Introduction

A Special Business

In 1949, a reporter for the popular weekly *Sandee Mainichi* visited Kyoto's famed pleasure quarter of Shimabara and, after some investigation, concluded that geisha had become "living antiques." For centuries, formally trained and elegantly costumed geisha had embodied the height of fashionable dance, song, and wit. But the reporter believed that something was now missing. "They deal only with 'drinking,'" he explained, "so they are a kind of showgirl dressed in historical costume, performing historical plays. After that they only entertain clients while they drink or serve them tea. And that's all the business there is for them—they have nothing to do with the 'special business.'"[1]

That "special business" is the subject of this study. What made it appear new and special, even while the geisha came to seem quaint? For more than 300 years, Japan had tolerated and regulated the performance of sexual services for remuneration. Other more eclectic accounts have surveyed this earlier era, when authorities demarcated "pleasure districts," recognized debt contracts, and certified the health of sex workers. *Occupying Power* seeks to explain how and why the arrival of masses of foreign soldiers shifted the long-established landscape of the sex industry in fundamental ways. Together

with the more generally democratizing policies of Allied officials, which gave greater voice to female political activists, the arrival of hundreds of thousands of servicemen struck Japan like an earthquake. The aftershocks produced a new political configuration that finally abolished licensed prostitution. Ironically, and tragically, abolition made sex workers less visible and more vulnerable.

The period of this study includes the most dramatic events in Japan's twentieth century, including total war, unconditional surrender, and foreign occupation. New buildings and whole neighborhoods in base towns and larger cities rose up to accommodate a veritable industry in sexual services. As the built environment changed, so too did Japan's psychological landscape. The visible presence of "objectionable" women served as a constant reminder of defeat. It was written on their very bodies, apparent to both the occupiers and the occupied. Dressed in brightly colored dresses, wearing pancake makeup and with cigarettes dangling from their lips, the *pan-pan*—or streetwalkers—seemed to embody both the fall of Japan's empire and the rise of something shockingly new. Decades later, the way Japanese talked about, or did not talk about, sex under occupation—above all, the experience of the "comfort women," under *Japanese* occupation—continued to show the influence of this singular, searing experience.

SELLING SEX UNDER OCCUPATION

Sex work provides a powerful subject to analyze social change. It can provoke troubling questions about the true nature of sexual partnerships and paid labor. Since the late nineteenth century, sociologists have cited prostitution to illustrate the problems that come with the commodification of the body through wage labor.[2] In the early twentieth century, sexologists and psychoanalysts helped create an enduring distinction, rendering male visitation to prostitutes as normal, even healthy, while pathologizing the sex worker.[3] Analysts reconsidered in the late 1980s and 1990s, when the issue became part of the feminist "sexuality debates." Some academics and activists suggested that commercialized sex could, under certain circumstances, actually be empowering.[4] Feminists argued that it was comparable to other kinds of service work.[5] For their part, sex workers and their supporters became active participants in such inquiries, drawing on this scholarship to lobby for recognition and decriminalization.[6] Although the "sexuality de-

bates" were largely theoretical, recent work incorporates research among both sex workers and their clients.[7] Historians have drawn from and contributed to both approaches, at the same time expanding the scope of such inquiries beyond the Euro-American context. Some use cultural theory to investigate the symbolic meaning of sex work, while others use social history to describe how it has been structured.[8]

Japan under the Allied Occupation is a particularly revealing and important subject for such inquires. The firebombing of Japanese cities also incinerated centuries-old pleasure districts. Dazed survivors were utterly destitute. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of servicemen arrived from the United States and the British Commonwealth, including African Americans as well as white Americans, Aborigines, Maori, and Indians as well as Australians, New Zealanders, and Britons. Beginning in 1950, even more contingents would pass through Japan as part of the United Nations force fighting in Korea. The Japanese government first established official brothels, and even segregated black and white clients to please occupation authorities. But Douglas MacArthur soon ordered them disbanded. Even as they were deregulated, commercial sex markets proliferated. At the same time, the disgrace of militarists and the return of democratic politics meant that Japanese women would be given the vote for the first time. Female and socialist politicians could therefore exercise real power, but only within limits set by their American overlords. After more than a decade of activism, and critical compromises with their conservative opponents, they helped secure passage of Japan's first national anti-prostitution law in 1956.

This transition from regulated sex work, to outright deregulation, to criminalization—all in a period of unprecedented social upheaval—remains unique in the annals of the "oldest profession." Sex work in occupied Japan therefore permits us to grapple with fundamental questions about imperialism and individual agency, political economy and cultural change, and the political use and misuse of history.

Allied servicemen came to Japan with a good deal of historical baggage, including a set of policies and practices concerning sexual relations and venereal disease (VD). U.S. and British Commonwealth policies bore the imprint of particular notions of masculinity and manhood inflected by differences in race, class, and ethnicity. Comparing different policies in policing and public health, and the varied experience of African Americans, Indians, and others in segregated state-run brothels and more deregulated markets, enables us to address highly politicized historical questions more

analytically. Examining both high politics and the everyday negotiations among servicemen, sex workers, and entrepreneurs, we will see how intimate histories and international relations are interconnected in ways scholars have only begun to explore.

Occupied Japan featured a proliferating array of different forms of sex work, as more—and more diverse—women entered and transformed the industry. They migrated from the countryside and cities to base areas, from Hiroshima and Osaka to Sasebo, from Tokyo to Yokosuka, and shifted sex work beyond regulated districts to public parks, port areas, and wherever else bodies could be bought and sold. Although sex work had always existed outside the regulated districts, women now sold sex openly on street corners near schools and other places where children played. They were difficult to dislodge because they occupied a crucial position in the postwar economy, earning precious dollars and black-market goods, while supporting a host of ancillary workers—from letter-writers to rickshaw pullers, from bar owners to bankers.

Many women became sex workers out of economic despair: former shop girls, office workers, or bus girls. Others simply moved positions within the larger entertainment industry, including geisha, cabaret girls, or beer hall workers. New sex workers who catered to servicemen tended to be more educated, ambitious, and entrepreneurial than women who worked in the established red-light districts. Exploring the variety of their experiences can help us understand how selling sex is like or unlike other kinds of labor, and how it changes under different regulatory regimes.[9]

The struggle over sex work can also illuminate the changing nature of Japanese politics in the postwar period. Government and society underwent dramatic legal changes after 1945, as regulators and regulations shifted. The legal system itself was transformed when Americans rewrote the constitution and the criminal code. Debates about prostitution occurred as women's groups, left-leaning politicians, and conservatives were jostling for power. Whereas conservative politicians contended that prostitution was a "necessary evil," activists and socialist politicians insisted that it was a "social evil." But even if it is clear only in retrospect, Japan was settling into what is known as the "1955 system," a pattern of one-party rule that persisted for decades and helped uphold a Cold War alliance with the United States. The weak 1956 law that criminalized prostitution punished sex workers but protected others who profited from the trade. And all along, American servicemen were shielded from prosecution, even in cases where they assaulted Japanese women. How

did a reformist movement to improve the lives of women come to such an end? And how can this help us understand, more generally, the imposition of social order after a period of unprecedented change?

By granting equal weight to the experiences of the sex worker, client, and regulator, this book aims for a more sophisticated interpretation of the sex industry, one that is not limited to social history or women's history.[10] It will show how an influx of new buyers of sexual services, different sellers, and varied approaches to regulation shaped not just the larger political economy of Japan, but also the politics of memory and national self-perceptions.

The response of the Japanese people to the Allied Occupation was mediated through the bodies of individual women, as the nation was transformed from a conquering power to a conquered people. This provoked a reevaluation of sex work and gave a new and urgent credence to movements dedicated to its abolition. Popular distaste for prostitution with non-Japanese clients not only ended three centuries of regulated sex work but also changed the way Japanese remembered their own roles as occupiers of foreign lands, with consequences that continue to roil international relations across East Asia and the Pacific.

CONQUERORS AND CONCUBINES: SEX WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF OCCUPATION

Understanding this development requires an analysis that can relate race and gender to geopolitics. Military occupation, like colonization, is a situation of explicit political inequality. It is precisely within such a context that racial and sexual oppression can be taken to extremes. If occupied Japan provides a uniquely powerful lens to analyze the nature of sex work, examining sexual regulation and sexual relations affords a new perspective on the collapse of Japan's empire. The object of this study is not just the Allied Occupation, the specific historical event that supposedly ended in 1952 with the San Francisco Peace Treaty. It explores the broader concept of "occupation," a condition of compromised sovereignty resulting from a foreign military presence. In this latter sense, occupation may be said to have lasted in Japan through the Korean War years and continuing on until 1972, when Okinawa reverted to Japanese control. It persists in the form of permanent American bases operating on Japanese territory today. They form some of

the oldest elements of what some analysts consider a new form of empire: a network of overseas bases and informal spheres of influence, virtually unprecedented in scope and expense.[11]

The occupation of Japan has often been held up as a model of what American power can achieve, quite literally in the case of U.S. military operations in the Middle East. Former occupation officials themselves wrote many of the earliest, most favorable accounts. The image of a beneficent and enlightened regime—particularly for Japanese women—still informs popular understanding of this period in the United States. But Japanese scholars were offering a very different view in the 1950s and 1960s. They emphasized how Cold War priorities led U.S. officials to "reverse course" on many progressive reforms, and they used Marxist theory to analyze the imperialist motives behind U.S. policy.[12] In the 1970s and 1980s, both U.S. and Japanese historians—most prominently John Dower in the United States and Eiji Takemae in Japan—began to write accounts of the complex interplay between occupation policy and Japanese politics based on newly available archives in both countries.[13] American and Japanese scholars soon began to work in cooperation.[14] By the 1990s, the focus of new scholarship was shifting to issues of race and gender, work that examined not just policy-making and high politics, but also the social and cultural history of the U.S.-Japanese encounter.[15] In Australia and New Zealand, scholarship has followed a similar course, though most U.S. historians do not take into account the British Commonwealth forces in the Occupation.[16] Even for the Japanese, the U.S. role is still the central preoccupation.

On the subject of sex work, the perception of remaining under U.S. occupation pervades the accounts offered by most Japanese historians. Yuki Tanaka, for example, compares the panpan to the military comfort women in wartime Asia. He points to the way Japanese authorities set up brothels in both cases, as well as the similarities in the predatory and racist behavior of servicemen.[17]

For Tanaka, as for scholars such as Fujime Yuki and Hirai Kazuko, the U.S. military's VD policy was no less egregious.[18] U.S. commanders typically identified the source of disease as Japanese women, not U.S. servicemen. They implemented humiliating contact-tracing methods, closely questioning women about their sexual partners. And they provided American servicemen with medications such as penicillin, while denying treatment to Japanese nationals.

This history helps explains why, fifty years after the end of the Pacific War, accusations of sexual assault by servicemen resonated so powerfully in U.S.-Japan relations. Military bases—in Japan as in other countries—create many sources of friction, whether nuclear weapons, toxic waste, or noise pollution. But Japanese activists chose to make rape cases their rallying point in a movement that continues to seek the expulsion of the U.S. presence. Okinawans, who have long felt marginalized from mainland Japan, have in this way become central in the fight to regain national sovereignty, if only as victims.

But if sex work during the Occupation needs to be situated in a broader context, in both the larger history of East Asia and the longer history of U.S.-Japanese relations, it should not necessarily begin with the comfort women and end with the most recent rape cases in Okinawa. We must also look for continuities—as well as change—in how the Allies had dealt with sex work and sexually transmitted disease before World War II. There already had been a long history of identifying VD with women, beginning with medieval European references to "diseases of the yard," and how they were contracted by lying with a woman.[19] Specific policies and practices varied tremendously, however, and tracing their development over time can help explain how Allied officials conducted themselves when they arrived in Japan. Few scholars have noted, for instance, the intensity of the efforts that U.S. and British Commonwealth commanders devoted to policing and punishing the sexual desires of their own men, including suspension of pay, off-limits postings, and denial of promotion. Nor do they note that policies such as contact tracing were implemented in the United States on U.S. citizens. And although it is true that servicemen were the first to receive penicillin, putting the needs of soldiers over civilians was standard practice for both U.S. and Japanese authorities. What is harder to explain is why VD rates among occupation troops remained staggeringly high, though here again examining what happened before they arrived in Japan provides important clues.

In part because of the spread of disease, the network of institutionalized sexual-service centers, the Recreational Amusement Association (RAA, Tokushu Ian Kyōkai), proved unacceptable to Allied military commanders and was disbanded after fewer than seven months. The arrival of British Commonwealth Occupation Forces in 1946—often ignored in accounts of the postwar period—meant that millions of Japanese would live under a

different regulatory regime, one dedicated to eliminating all forms of fraternization. For more than a decade after the beginning of the Occupation, Allied servicemen, sex workers, proprietors, and an array of politicians continued jostling to negotiate new terms of exchange and new relations of power. The parallels historians draw between comfort women and the women who worked for the RAA therefore provide only a partial portrait of sex work during the Occupation.

How does the picture change when we expand the time frame to take in this longer, more complex history? Any convincing account of sex work in the context of military occupation must address the question of agency. By defining all sex work as oppression, we cannot begin to answer it. Selling sex may not have been the first choice of many women. But it needs to be understood in relation to their immediate economic and other interests. If only for lack of good options, they voluntarily participated and were paid for their efforts, unlike the Korean and Chinese women who were enslaved by the Japanese military. And, faced with difficult choices, Japanese women went on to work in ways that surprised and unsettled both their countrymen and occupation authorities.

Occupying Power will compare Japan to the occupations of Germany and Korea. In both cases, women selling sex to foreign troops were scorned or even subjected to violence—just as in Japan.[20] Sex workers were seen as symbols of foreign occupation. But in Japan, unlike in Germany, sex work had been accepted, regulated, and even planned for in wartime. It was not selling sex for money that was problematic, but the awkward clientele. If sex workers were symbols, what did these symbols mean? How did these women define themselves, and how did this experience affect the way Japanese remembered their occupation of other countries?

OCCUPATION WITHOUT END?

Both in principle and in practice, the Allied Occupation of Japan was quite unlike earlier military occupations, though it can be usefully compared to the way imperial powers—including the United States—had ruled colonial territories. Military occupation normally refers to the seizure and control of an area by foreign military forces for a limited period of time. Since the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, international law has specified the responsibilities of occupying states, seeking to protect occupied territories

so that "sovereignty may not be alienated through the use of force."[21] This is what distinguishes occupiers, who are temporary guardians over occupied territories, from imperial powers, who seek permanent settlements. The Americans, however, claimed exemption from the Hague regulations because of Japan's "unconditional surrender."[22] They rejected the law of military occupation in order to implement wholesale change in Japan, at the same time setting up permanent bases for servicemen and their families, complete with schools and shopping malls.

Even more than how the Americans defined their role, we can recognize the real nature and import of U.S. power in Japan by examining the actions it authorized. The ambitious program of the American authorities invites comparison with other political entities that have sought to reshape societies, ones usually characterized as empires. If empire is understood as "effective control, whether formal or informal, of a subordinated society by an imperial society," as Michael Doyle has usefully put it, then the U.S. role in Japan certainly qualifies.[23]

In occupied Japan, it was in the realm of social relations that effective control of a subject people was unmistakable. Whether attending to sex work, women's rights, VD, or miscegenation, the concerns of U.S. officials were strikingly similar to those of their Dutch, French, and British counterparts. As Ann Stoler has argued, regulating sexual relationships was essential in shaping the development of colonial societies.[24] In European colonies, authorities managed both marriage and extramarital relations. So too did American authorities in Japan, proscribing fraternization and prohibiting marriage to Japanese nationals. And at the same time they presented themselves as protectors of women against backward social practices, like the British in India and the French in North Africa.

American authorities also insisted on a legal system that accorded special status to U.S. nationals, both during and after the formal occupation, much as colonial codes discriminated between citizens and subjects. Shielded from Japanese local justice—whether for mundane traffic accidents or more serious crimes—American servicemen have benefited from a form of extraterritoriality. A Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) assigns jurisdiction over the vast majority of legal cases involving servicemen and Japanese citizens in military-base areas to the military authorities. In 1953, land extending over 245,000 acres remained in American hands. Much of the territory on which troops lived and performed maneuvers still has not been returned to the Japanese, creating continuities in time and space.[25] Japanese citizens in base

areas lived—and continue to live— in the modern equivalent of treaty ports, where foreign nationals enjoy privileged legal status.

But if the Occupation of Japan can be usefully compared to imperial dominion, it can also serve to remind us that power is never absolute. Just as French, British, Dutch, and other imperial authorities required collaborators and often ruled indirectly, U.S. officials also found Japanese partners indispensable—as bureaucrats, as policemen, but also as guides, interpreters, and confidants. All this raises more questions about the role of sex workers in the Allied Occupation. If we do not assume that servicemen were always conquerors and Japanese women their permanent victims, how do the power dynamics of occupation shift? How might we understand this as a process of negotiation and not just oppression?

FROM THE FLOATING WORLD TO THE MODERN WORLD

To appreciate the revolutionary transformation of sex work during the Occupation requires understanding how, for centuries, law in Japan had sanctioned different kinds of female entertainers. It is now the subject of a large scholarly literature, which has revealed a tremendously complex system. What contemporaries called the "floating world" had many different realms, with different rules, written or unwritten, for cities, castle towns, and remote villages all across the archipelago.

In 1589, Toyotomi Hideyoshi established the first regulated "pleasure district" (*yūkaku*) in Kyoto. The Tokugawa shogunate that ruled Japan from 1603 established other licensed quarters: Shinmachi, in the commercial city of Osaka, in 1610, and Maruyama in the port city of Nagasaki in 1642. The most famous district of all, the Yoshiwara, was approved by the shogunate in 1617. It opened in the city of Edo, now Tokyo, in 1618. By this point, sex work had already begun to assume myriad forms and constitute an elaborate hierarchy, including courtesans, streetwalkers, maidservants, and military camp followers.[26]

Within these licensed districts, a tiny proportion of sex workers held elite jobs. They were regarded as the female celebrities of their time. They were ranked in guidebooks, depicted in woodcut prints, and celebrated in literary works. Reaching this position required much hard work. Often sold by poor families, girls had to rise from the position of attendant (*kamuro*),

performing the duties of a maidservant, and might suffer considerably. But they also gained the opportunity to learn performing arts, dancing, and manners critical to rise in the status world of the pleasure districts. After their training and debut, they could ascend through a variety of hierarchal distinctions to reach the coveted top-class designation variously denoted as *tayū, tayū kōshi, or yobidashi*. Most never did. Should the journey prove unsuccessful, the fall was rapid—debts soon piled up, and moneylenders crowded the doors.[27]

All but invisible next to the most elite sex workers, many more women who sold sexual services for money populated the pleasure districts. Together with proprietors, they had to operate under the watchful eye of samurai officials. Many other people profited from the trade, including fruit sellers, fortune-tellers, and hairstylists. And outside these districts were hot-spring geishas, bath attendants, maids, and post-station maidservants and waitresses. Part-timers of all sorts—musicians, actors, and dancers—worked beyond the city walls.[28] Female entertainers and maidservants easily moved in and out of the trade. For most, especially outside castle towns, the Yoshiwara experience was atypical. In the mining town of Innai, brothels were limited to a certain quarter, while other economic activities were assigned to different areas. In Niigata, authorities allowed sex work with no regulation whatsoever. Freedom of movement also varied: in Fukuoka, like Yoshiwara, women were limited to the quarter. In Mitarai and Takehara, they worked on boats.[29] The regulation of sex work in early modern Japan therefore created a patchwork pattern. Not only did sex workers have their place, but they also had many places to practice their trade.

Following the arrival of Commodore Perry's Black Ships, the collapse of the Tokugawa shogunate, and the restoration of the Meiji emperor, licensed sex workers, like many others in Japan, saw their lives change. Fujime Yuki, Japan's most prominent historian of the subject, has emphasized how the encounter with the West would lead authorities to reorganize sex work. Sheldon Garon has highlighted the role of social activists and middle-class reformers in persuading the state to adopt new methods to manage public morals. Both are critical of the motives as well as the consequences of these regulatory and reformist efforts.[30]

In re-regulating sex work, government officials sought out European models to emulate, much as they did in modernizing other aspects of Japanese society. They studied and adopted a variety of new regulations in the 1870s, including mandatory medical examinations. These were highly invasive,

unpopular with sex workers, and—as it turned out—mostly ineffective in preventing the spread of VD.[31] They also planted the idea that, instead of being glamorous and alluring, sex workers were a source of disease.

But while seeking to initiate reforms, the Japanese government sometimes had to react to outside provocations and pressures. The most famous incident occurred in 1872 and involved the *Maria Luz.* When the Peruvian vessel stopped for repairs in Yokohama while carrying indentured Chinese laborers, some of them jumped ship and swam to a British ironclad. A special Japanese court convened and declared the laborers free. The Peruvian captain's lawyer asked why foreigners should be denied the right to buy and sell laborers when, after all, Japan's licensed quarters engaged in the same practice. Sensitive to foreign perceptions, the Japanese cabinet issued a proclamation liberating indentured prostitutes.[32]

One week later, the Ministry of Justice lacked similar sensitivity when it issued an infamous order excusing geisha and licensed prostitutes from repaying their debts. It argued that if farm animals could not be expected to be responsible to creditors, neither could the women. The order did not void the practice of prostitution, only indenture contracts—and these were reinstated by 1875.[33] In 1902, the Supreme Court confirmed that sex workers were required by law to pay back advances, even if they had escaped. Six years later, the Home Ministry ruled that unlicensed prostitutes (if caught) would be committed to penal servitude.[34] Though the indenture contracts that remained common among licensed sex workers might now be considered exploitative, these contracts were for a limited term and not for life. Families entered into them because they were often the only available source of credit during emergencies, such as failed harvests, which were all too common in prewar Japan.[35]

At the end of the nineteenth century, a movement arose to abolish sex work altogether.[36] The Freedom and People's Rights Movement (Jiyū Minken Undō) laid the groundwork for the abolitionists by calling for a popularly elected Diet and a democratic constitution. But it was not until 1880, when Christian activist Yuasa Jirō and others submitted to the Gunma prefectural assembly a petition to abolish prostitution, that any true Japanese anti-prostitution movement could be identified. The prefecture, which adopted an ordinance against prostitution in 1891, soon emerged as the center of operations for the National Prostitution Abolition League (Zenkoku Baishō Dōmeikai) and the abolitionist movement more generally. By this time, explicitly Christian groups had also begun to organize against prostitution. In

1886, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU; Nihon Kirisutokyō Fujin Kyōfūkai) began operations in Tokyo, joined by the Salvation Army (Kyūseigun) in 1900. After fires razed the Yoshiwara licensed district in 1911, the Purity Society (Kakuseikai) joined the anti-prostitution coalition.[37]

But the abolitionists could not thwart a flourishing commercial sex market. In fact, it had begun to spread to the countryside, where paid sex had previously been rare.[38] Nor could they dissuade public authorities from continuing to regulate it. For instance, although the Gunma ordinance may have stopped the licensing of prostitutes, taxation of sex-work businesses and mandatory VD examinations continued.[39] Activists' efforts did little to discourage the sale of sex or to improve the work conditions of women in the licensed districts.

Starting in the 1880s, Japanese sex workers formed part of a larger, transnational market that included port cities across Southeast and East Asia. They were among the more than 100,000 Japanese women who emigrated over the following fifty years.[40] Known as *karayuki-san*, they fled impoverished communities, particularly in northwest Kyushu, to seek work in such places as Rangoon, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Although many women were unaware of the kind of work that awaited them, others, especially those from Shimabara or the Amakusa Islands, knowingly entered the profession.[41]

For a newly powerful Japan, deeply concerned with its image and markets abroad, the *karayuki-san* were an embarrassment. Beginning in 1899, the Foreign Ministry instructed consuls to induce Japanese women to return. Other colonial powers assisted by declaring that Japanese sex workers were no longer welcome.[42] By 1919, the acting Japanese consul general in Singapore, Yamazaki Heikichi, began to pursue and repatriate Japanese women. With the cooperation of local authorities, he abolished Japanese prostitution houses.[43] From 1918 to 1920, Japanese consuls in Manila, Rangoon, and Hong Kong joined in efforts to send sex workers home. But an informal economy in sex work remained in these and other port cities.[44]

At the same time that the state sought to prevent Japanese sex workers from operating in foreign territories, it extended the system of licensed prostitution to its colonies. Licensed prostitution was introduced in Taiwan after the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki.[45] Even though the Japanese did not gain control of Korea until 1905, the Treaty of Kanghwa in 1876 had given them extraterritorial status, and Japanese-run brothels in Pusan and Wonsan soon followed. After Korea became a protectorate, prostitution was permitted in restaurants, and prostitutes began to be licensed in 1916.[46]

In the 1920s, as Japanese sex workers—and Japanese style-regulation—followed the expansion of empire across Southeast and East Asia, sex markets and the struggle for abolition in the home islands entered a new phase. As in other countries, the phenomenon of the "modern girl" inspired new notions of independence and sexuality. In the popular press, commentators focused on café waitresses, who worked in a highly eroticized atmosphere and received their wages from tips. Although evidence suggests that sexual labor was not mandatory and occurred outside the café premises, many women probably engaged in extra-hours activities.[47] Moreover, unlike most sex workers, they had control—albeit negotiated—over their bodies and their choice of clients.[48]

Despite sporadic crackdowns, café culture continued to be popular into the 1930s. By 1936, there were twice as many registered café waitresses nationwide as licensed sex workers. Abolitionists exploited the coming of war to fight new types of sex work, imposing restrictions on cafés and bars. For the first time, licensed brothels began to work with them, since eliminating unregulated sex work served to limit competition. Authorities continued to license sex workers, but other women still sold sex outside regulated areas.[49]

But the most important new development of the wartime period was not the beginning of more informal, less regulated forms of sex work, nor was it the first sign of a de facto coalition of anti-prostitution activists and brothel owners to stop such practices. Instead, it was the creation of a vast system of sexual slavery establishments for the Japanese military. Unwitting women from countries including Korea and China, as well as interned Dutch civilians, found themselves compelled to provide sexual services to Japanese servicemen, enduring the most appalling conditions. Estimates vary, since so much of the official record was destroyed, but as many as 200,000 women may have been consigned to this fate. In this way, the military hoped to control sexual violence against occupied peoples and contain the spread of VD in the ranks.[50]

In the first postwar decade, Japanese politicians would therefore have many histories to draw upon as they sought models upon which to base national policy. Conservative politicians, for example, could argue that sex work had long been accepted and regulated and that complete prohibition was unrealistic. Female activists could argue that the abolition movement had deep historical roots and the government had already begun to limit prostitution in particular prefectures and among Japanese expatriates. But the

most immediate precedent was the system of comfort stations the state had created in occupied Asia.

This book begins with the arrival of U.S. troops in Japan in 1945. The first chapter, " 'To Transship Them to Some Suitable Island': Making Policy in the Midst of Chaos," analyzes the differing responses—regulation, punishment, and preventive measures—that U.S. and British Commonwealth forces used to combat a purported VD epidemic among both their own forces and Japanese women. Japanese officials set up the RAA, modeled on the comfort stations they had established overseas. But this proved unacceptable to Allied authorities. They were alarmed about the spread of VD and also had to worry about critical reactions in the United States and Australia. The abolition of the RAA, along with all laws that permitted licensed prostitution and indentured contracts, amounted to the de facto deregulation of sex markets.

As complex cultural relations developed between sex workers and foreign servicemen, Allied and Japanese authorities struggled to impose some sort of regulatory system. Chapter 2, "Violence, Commerce, Marriage," examines the range of encounters between servicemen and Japanese women. In the first weeks, Japanese authorities stoked fear of sexual violence. But over time, both Japanese and Allied officials became more concerned about long-term relationships and biracial children. Chapter 2 therefore considers not just the ensuing changes in official policy, but how they were interrelated with the realm of intimate relations between servicemen and Japanese women.

The third chapter, "When Flesh Glittered: Selling Sex in Sasebo and Tokyo," maps the changing topography of the sex markets with the influx of servicemen and the delicensing of the commercial sex industry. Confusion reigned in districts where prostitution had long been regulated and tolerated. Streetwalkers became a vivid and contentious symbol of the American Occupation. In military-base areas, such as Sasebo, a flood of new sex workers forced Japanese men, women, and children to confront a changed physical and social landscape, reconfigured to accommodate the occupying forces. As the commercial sex market expanded, its representatives became increasingly unpopular: sex workers were widely disliked—and discriminated against—as men and women discovered in this a way to display an abiding nationalism.

The fourth chapter, "Legislating Women: The Push for a Prostitution Prevention Law," turns to the female activists and legislators who worked

locally and nationally to pass laws against prostitution. Even as the Allied Occupation made some women victims, it gave other, newly enfranchised women the tools to fight back. Female legislators such as Fujiwara Michiko, Ichikawa Fusae, and Kamichika Ichiko inspected military-base towns and protested in the popular press. Politicians and critics refigured prostitution as a crime against children to appeal to Japanese patriotism. Women's organizations formed local and national networks, and local governments passed more than sixty prefectural and municipal ordinances against prostitution.

The fifth chapter, "The High Politics of Base Pleasures: Regulating Morality for the Postwar Era," explains how a national anti-prostitution law finally passed in 1956, when Liberal Democratic Party legislators made the cause their own. Different politicians had distinct perspectives on sex work. Although some saw it as emblematic of a moral crisis, others argued that men would always need an outlet for their sexual desires. For Prime Minister Hatoyama Ichirō, the sex industry constituted a political conundrum. Brothel owners were important contributors, but their support had become embarrassing. He solved this dilemma by securing passage of a government bill that did not actually threaten the business of brothel owners. Where activists had fought for a strong law that punished prostitution as criminal exploitation, Hatoyama refigured prostitution as contrary to morals. Although the law was a narrow institutional triumph for female legislators, it actually safeguarded a sex industry that left men in charge.

Chapter 6, "The Presence of the Past: Controversies over Sex Work Since 1956," surveys the consolidation of new sexual markets that persist to this day. The 1956 law hastened a process that had begun ten years earlier, leading to the demise of licensed sex work and, with it, a whole way of life. Other changes became evident in the built environment, as proprietors evaded legislation by creating businesses they dubbed "Turkish baths," then "soaplands." In the military-base areas, bars continued to predominate, even if Japanese characters replaced the English lettering when the Japanese Self-Defense Forces began to patronize the same establishments. With no contracts to guarantee the terms of work, labor conditions worsened. Thais, Filipinas, and eventually Eastern Europeans gradually took the place of Japanese women. In the 1990s, the worldwide campaign against sexual trafficking led the Japanese government to change its visa policies. Now illegal immigrants, sex workers became more invisible and more vulnerable, completing the transformation that started in 1945. Sex workers are marginal-

ized, even while remaining essential to defining nationalism and defending international norms.

Power abhors a vacuum, which is why the period immediately following Japan's defeat was so chaotic and tumultuous, with fierce struggles between farmers and landlords, women and men, and Left and Right. What remains remarkable about postwar Japan is how, if only for a brief period, those who are usually thought of as the most powerless and most victimized—people who sell their own bodies—were suddenly in a pivotal position. They were potent symbols of defeat, but they were not just symbols. They could actually negotiate the terms of their own relationship with the occupiers. As we shall see, it was not an unconditional surrender.