

# Social Exclusion of *Warikiri* Women: An Aspect of Prostitution in Contemporary Japan

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*In Japan, prostitution by high school girls, or enjo-kōsai, became problematized in the 1990s. In the enjo-kōsai debate, prostitution was separated from the issue of poverty, and “sexual autonomy” was the focus of the debate. However, according to Chiki Ogiue’s report, many women who practice warikiri experience poverty and social exclusion. This paper emphasizes the actual conditions of warikiri women, arguing that the number of women risking poverty and social exclusion is higher than that of men. Although some warikiri women are indeed threatened by or living in homelessness, they do not or cannot receive adequate welfare services. They are also faced with exclusion from social exclusion or meta-level social exclusion. This means social sciences have not effectively problematize prostitution in the studies of social exclusion.*

## 1 Introduction

It is sometimes said that prostitution is “the world’s oldest profession.” Whether these words are true or not, prostitution has been a social issue and is often seen as a symbol of (women’s) poverty. The Japanese government, as well as other governments, have been monitoring *fūki no midare* (風紀の乱れ; the corruption of public morals), and the crackdown on prostitution has been among the common ways of reforming public morals. In Japan, the majority of people think prostitution is illegal and immoral.

Even though the Anti-Prostitution Act banning prostitution was instituted in 1956, people are not punished for simple prostitution (i.e., prostitution of their own free will). People are only reprimanded for controlled or forced prostitution, prostitution mediation, etc. In the Anti-Prostitution Act, two elements of different natures are combined: “control” and “protection.” Although the act provides women’s protection service, it is clearly different from the other welfare services, in that the act is not a law regulating the social welfare system but a criminal law (Sudō 2011).

In most cases, prostitution is practiced in such establishments as “soap lands (ソープランド).”<sup>1</sup> The sex-related industry is called *fūzoku sangyō* (風俗産業), or simply *fūzoku* (風俗), in Japan. The soap land is one of the major business categories in *fūzoku*; however, there are







































