



‘Pig Alley’ Continued, With Help of Shipmates

In my recent piece on Yokosuka’s Dobuita Street, I wanted to include this photo, because it shows a stretch of the road as it exists today, and because I look fit and trim after eating raw fish for nearly three weeks. In the end, however, I discarded it because it was too dark. Shipmate Armand Richard, a master of photography, enhanced it, so here it is. Also, Shipmate Paul Adkisson called my attention to a fine description of the street in his excellent memoirs, *Anchors and Eagles*. A brief 1955 remembrance is boxed below. But to get the full flavor, *Colahan* shipmates should read the entirety of Chapter 4, “First Impressions and the Reality of WestPac Liberty.” Paul refers to the narrow roadway as “Souvenir Street” or “Black Market Alley,” but Japanese have called it Dobuita (“Plank Over a Ditch”) or “Pig Alley” since at least the 1920s.

Jackson Sellers
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Very near to the main gate was “Souvenir Street,” more commonly known as “Black Market Alley.” Sooner or later all sailors were sure to find themselves somewhere along that narrow strip. Everything imaginable could be found for sale on one side or the other of the two or three blocks Souvenir Street had to offer.

It didn’t take me long to learn how to barter. The first price was at least double the acceptable price, sometimes triple. The smart shopper would test the market, shop around and learn what the going prices were, then make his purchase at the store or from the vendor offering the best deal. Cameras, camera equipment, and electronic devices were the exception, where haggling over the displayed prices seldom resulted in a discount.

Beautifully lacquered music/jewelry boxes, decorative and impressive china dishes, personalized coffee mugs, engraved cigarette lighters, and paintings, were commonplace and could be purchased at truly bargain prices. Grampus fishing rods and photo albums were also plentiful and were favored over other souvenirs. “Dirty” (pornographic) pictures, actual color photos, usually depicting forty-eight positions of sexual intercourse, were openly displayed in most of the small souvenir shops. The same pictures were printed on silk scarves and handkerchiefs, all for sale at near giveaway prices.

From *Anchors and Eagles* by Paul L. Adkisson