this arguably contributes to the immense success of Yip Yuk-hing and Lee Lai-chun, among others, during the early to mid 1990s. As Yuki Maiko, who is sexually shy and cute but whose movies are immensely sexual, came to Hong Kong during the late

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1990s, she immediately became a household name among men in Hong Kong because she is the perfect example of this new sex ideal.

NOTES

1. Even in 1996, most Japanese AVs still had the whole pubic regions airbrushed (Tora 1998a: 20) and the restriction on pubic hair in the AV industry remained in place until 2006 (Yasuda & Amamiya 2006: 118).
2. Indie, an abbreviation of independent, is a term regarding a trend seen in music, film, and subculture originating in the late twentieth century, which is largely meant to be 'independent' from the mainstream. Japanese instead take the noun form and therefore have a plural form.
3. The terms softcore and hardcore are used to differentiate between sexual scenes which involve violence and portray women as subordinated and scenes which are less violent or sexually degrading to women. This paper however uses these terms to differentiate between pornography which has mosaic and that which does not.
4. A Japanese AV actress who was prominent during the late 1980s and early 1990s. She was noted for her large breasts (110.7cm with cup G), which sparked 'Big Bust Boom' in Japan in 1989 (Rasshu 1999:144).
5. The research was conducted in Taiwan between October 2002 and August 2005, and her PhD thesis is entitled 'Search for Individual Agency: the use of Japanese adult videos in Taiwan'.
6. The experience of one of the authors in interviewing men on this topic led us to believe that it might be easier for a female researcher to interview men on sex-related topic, in part because men will feel less pressured to talk about sex to women rather than men (it could be a chance for them to brag about themselves as men), and in part because they perhaps feel "sexually excited" to talk to a female researcher about sex. And it is precisely because of this latter point that we will suggest that female researchers who intend to interview men on sex-related topic have to pay more attention to personal safety, for instance, the location where the interview is held and so on.
7. All informants are given pseudonyms. Various information including ages, education,

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and occupations provided in the table refer to conditions in 2000.

8. The secondary education in Hong Kong is composed of seven years, of which the first three years are compulsory, while the latter four years are non-compulsory. The latter four years can be subdivided into two parts, the first two years lead to the HKCEE (Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination), and its graduates are known as Form 5 graduates, while the last two lead to the HKALE (Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination), and its graduates are known as Form 7 graduates.
9. Since the early 1990s, 'cheap' has entered into the lexicon in Hong Kong, referring to behaviours which are unpleasant, unkind, and debased.
10. Yuki Maiko debuted officially in April 1995 and retired in 1996, although she returned to the AV industry in 1998. Since her re-debut, she has participated in several AVs, but she is no longer presented as *bishōjo*, and for that reason, these AVs will be excluded from this study.
11. Information is gathered from her official website, http://www.yuukimaiko.com/

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GLOSSARY

Cantonese Terms	Chinese Characters	Meanings
Douban	盜版	Pirated version
Dzai fau siu neui	制服少女	Uniformed young girls

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Fengyan	鳳眼	Phoenix eyes, i.e. coquettish eyes
Gwaai	乖	Good
Haam chung	鹹蟲	Sexually avid person
Haam pin	鹹片	Pornographic movies
Heung Gong Yahn	香港人	Hong Kong People
Hok sang	學生	Students
Ho ai	可愛	Cute, sweet
Gwok fo gung si	國貨公司	Department stores exclusively selling Chinese made products
Mei siu neui	美少女	Beautiful young women
Moumei	嫵媚	Dainty and charming
Neui san	女神	The goddess
Shun	純	Pure
Shun ching	純情	Purity, naivety
Wai	壞	Bad
Yuk neui	玉女	A naïve girl who is as pure as jade
Yuk neui jeung mum yan	玉女掌門人	Eternal maiden queen

ACTRESSES

Romanisation	**Chinese Characters**
Chan Bo-lin	陳寶蓮
Hirosue Ryoko	広末涼子
Hu Chin	胡錦
Kato Koyuki	加藤小雪
Kawai Naoko	河合奈保子
Koizumi Kyoko	小泉今日子
Lee Lai-chun	李麗珍
Lee Wah-yuet	李華月
Matsu Takako	松隆子
Matsuda Seiko	松田聖子
Matsushima Nanako	松島菜々子
Nakamori Akina	中森明菜
Tien Lie	恬妮
Tokiwa Takako	常盤貴子
Yip Yuk-hing	葉玉卿
Yip Ji-mei	葉子楣
Yau Yuet-ching	邱月清
Yung Hung	翁虹
Yuki Maiko	夕樹舞子
Shaw Yinyin	邵音音

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