Imperial Japan; and (4) Korea's unequal diplomatic relations with Japan (during *and* after colonial rule) and with the United States after the war in the nation-state power dynamics to redress historical wrongdoings.

Furthermore, the conjuncture of various social structural axes contributed not only to the wartime victimization of Korean comfort women but also to the continuous *societal indifference* to them after the end of the war in postcolonial Korea, which must be further contextualized in the genealogy of Korean women's stigmatized but customary professional labor to provide men with public sex for over a millennium, an important topic to which I will return in chapter 6. The comfort women survivors' *han* narratives discussed in this chapter, one might add, represent unfortunate—but not uncommon—tragedies that countless women seekers of autonomy have encountered in patriarchal capitalist societies around the globe. The systemic violation of women's human rights in many patriarchies is a centuries-old practice that continues to challenge conscientious policy makers and committed social activists.

In closing, let me note here that Koreans afflicted with the *han* complex have traditionally turned to healing rituals of *kut,* performed by shamans, in order to experience the cathartic effect of unleashing the knotted emotions suppressed in their heart.[71] It is both remarkable and unsurprising, therefore, that the first public commemorative event (organized by a women's organization and held in July 1990) to console the "angry wandering souls" of deceased comfort women was a performance of the "*chŏngsindae haewŏn kut*" (a shamanistic ritual *kut* to help release the rancorous *han* of Korean comfort women [euphemistically referred to as *chŏngsindae*]).[72] The *kut* ceremony included prayer-like propitiatory narrative songs, which the shamans sang to posthumously and collectively console the souls of numerous deceased comfort women and help resolve their knotted *han* so that they may rest in peace. I quote below the lyrics of the shaman song:

> Pitiable are angry souls with hungry tummies and plentiful *han.*
> Accept This World's offerings and
> Borrow the power of the shaman so as to
> Unbind your mountainous and river-like *han* and
> Open your heart's door.
>
> In the Other World,
> Put on your *yŏnji* [rouge] and
> *Konji* [the red dot painted in between the bride's eyebrows].[73]
> Give birth to sons and daughters. . . .

C. Sarah Soh, *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence & Postcolonial memory in Korea and Japan* (Chicago: 2008)

Chapter 3

Japan's Military Comfort System as History

When the Japanese army advances, the officers' primary concern is the transportation of the "girl army." The reason Japanese troops don't rape Chinese women is precisely because they have the "girl army." So they are not merely prostitutes!

—Nakayama Tadanao, director of the Nakayama Institute of Japanese-Chinese Medicine, June 1933, in Yoshimi Yoshiaki, *Comfort Women,* 2000

The logic of male privilege that declared that a man who hadn't had sex was not a man and that life was futile supported the licensed prostitution system at home and in the colonies, as well as the military comfort station system in war zones.

—Yoshimi Yoshiaki, *Comfort Women,* 2000

SOUTH KOREAN ACTIVISTS defined the Japanese military comfort system as a "war crime" in the early 1990s; these activists considered the comfort women to have been forcibly and deceptively recruited *chŏngsindae* and abused by the Japanese Imperial Army.[1] Here we should note, however, that "war crime" is *not* a special conceptual category.[2] A war crime may take place *during* war, facilitated by the chaos and confusion of the time, but it is in fact a type of criminal act committed in everyday life under another name, such as murder, torture, rape, forced prostitution, or theft. Testimonials of surviving Korean comfort women encompass a wide range of situations that complicate the picture; they include cases of destitute families selling daughters into indentured prostitution, runaway daughters deceptively recruited into forced prostitution by Japanese and Korean traffickers, abduction by civilian thugs, and forcible recruitment by agents of the colonial state.

Internationally, after publication of a 1996 U.N. report, pro-redress activists, the mass media, and also scholarly publications in English routinely be-

gan to use the term "military sexual slavery" with reference to the Japanese comfort system. By the end of the decade, Japanese, South Korean, and Filipino activists had organized the 2000 Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery, which indicted Japan—and the late emperor in particular—for wartime sexual violence against women.[3]

We should also note that most activists—in both the pro- and the anti-redress movements—have neither lived experience nor personal memories of the historical period under discussion (the early 1930s to 1945) by which to understand the sociocultural and political economic context of the widespread "commerce in women" and the nature of the Japanese military comfort system. Nevertheless, the vigorous redress movement, spearheaded by Korean and Japanese activists and their international supporters, has by now constructed something that may be called a "transnational memory" of the comfort women's experience as sexual slavery.[4] This has been possible, in part, because of the global post–cold war politics of human rights.

Faced with conflicting memories from those who experienced the war (the veterans and surviving comfort women) and this newly formed transnational memory, we must address the question of how one goes about probing into "the truth" about the nature of Japan's military comfort system and the slavery-like conditions many women endured to "comfort" Japanese soldiers. This question goes to the heart of the comfort women controversy, that is, the multiple dimensions of truth as remembered and asserted by disparate individuals and agents with competing personal, national, and feminist political interests and perspectives.

In this chapter, I attempt to compile a broader, better integrated historical view of the comfort system than the ahistorical binary representation of commercial sex versus war crime commonly asserted by the activists of opposing camps. My primary aim is to fully expose the fact that the comfort system encompassed both commercial *and* criminal sex, a point often conveniently lost in the heated international memory wars waged for and against the redress movement. In this regard it is imperative that we take a historical overview of the cultural legacies of traditional Japanese institutions of public sex for a deeper understanding of the wartime military comfort system. Institutionally, Japan's comfort women system was rooted in the country's long history of a system of state-sanctioned prostitution.

PROSTITUTION AND THE STATE: JAPAN'S HISTORY IN BRIEF

Prostitution is commonly regarded as the world's oldest profession. However, feminist scholars have underscored its exploitative nature by contending that pimping, "the living off of the earnings of a prostitute," is the oldest profession across the globe.[5] As the histories of Korea and Japan demonstrate, the most powerful pimps have sometimes been none other than the state itself. Prostitutes may be of either sex, but historically the majority of them have been young women. Prostitution as a social institution was widespread in both preindustrial and industrial societies.[6] The ancient Babylonians, for instance, worshiped fertility and believed that the generative influences of human sexual activity promoted fertility in nature. They maintained a class of women attached to temples whose role was to "civilize the wild man."[7] In medieval Europe many cities maintained public houses of prostitution for the benefit of young unmarried men. Some of these institutions were subsidized by municipal governments, and others generated profits for their host cities. The prostitutes in these establishments were not marginalized or criminalized; they were legally free and socially eligible for marriage.[8]

In contrast, sexual landscapes in modern times have been characterized by stringent moralistic social control of private sexual conduct, on one hand, and provision of regulated prostitution in the public sphere, on the other. Modern societies have produced a profusion of social discourse on sex to which scientific knowledge about human sexuality has often lent a kind of moral weight; these developments constitute the effects of "polymorphous techniques of power" employed in modern nation-states.[9] Licensed prostitution in imperial Japan, for instance, was a commercial system composed of state-regulated "pleasure quarters" (*yūkaku*) in delimited districts where prostitutes' bodies were confined; this system, which fell under state surveillance, controlled virtually every aspect of these women's lives.[10]

Japan's officially condoned institutions of public sex have a long history. The state has played a pivotal role in generating the particular organizational forms, the specific rules and regulations, and the various euphemistic terms for the highly stigmatized women's sexual labor performed for both civilians and servicemen.[11] The establishment in 1193 (Kamakura period, 1185–1333) of an official post (*yūkun bettō*) to deal with prostitutes recognized a loosely organized system of prostitution that provided traveling men with access to female sexual services. Under the shogun Yoshiharu (r. 1521–1546), a new bureau (*keisei kyoku*) was established and began levying a tax on the houses of prostitution in 1528.[12]

The Pleasure Quarters

A forerunner of the pleasure quarters appeared in Kyoto in 1589. It had the support of the warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598), who saw such facilities as necessary to the welfare of men in his service who had been

separated from their wives.[13] The Yoshiwara, the first pleasure quarters in Edo (today's Tokyo), were granted an official license in 1617. The Yoshiwara is just the best-known among hundreds of prostitutes' quarters that existed in pre–World War II Japan. International fame came to the Yoshiwara with the forced opening of Japan to the West toward the end of the Tokugawa shogunate (1600–1868). The Yoshiwara stunned Commodore Matthew C. Perry and his men when they first landed in Japan in July 1853.[14] Visitors could buy guidebooks to these pleasure quarters (*Yoshiwara saiken*), which was a world unto itself, with its own rituals, its own seasonal observances, even its own private language.[15]

> The basic fee (which was doubled on festival days) [for high-ranking courtesans] ranged from the equivalent of $450 to $750 in 1993 American money, and this included none of the tips that had to be paid to the *hikitejaya* [teahouse], the entertainers, and the courtesan's attendants. . . . [Lower-ranking courtesans] . . . had to sit on public display in a custom known as *harimise*. . . . [They sat] behind their cage-like windows on full view to passersby.[16]

One of the rules at the brothels was that samurai had to leave swords and daggers with attendants to prevent them from wielding their weapons while intoxicated.[17] Most of the women in the brothels had been sold by destitute parents and were virtual prisoners. But according to Donald Jenkins, curator of Asian art at the Portland Art Museum and author of *The Floating World Revisited,* the terms of their captivity resembled indentured servitude more than slavery, and "life in the brothels was not excessively harsh by the standards of the time."[18]

During the 1850s and 1860s, Japan underwent a period of rapid social and political change in response to economic distress, the onslaught of Western demands that it open its doors, popular unrest, and finally the civil war that ended the Tokugawa shogunate.[19] Japan was pressured to sign unequal treaty agreements with the Americans, the British, the Russians, and the Dutch. Foreign traders began to settle in large numbers around the harbor of Yokohama. Based on an agreement with the American consul-general Townsend Harris, who had arrived in Japan 1856, pleasure quarters were established for foreigners in Yokohama to ward off disputes over the rape of Japanese women by resident foreigners.[20] With the "commerce in foreigners and women" prospering in Yokohama, the government approved the Yoshiwara brothel owners' request to build a special red-light district for foreigners in Tokyo in 1868.[21] This was the same year the new Meiji ("enlightened rule") state was born. Japanese society at that moment was reeling from the effects of "foreigner shock," the civil war, and the pauperization of the people. There was a surfeit of prostitutes, most whom were the wives and daughters of more than a million and a half samurai who had been freed from their masters and forced to seek new livelihoods. More than thirty thousand women in Edo alone lost contact with their samurai husbands and had to make a living on their own.[22]

The Meiji State and Modern Prostitution System

The Meiji state (1868–1912), which revolutionaries helped establish by ending the shogunate and restoring imperial rule under the fourteen-year-old emperor, pledged in its "charter oath" to seek knowledge "throughout the world in order to strengthen the foundations of imperial rule."[23] Japan's effort to modernize and strengthen the nation included legislating a series of new laws and ordinances concerning the prostitution system, and from the 1870s on the Japanese sex trade modeled itself after European systems of regulated prostitution.[24] For example, in 1868 the new government established a syphilis clinic in Yokohama at the suggestion of a Dr. Newton, a medical doctor in the British Royal Navy, and placed it under British jurisdiction inside the licensed pleasure quarters.[25] In 1871 the Meiji state issued a directive to local governments to set up examination centers for syphilis; these came to be known as "prostitute hospitals."[26]

The licensed prostitution system of Meiji Japan was qualitatively different from the system of the Tokugawa era in three respects.[27] First, following a European (French) practice,[28] it required prostitutes to submit to compulsory venereal disease examinations, in effect holding the women responsible for infection. Many Japanese regarded this program as "a gift from foreign countries," and government leaders believed that its introduction was consistent with the Meiji's enlightened policies.[29] Second, the government levied a monthly licensing fee on brothel owners and prostitutes. Third, it prohibited and criminalized unlicensed prostitution. The Japanese historian Fujime Yuki characterizes these state policies as an attempt to monopolize the traffic in women for sex.[30] The American historian Susan Burns, by contrast, interprets it as the state-led production of a new social and political discourse on human sexuality. This discourse engaged the Japanese public in rethinking the nature of the body, the public implications of disease, and notions of female social roles and sexuality in the construction of an emergent concept, the "national body" (*kokutai*).[31]

Most significant for this study, the first human rights controversy over Japan's licensed prostitution erupted as an aftereffect of lawsuits involving

the Peruvian ship *Maria Luz,* which entered Yokohama harbor for repairs in June of 1872.[32] On board were 231 Chinese under transport from Macao to Peru. So desperate were conditions on the ship that a man who had been deceptively recruited by traffickers in the "coolie trade" risked his life by jumping ship to seek help. He was rescued by the crew of an English battleship. The resident British chargé d'affaires contacted the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and asked to be allowed to intervene in the mistreatment of the Chinese passengers, among whom were thirteen children. At the recommendation of British and American diplomats, the Japanese government set up a special court. The Japanese judge ruled that the captain was innocent and his ship was allowed to leave. The judge refused, however, to return the Chinese to the ship. The captain filed a civil suit, and his lawyer, F. V. Dickens, an Englishman residing in Yokohama, argued that if the Chinese laborers were to be regarded as slaves from a humanitarian perspective, the tens of thousands of women trafficked as prostitutes in Japan were in fact slaves, too. High officials in the courtroom as well as the judge were deeply disturbed at the charge. Judge Ōe responded in the end that the Japanese government was in fact considering emancipation of prostitutes.[33] The Japanese informed China of the incident, and a special envoy arrived from China to convey his countrymen home on September 13. Less than a month later, on October 2, 1872, the Japanese government promulgated Ordinance No. 295, the "prostitutes liberation law" (*shōgi kaihō rei*).[34]

In fact, this new law amounted to little more than a political declaration meant to save face with the international community. The tearful joy of the emancipated prostitutes lasted less than a month. Most of them were unable to find other means of support after returning to their hometowns; consequently, they either engaged in unlicensed prostitution or returned to the pleasure quarters.[35] The government had no intention of eradicating prostitution, but it was painfully aware that the institution drew sharp criticism from foreign powers. The face-saving regulations resulted in a host of euphemisms that disguised the customary trafficking practices in new contractual language; technically the women now enjoyed the status and rights of autonomous agents.

The *yūkaku* became "rented banquet or drawing rooms" (*kashi zashiki*), where prostitutes "voluntarily" entertained customers; brothel owners merely rented out the rooms and served food. The wording of regulations for the "rental room business" represented relations between brothel owners and prostitutes as fair commercial transactions. The conventional term "human trafficking" (*jinshin baibai*) was replaced by "human mortgage" (*jinshin teitō*), and the "body price" (*midaikin*) was changed to "advance wage" (*maegari*). Within two years, the business of prostitution had adjusted to its new terms and went on with little substantive change.[36]

The first grassroots prostitution abolitionist movement began in 1880 when members of the Gumma Prefectural Assembly, including Yuasa Jirō, an advocate of Christian civil rights, submitted a petition to the local government to end prostitution. Members of the industry fought back by forming a national association that supported licensed prostitution. The battle between these groups lasted for more than a decade before the abolition ordinance was adopted in Gumma Prefecture in 1891. The ordinance eliminated the *shōgi* (licensed prostitutes), but it did not stop privately run prostitution. Gumma Prefecture continued to levy taxes on prostitution businesses and perform venereal disease examinations.[37]

Gumma's success in abolishing licensed prostitution encouraged the Japan Women's Christian Temperance Union (Nihon Kirisutokyō Fujin Kyōfūkai) and the Salvation Army to engage in a nationwide abolitionist movement. The objectives of the movement were to save the nation's dignity, criminalize those involved in prostitution, and spread the social ethic that prostitution was a vice and a "shameful or indecent occupation" (*shūgyō*) that made prostitutes *shūgyōfu* (women of indecent occupation).[38] For the abolitionists, licensed prostitution "sullied the dignity of the empire."[39] Thus, the Christian women's society referred to prostitutes working abroad not by the euphemistically ambiguous term *karayuki-san* (literally, "China-bound person"),[40] but as *kaigai* [overseas] *shūgyōfu.*

"Overseas Prostitutes" and Military Prostitution

While advocating the establishment of a disease-free "Pure Japan," however, prostitution abolitionists overlooked the transplantation of regulated prostitution in colonial Korea and Manchuria. In supporting the militarist project of territorial expansion for the greater Japanese Empire, they were actively concerned with programs for the prevention of venereal disease and urged the Japanese government to emulate the military prostitution policies of other imperialist nations. When the military comfort policies were instituted, their effect was to connive with the Japanese army in the massive exploitation of lower-class women, especially those of colonial Korea and other countries.[41]

As Japan continued to militarize in the late nineteenth century, military bases sprang up across the country. Because bases meant local financial gain from increased spending on public works projects and other patterns of consumption, the prefectures competed for such installations, and local authorities tried to lure the military by establishing red-light districts and

amusement areas. The establishment of military bases and the institution of licensed prostitution by local governments went hand in hand.

The demand for military prostitutes and for red-light districts in both Japan and the colonies increased as Japan engaged in imperialist aggression and territorial expansion in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). Nearly twenty thousand Japanese women were laboring as *karayuki-san* by 1910.[42] The term *karayuki-san* initially referred to migrants who went to China or Southeast Asia in search of work, but it gradually came to refer to the destitute women of prewar Japan who worked abroad as prostitutes. These women came from impoverished rural areas and coal-mining towns, especially in northwestern Kyūshū,[43] and had been sold into overseas prostitution. *Karayuki-san* labored at the many Japanese-owned brothels that flourished in Korea, Manchuria, China, Southeast Asia, and North America between the 1860s and 1930s.[44]

J. Mark Ramseyer, an American scholar of Japanese legal studies, has pointed out that most scholars tend to explain Japan's prewar prostitution by repeating journalists' accounts of "naïve women tricked by usurious brothel owners" into a life of "thinly disguised slavery."[45] While recognizing that the slavery argument was "not all fiction," he has cautioned scholars "not to let the brutality of prostitution blind them to the effective ways peasant women and men make the most of bad situations."[46] Ramseyer notes that the women who became licensed prostitutes were "not women with many attractive alternatives" and that "prostitution did pay well."[47] His study concludes that women in prewar Japan became licensed prostitutes by signing six-year indenture contracts, and "most prostitutes did *not* become slaves" (emphasis in original).[48] Instead, most of them quit when their contracts expired, and some were able to quit earlier by repaying their debts in three or four years.

The lived experience of some Korean comfort women has corroborated Ramseyer's research findings, but their personal histories have remained a part of strategically "subjugated knowledge" in contemporary politics. Nevertheless, a vocal minority of feminist leaders and human rights activists, in prewar as well as in contemporary Japan, have pointed out that even those who became "prostitutes"—in the sense that they "voluntarily" entered *ianjo* without overt physical coercion and received money for their services—were also often under economic and social compulsion. The fundamentally clashing views of prostitution as commercial sex versus sexual slavery, in fact, constitute a crucial axis in the competing public discourses and conflicting memories over the comfort women in Japanese society.

In any case, the customary use of red-light districts by the military undoubtedly served as a model for the military comfort stations established at the front as well as in urban centers during the Asia Pacific War. Moreover, the *karayuki-san* provided a concrete model for the comfort women system.[49] The similarities between the *karayuki-san* and the *ianfu* include the sources and methods of their recruitment. Both *karayuki-san* and *ianfu* came mainly from impoverished families and were sold or deceptively recruited into indentured prostitution. Some were simply abducted.

There were major differences, however, in their labor patterns and living conditions. For one thing, *ianfu* labored exclusively for the military, which meant for some women living near or on the battlefront. Furthermore, military authorities and other state agents became systemically involved in the management of military brothels. Finally, compared to *karayuki-san* with civilian clients, *ianfu,* especially non-Japanese women, were more likely to suffer physical violence at the hands of hypermasculine soldiers and also ran a higher risk of being killed by virtue of their proximity to the battlefront.[50]

THE JAPANESE MILITARY COMFORT SYSTEM

In order to get beyond the nationalistic-versus-human-rights discourses, I portray below in broad strokes imperial Japan's military comfort facilities by throwing a harsh light on them to reveal the diverse categories and types of the facilities, which purported to provide troops with regulated access to sexual recreation during the war. I suggest three major categories of the comfort facilities—the concessionary, the paramilitary, and the criminal—to help sort through the ambiguities and complexities of the historical reality surrounding them, which have been nearly uniformly referred to as "comfort stations" (*ianjo,* in Japanese) in the activist discourse as well as in scholarly publications. In this discussion I use the terms *ianjo,* "military comfort facilities," and "comfort stations" interchangeably.

The general contours of the comfort facilities sketched below underscore the fact that the sexual behavior of Japanese troops and the quality of life at comfort facilities varied enormously across time and locale. The reconstruction here of three organizationally diverse categories of the *ianjo* will help illuminate the nature of the comfort system and place it in a comparative historical and cross-national perspective. Analytically, I approach the comfort system as a historical institution deriving from the dynamics of capitalism, militarism, and a sexual-cultural order acted out in a "structure of the conjuncture," to use the anthropologist Marshall Sahlins's terms, in which "cultural categories are actualized in a specific context through the

interested action of the historic agents and the pragmatics of their interaction."[51] In other words, in the conjuctural structure of imperial Japanese society the paternalistic state and its military leaders realized the comfort women system by instructing low-level local functionaries to enlist the help of profit-seeking entrepreneurs in Japan and colonial Korea who, in turn, unscrupulously recruited with false promises young women in search of wage-paying jobs.

To construct a theoretically useful classification of the *ianjo,* then, we first need to situate the military comfort system within the social and historical structures of modern imperial Japan. Only then can we probe its "actualization" in the participation of men and women as individual "historic actors," relying on their own language to reveal personal motivations and circumstances. To do this we must undertake a "double engagement of culture with history."[52] Cultural influence manifests not only in speech and activities in social and public life, but also in customs pertaining to intimate private acts. The concept of sexual culture must be considered "a cultural lifeway" involving notions of personhood, proper gender relations, and theories of human nature as part of a conventionalized and shared system of sexual practices.[53]

For example, the euphemism "comfort women" epitomizes a naturalized masculinist sexual culture. In masculinist sexual culture (a shared feature of patriarchal societies, including Japan and Korea), people believe that men have biologically based sexual "needs" that must be met by access to the female body. This sexual cultural belief, which I shall call "normative heterosexual masculinity," has traditionally been a principal component of what R. W. Connell calls the "heterosexual sensibility" underlying hegemonic or dominant social practices that construct idealized masculinity and femininity and customary gendered power relations between men and women in patriarchy.[54] In both Japanese and Korean patriarchies the state-sanctioned systems of public sex emblematically represented the cultural practice of normative heterosexual masculinity, which encompassed the traditional institutions of professional women entertainers, the geisha and *kisaeng* (in Japan and Korea, respectively). They were trained formally in the arts of literature, music, and dance to entertain male clients in the so-called customary trade in adult amusement. The boundary between "entertainment" and "prostitution" became fuzzy in the lives of traditional geisha and *kisaeng,* especially the low-ranking ones.[55]

In short, in Japanese history the state-regulated system of prostitution recognized what might be called the rule of male sex right,[56] that is, the right of men to have orderly access to commercial, public sex outside marriage, and which presumably helped to protect virtuous respectable women from rape. It is not surprising, then, that the wartime fascist state of imperial Japan endorsed the military comfort system as an extension of licensed prostitution for its armed forces engaged in prolonged warfare.

VARIETIES OF THE MILITARY COMFORT FACILITIES

Let us now turn to the organizational diversity of the *ianjo,* bearing in mind their starkly opposed categorical representations as "rape centers" rather than "comfort stations." Here it is important to ask, What criteria can one employ to effectively differentiate among the variety of *ianjo* described by victim-survivors?

Earlier researchers have asked who managed the comfort stations and where and how long they ran them. Yoshimi Yoshiaki, for example, classified military *ianjo* into three categories: (1) those directly run by the military for the exclusive use of military personnel and civilian military employees; (2) those managed by civilians but supervised and regulated by the military for the exclusive use of the troops or civilian military employees (the most numerous type); and (3) facilities, including restaurants, open to the general public but designated as comfort stations, where military personnel were given special priority.[57] Tanaka Yuki, however, classified them differently, as (1) "permanent" *ianjo* located in major cities; (2) "semipermanent" *ianjo* attached to large army units; and (3) "temporary" *ianjo* set up by small units near the front lines. Tanaka notes that the permanent and semipermanent types were managed either by private proprietors under the military control or by the military forces themselves, while the temporary type is believed to have been run by individual units.[58]

This study, however, considers the *motives* behind running, supporting, and/or patronizing these facilities to better explain the nature of the comfort system. I therefore pay special attention to the "organizational" motives of the diverse categories of *ianjo.*[59] The motives, which can be inferred from narratives of surviving comfort women (and former soldiers), ranged from commercial profit (by civilian entrepreneurs), to paternalistic accommodation (by the state and military leaders), to criminal self-gratification (by soldiers on the battlefield), both individually and collectively. These varying foundational motives must be recognized when we discuss the different operational factors that underlay the concessionary, the paramilitary, and the criminal categories of *ianjo* considered here.

I use the term "concessionary" to refer to commercial houses of assignation and prostitution run by civilian concessionaires to make money; they

were generally located in urban areas. The relationship between civilian proprietors of concessionary *ianjo* and the military authorities sanctioning such enterprises was contractually regulated: the former, as concessionaires, offered the commodities (i.e., sexual services and entertainment) desired by the military; the latter possessed the power to dictate the terms of operation and regulate behavior at the comfort stations. Nakasone Yasuhiro, who became prime minister after the war, mentioned in his memoirs how he, as the chief accounting officer for the 2nd Construction Corps in the navy, permitted the building of an *ianjo* on the island of Borneo to be used by over three thousand men under his command, some of whom had attacked local women.[60] Nakasone provides no operational details, but his *ianjo* probably falls into the paramilitary category, which was installed and managed directly by local units of the military.

A fundamental difference between the concessionary and the paramilitary *ianjo* lay in the fact that the former was run by civilian—mostly Japanese and Korean—entrepreneurs for profit, although this does not necessarily mean they always made money. The paramilitary *ianjo,* by contrast, were operated as not-for-profit recreational facilities, run by the paternalistic military to control the troops through regulated access to sex, though those run under the ticketing system might have been financially profitable. Although both categories seemed to have largely relied on civilian traffickers to procure women, the military was at times directly involved as evidenced by the case of interned Dutch women such as Ruff-O'Herne. Whether concessionary or paramilitary, the articulated aims of the *ianjo* were the same: boosting the morale of the troops, checking the spread of venereal disease, and preventing sex crimes against local women.[61]

By contrast, the most vicious category of the comfort stations, what I call the criminal *ianjo,* came into being primarily *as an outcome* of sex crimes committed by individual troops against local women. Criminal *ianjo,* which were run by soldiers themselves in the battlefield, confined women in enemy territory in sexual enslavement after either rape and abduction or coercive procurement. Soldiers gratified their sexual "needs" at will and for free. The criminal category of *ianjo* appears to have emerged primarily during the final years and months of the war.[62]

Here we must note that, in practice, ambiguities and underlying similarities existed among the different categories of *ianjo.* The lives of comfort women featured elements of coercion in the recruitment and slavery-like conditions in incorporation processes. Moreover, it was not only soldiers, but also the civilian managers and owners, who inflicted physical violence against the women, as many survivors have described. Despite the common

underlying brutality of the system, however, the criminal category appears to have been an anomaly of vicious and hypermasculine lechery, distinct from the state-endorsed and regulated *ianjo* of the concessionary and paramilitary categories that catered to cultural assumptions about normative heterosexual masculinity. The criminal *ianjo* constituted a battlefield embodiment of aggressive and violent military heterosexual hypermasculinity.[63]

The Concessionary *Ianjo*

The concessionary *ianjo* may be further divided into two subtypes: the "house of entertainment," which served primarily officers, and the "house of prostitution," which catered to the rank and file. The former offered a more comprehensive range of recreational activities, as exemplified in the case of the Military Center described below, whereas the latter was operated simply as a brothel.

1. The House of Entertainment

The "house of entertainment" refers to relatively comprehensive comfort facilities run by civilians in cooperation with the military. Like establishments in the pleasure quarters of imperial Japan, the entertainment house often resembled a special type of restaurant called *ryōtei* (*yojŏng,* in Korean) that were known under ordinary business names. For example, the Silver Moon Loft (*Gingetsurō,* in Japanese; *Ŭnwŏllu,* in Korean) and the Abundant Sea Loft (*Hōkairō,* in Japanese; *P'unghaeru,* in Korean) are the names of comfort stations set up exclusively for the Japanese navy in Ch'ŏngjin, a port city in North Hamkyŏng Province in northern Korea. These were established in the mid-1930s and 1938, respectively,[64] and all the comfort stations in Taiwan, Saipan, Truk, and Palau that the Japanese comfort woman survivor Shirota Suzuko recalled in her autobiography had normal business names.[65] The entertainment house usually served food and alcoholic beverages, as well as heterosexual entertainment and prostitution, exclusively for military men and for civilian military employees. Detailed regulations for the operation of comfort facilities issued by the Japanese army in Shanghai on April 1, 1932, reveal that the authorities were most concerned with the prevention of venereal disease. They stipulated a weekly medical examination of the "female receptionists" (*sekkyakufu*). The regulations set business hours and hourly fees for sexual services on the basis of the women's ethnicity: 1.5 yen for Japanese women, 1 yen for Korean and Chinese women.[66] Notably, Korean women's status in the ethnic hierarchy appears to have improved toward the end of the war, which, presumably, reflected a conscientious implementation of imperial Japan's "one body" (*naisen ittai*) policy

of the forced assimilation of Koreans.[67] For example, comfort stations in Manila around 1943 or 1944 charged the same rate for Korean *ianfu* as for Japanese.[68]

The Military Center (Kunin Hoegwan, in Korean) in Manchuria was an example of upscale modern military recreational facilities. According to the testimonial of Mun Myŏng-gŭm (1919–2000), the Military Center was a huge two-story building that also housed the general headquarters of the 123rd Unit of the 4th Army of the Kantōgun.[69] The east wing of the building held a big cinema, and the first floor contained a huge banquet hall, a restaurant, and a public bath. Mun, who was deceptively recruited at age eighteen by a Korean man in his fifties, recalled her room at the Military Center, the second floor of which was used as the business as well as residential quarters for comfort women:[70]

> The room assigned to me was simple but clean. When I first entered it, I saw a Japanese-style tatami floor on which military bedding for two people had been placed, with two pillows. I thought naively that I might be sharing the room with another woman. What surprised me most, however, was that the room had its own bathroom. It was equipped with a huge mirror, a bathtub, a sink, a towel, and a bar of soap. Remembering the hard labor involved in getting water in my rural hometown, I was further amazed to find that not only cold water but also hot water was instantly available upon turning the knob. Everything in the bathroom looked new. The daily necessities we had to buy were toothpaste and personal cosmetics.[71] For me and other colleagues who did not have money, the manager of the comfort station entered these purchases as part of our individual debts. "What work would they have us do to allow us such fine accommodation?" My mind was full of questions then. After we had rested for a few days, I came to learn that we were placed at a military comfort station.[72]

Another entertainment house in Manchuria is mentioned in the testimonial of Kim Sun-ok (b. 1922). Kim labored at a comfort station that housed about forty women and was located in a place called Tongnyŏnghyŏnsŏng, near the Chinese-Russian border, from 1941 to 1945.[73] Some Japanese women also labored there, but Koreans were more numerous. Kim was told that her comfort station admitted only those women who had been educated at *kisaeng* schools or had had comparable training.[74] Parties for senior officers were frequently held there to celebrate victories and other events. Japanese geisha in kimonos or Korean *kisaeng* in *ch'ima* and *chŏgori* (Korean dress) played music and danced to entertain the officers at these parties.

Another account of an entertainment house comes from Southeast Asia. In Rangoon, Burma, an officer's club called Suikōen hired only Japanese women, who served military officers exclusively. The Suikōen was a special branch of a famous, high-class restaurant of the same name in Kurume, Japan.[75] Entertainment houses such as Suikōen served primarily high-ranking officers from the beginning to the end of the Asia Pacific War in areas where large contingents of the Japanese military were headquartered. According to a former infantryman named Honda (b. 1914), however, some "officers' clubs" in China offered sexual services to all military men, dividing service hours among different ranks and reserving the overnight service for officers only.[76]

2. The House of Prostitution

The second type of the concessionary *ianjo* was owned and managed by civilians but was closely supervised and regulated by the military. Ichikawa Ichirō (b. 1920), a former military policeman turned supporter of the redress movement,[77] stated during our interview that it is "not incorrect" to argue, as some former soldiers and antiredress activists have, that military comfort stations were run by civilian entrepreneurs. Conscripted in 1943, Ichikawa served as a *kempei* (military policeman) in Manchuria for about a year and half. After the war ended, he was held for five years in Siberia as a prisoner of war and a war criminal prior to his repatriation in 1950. During the war Ichikawa's main duty as a *kempei* was to supervise two military comfort stations. He recalled that when he was assigned he hardly knew the term *ianfu:*

> I thought vaguely that *ianjo* was a place where soldiers went to relax and enjoy themselves. In addition to the two military *ianjo* I supervised, there were *minkan ianjo* [private or civilian comfort stations] as well as many special restaurants where prostitution took place. The military customers there were almost exclusively officers. However, officers also went to military *ianjo,* since they were cheaper than civilian ones.

A notable difference between civilian and military *ianjo,* according to Ichikawa, was that as a security precaution managers of the military *ianjo* under his supervision had to provide information on the personal identity of

Plate 3.1. Ichikawa Ichirō with the author, Tokyo, 1997. (Source: the author.)

each comfort woman and submit to the military police a daily report on the names of customers and of the women who served them.[78] As a matter of fact, the practice of systematic record keeping at brothels and state surveillance of the adult entertainment industry were nothing new to the Japanese authorities. The policies of the Meiji (1868–1912) government, for example, had included a set of regulations that supervised and taxed the five categories of workers in the pleasure quarters. Houses of assignation and banquet halls, for instance, were required to record and report daily on the identity of all customers and the amounts of money they spent on the premises.[79]

Kim Sun-dŏk (a.k.a. Kim Tŏk-chin),[80] a Korean survivor who developed an intimate relationship with a high-ranking officer named Izumi during her three-year (1937–1940) ordeal as a comfort woman, recalled that the military regularly inspected her comfort station—located outside Shanghai and later in Nanking (Nanjing) and run by the Korean man who recruited her—to check the food and the cleanliness of the house. Kim also mentioned a regular medical examination conducted by the military doctor. By comparison, Yi Yong-su, who arrived in Taiwan in January 1945, stated that there was no regular medical examination at her comfort station, which was run by a Japanese man who had recruited her from Taegu (as described in the introduction). When Yi contracted a venereal disease, the proprietor gave her an injection known as "No. 606," which contained mercury and contributed to her later infertility. The area had no hospital or health clinic.[81]

In general, the houses of prostitution catered primarily to noncommissioned officers and enlisted men but reserved overnight services as a privilege exclusive to officers. Some brothels, by contrast, served only officers. One such example was the House of the Seven Seas in Java, described in detail by Ruff-O'Herne.[82] It was set up in a large Dutch colonial–style house with nicely furnished rooms for each woman, a storeroom for food, servants' rooms, a large garden with several trees, and a pen for fowl. The front veranda of the house was used as a reception area, where the officers could lounge and purchase tickets for the girls or women of their choice, whose pictures were displayed on a bulletin board. The army doctor who conducted weekly medical examinations of the women was one of the regular "customers." An Indonesian housemaid and a houseboy served meals and did various household chores for the Dutch comfort women, who included married "volunteers."

The majority of the Korean survivors appear to have labored at these houses of prostitution, where they were identified by their newly given "professional" Japanese names such as "Nobuko" for Yi Sang-ok and "Mi-chan" for Mun P'il-gi, a short version of Mun's childhood Japanese name, Miyoko. Many claim not to have received any money. Among the very few who acknowledged payment for their sexual labor, Ha Yŏng-i (pseudonym; b. 1922) stands out for her detailed recollections of her nearly seven years as a comfort woman. Ha received 10 percent of the 1.5-yen fee until after 1940, when upon the order of a military leader her cut jumped to 60 percent.[83]

On weekdays the women sat in the hallway for customers to view before picking their chosen ones. This practice of "sitting in public display" (*harimise*) had been common in licensed brothels of Japanese pleasure quarters since the seventeenth century.[84] Mun P'il-gi recalled that on weekdays they served about ten soldiers, usually during evenings because the men were out fighting during the day. Yi Yong-su, by contrast, stated that she served on average four or five soldiers a day when she labored in Taiwan in 1945. According to many Korean survivors, weekends at the comfort stations were hectic. They often did not have time to eat, let alone sit in the hallway. On Saturdays and Sundays, Mun P'il-gi had forty to fifty soldiers who would come from eight in the morning until seven in the evening, after which only officers could visit. Mun recalled that soldiers lined up outside the door, waiting their turn and sometimes quarreling when someone jumped the queue, while other survivors such as Pak Pok-sun insisted that such descriptions of queuing and quarreling were untrue. In any case, generally, each soldier was allowed thirty minutes but most left after about five minutes of sexual contact, according to Mun and others. Some brought their own condoms, but a few would refuse to use them. Mun would then insist, threatening to report them to their superiors or pleading with them to comply so they would not catch a disease.

Houses of prostitution were usually located in clusters,[85] both in big cities and in isolated areas where the military units were stationed. The experi-

ences of Yi Ok-sŏn (b. 1927)—who was abducted by a Japanese man and a Korean man on her way home after shopping at a department store in Ulsan and taken to Manchuria, where she was held from 1942 to 1945—reveal that some brothel operators received substantial assistance from the military when they set up comfort stations. The brothel where Yi Ok-sŏn labored was first located inside the military camp, and during those several months the women were fed in the canteen after the soldiers had finished their meals. After the Japanese civilian proprietor moved the establishment outside camp and settled it near the market, it became a "regular military comfort station" with a big sign on the gate. Yi (also known by the Japanese female name Tomiko) was forced to wear makeup and participate in *harimise* for the soldier-customers.[86]

Brothels in urban centers served not only troops stationed in the city, but also those passing through. In addition, some women were made to travel from one camp to another. For example, Hong Kang-rim (b. 1922), who labored at an urban *ianjo* in Hunan Province in China from the early 1940s until 1945, recalled that the most difficult time of her life as an *ianfu* was when she and her colleagues had to take turns traveling on foot to outposts, where they would stay for a month at a time to provide sexual services to the men stationed there.[87] Proprietors of the houses of prostitution located in isolated areas followed the military unit they were servicing, as Kim Hak-sun's account reveals (see below). Kim Sun-dŏk also recalled moving several times along with her fellow *ianfu* whenever her Korean recruiter-proprietor decided to do so; they started somewhere near Shanghai and ended up in Nanking (Nanjing) before she returned home.[88]

The Paramilitary *Ianjo*

The paramilitary *ianjo* may also be subdivided into two types, in chronological order of their emergence. The *ianjo* I call the "maidens' auxiliary" was embedded with a particular military unit that directly managed the facility for its own exclusive use. It was typically located in a remote frontline area, where the *ianfu* played multiple feminine gender roles, performing both manual and sexual labor. In contrast to the maidens' auxiliaries, which constituted an *embedded* "girls' army" kept within the military compound, the second type of the paramilitary *ianjo,* the "quasi-brothel," was located outside the military compound and generally did not perform manual labor. The quasi-brothels operated by the military worked much like the civilian-run houses of prostitution but were not motivated by profit. The testimonials of victim-survivors suggest that civilian traffickers procured women for both types of paramilitary *ianjo.*

1. The Maidens' Auxiliary

The embedded maidens' auxiliary units seem to have been set up in the early 1930s, not long after the September 1931 Manchurian Incident (see the testimonial of Ch'oe Il-rye below). One may assume that the maidens' auxiliaries became more numerous after war with China began in earnest in 1937. The Japanese army used a variety of euphemistic terms, such as the "special platoon" (*tokushu shōtai*) and the "girls' army" (*jōshigun*) to refer to groups of the *karayuki-san.*[89] These prostitutes were regarded as an essential part of the army; the women were transported along with provisions when the army advanced. Navy documents referred to comfort women as *toku-yō-in* (literally, special-necessary-personnel) and sent them to Southeast Asia and the Pacific region as a matter of practical policy during the final phase of the war.[90] Nakayama Tadanao, whose 1933 comments on the "girls' army" after his visit to the Japanese Imperial Army headquarters in Jinzhou, Manchuria, are excerpted in the chapter epigraph, also observed that comfort women became "nurses as tender as wives" to the wounded soldiers.[91]

Notably, some survivors in South Korea, such as Yi Tŭk-nam (b. 1918) and Mun Ok-chu (1924–1996), testified that they indeed played the role of nurses in Indonesia and Thailand, respectively, during the last few months of the war.[92] In addition, the Korean survivor Ch'oe Il-rye provides uniquely significant evidence of a prototypical embedded maidens' auxiliary. Ch'oe's testimonial is extremely valuable for several reasons.[93] First, although documentary evidence for the establishment of the first confirmed comfort station in Manchuria is dated March 1933,[94] Ch'oe Il-rye's testimony dates the establishment to 1932. Second, her case reveals that the military played an active role in setting up comfort stations of the paramilitary category from the start of the Asia Pacific War rather than after the Nanking massacre in 1937, which official documents may suggest.[95] Third, because she labored as a comfort woman for the same military unit for thirteen years, covering roughly the entire period of the comfort system, her testimonial narrative, summarized below, reveals the deteriorating changes in living conditions at comfort stations during the final phase of the war and supports the hypothesis of a three-phase evolution of military comfort facilities. Ch'oe Il-rye recalled:

> My family lived in the remote countryside in South Chŏlla Province where one could hardly see a car pass by. I did not know about schools or studying. My father was an agricultural laborer. My mother died of an illness after she gave birth to my younger sister. We were very poor, and I worked as a maid for a neighbor. It was in 1932, when I

was sixteen years old, that two men in military uniforms [believed to be Japanese] abducted me from near a village well. The soldiers took me to a nearby city [possibly Kwangju], where we stayed for about a month so that they could gather more women. When we set out on the road, there were about thirty women riding in several trucks passing through Taejŏn, Seoul, and P'yŏngyang.

Upon the arrival of my group of five girls at a remote unpopulated battlefront in Manchuria on a very cold winter day, I watched the soldiers build their barracks using plywood and tent materials. A few yards away from their own large barracks, they built separate living quarters for us women. Metal wire fences surrounded the buildings, and two sentinels stood at the entrance to guard the barracks. At first, my group of five women was accommodated in one room, but later we were assigned to individual rooms. They also gave us new names. Mine was Haruko, and all five of us got along very well. The military provided us with meals and seasonal clothing.

A month or so after our arrival, a soldier came to conduct medical tests on us by drawing blood from the ear. After the test, a high-ranking officer summoned me to have sex. Until then I had no knowledge about the male sexual organ, let alone about coitus. The officer raped me, and I tried to accept everything as my fate. I recall that about thirty of us women resided scattered across the huge military compound. We gathered together for weekly medical examinations on a weekday when we did not serve soldiers.

For thirteen years, from 1932 to 1945, I labored as *wianbu,* serving only officers most of the time. Officers sent their men to fetch me to their places. My colleagues and I also worked as nurses and washerwomen for the soldiers. We would send off soldiers to battle, tend the wounded, and attend the funerals of those killed in combat, wearing black hats and kimonos. Sometimes, some of my colleagues and I became "serving women," which afforded us an opportunity to consume alcoholic drinks with the soldiers. There was no regular payment, but I was able to save a very large amount of money (about 1,000 yen) by accumulating the occasional tips of 2 to 3 yen given by some officers.

Toward the end of the war, when life became harder, without enough food to go around, an officer whom I served regularly told me to flee without telling the other women. He provided me with three white identification cards and explained to me in detail how to run away. I followed his instructions and was able to make it. By the time I arrived in Seoul, Korea was liberated. Then I returned to my hometown right away.[96]

2. The Quasi-Brothel

The quasi-brothel appears to have also existed in relatively remote areas close to the front lines, and it sometimes served multiple units. With the commanding officer's permission, unit members visited the *ianjo* of the quasi-brothels on specified days for an allotted amount of time. Extant official documents reveal these characteristics and record that this type of comfort stations were established "in rapid succession" in central China after 1938.[97]

Kim Hak-sun's description of her experiences highlights the characteristics of the quasi-brothel. Kim was seventeen years old when her foster father took her and another girl to China to find jobs for them. Both girls completed their training to become *kisaeng* but were unable to work in Korea because they were minors. Kim's accounts—as others have noted—vary as to the procedure whereby the two girls were taken to a comfort station, as well as the exact place.[98] Her testimonial narrative for the 1991 lawsuit stated that the foster father took the girls to a small village called Ch'ŏlpyŏkjin (Tiebizhen, in Chinese) and left them there. In her 1993 published version of the story, on their arrival in Beijing, the girls were separated from Kim's foster father by the Japanese military and were then forcibly taken to a house being used as a comfort station. In contrast, I learned from Yun Chŏng-ok, the founding corepresentative of the Korean Council, that Kim's original unpublished story given to Yun included a quirky twist: her foster father apparently worked as the manager of the comfort station until he disappeared one day,[99] though her published testimonial narrative states that no one managed the women directly in the house where she stayed. This sort of variation in circumstantial details should not detract from the fundamental value of her account. In light of the historical significance of her being the first Korean woman to come out and of her having helped ignite the redress movement, I provide the relatively detailed narrative of her life below, from her birth in Manchuria to her life as a comfort woman in 1941, ending with her successful escape from the comfort station and her return home as a married woman in 1946.[100]

I was born in Manchuria in 1924 and had the misfortune of losing my father soon after my birth, depriving me, among many other things in my wretched life, of the opportunity to receive the traditional celebration of the one-hundredth-day feast [*paegil chanch'i*] for newborn

babies. My mother apparently came to regard my birth as an omen for her own hard life ahead. When I behaved in an unruly manner, for example, my mother would bewail her *sinse* [personal circumstances], accusing me of having brought on the death of my father. Mother would also berate me for being troublesome, "just like" my deceased father, who had pestered her so much. After returning to Korea, Mother remarried when I turned fourteen. I did not get along with the stepfather, and I felt estrangement in my *chŏng* [affect] toward mother. She then pawned me as a foster daughter to a man who changed my name to [the more feminine-sounding] Kŭm-hwa and gave me formal *kisaeng* training in singing and dancing.

When I finished my training, I was seventeen years old and my minor status prevented me from working as a *kisaeng*. My foster father then decided to find a job for me in China. After receiving permission to do so from my mother, he left for China with me and another girl (who had also been trained to be a *kisaeng*) in 1941. After we arrived in Beijing, we ran into Japanese soldiers and an officer, who asked my foster father if we were from Korea. They then took him away under charges of being a spy. Other soldiers hustled me and the other girl along a back street to where a truck was parked. About forty to fifty soldiers were on board. When we refused to board, the soldiers simply lifted us into the truck. Shortly afterward, the officer who had taken my foster father returned, and the truck sped away immediately. During the journey, when shooting was heard, everyone got off and crouched underneath the truck. We were given balls of cooked rice for food during the ride. At dusk the following day we got off the truck and were taken to a house. Later in the evening, the officer came to take me to an adjoining room, divided only by a curtain. He forced himself upon me. During the night, he raped me again.

The following day, soldiers brought two wooden beds they made for my companion and me. As we learned later, the red brick house had been abandoned by fleeing Chinese and turned into a comfort station. Next to the house was a military unit. I learned later from the soldiers that the place was called Ch'ŏlpyŏkchin. There were five Korean women in the house. They all had Japanese names. The twenty-two-year-old Shizue was the oldest. She gave my friend and me Japanese names, Emiko and Aiko, respectively, to be used at the comfort station. The soldiers brought us rice and other groceries, and the five women took turns cooking and doing laundry. As the youngest, I ended up doing the most cooking and washing. If I asked the soldiers for cooked rice occasionally, they would bring me the cooked rice and soup that they had prepared for their own consumption. Sometimes they would also smuggle me snacks such as dry biscuits.

Regarding fees, Shizue once told me that the rank and file should pay the women 1.5 yen a visit and the officers 8 yen to stay overnight. When I asked who received the money, all she replied was that we were the ones who should be paid. But I never received any money at the comfort station, and I wondered what made Shizue say such things. [It is conceivable that Shizue and others had entered into contracts of indenture with the civilian traffickers who delivered them to the paramilitary comfort station.]

If we wished to go out, the sentinel of the military unit located next to the house would check us. Each room had a bed covered by a blanket and a basin by the door. We wore cotton underwear that had been discarded by the soldiers. From time to time, they would bring us clothes acquired from abandoned Chinese houses. When the soldiers came to the house, they chose the rooms of the women they fancied. As a result, each of us had regular customers. They varied in the way they treated us. While some would knock me out [with exhaustion] at the end of the thirty minutes, others would be quite gentle. One ordered me to suck his sexual organ while holding my head between his legs. Another asked me to wash his sexual organ after intercourse. Sometimes when I resisted out of disgust, I would end up being roundly beaten.

The women at my place were not furnished with condoms. Instead, soldiers brought their own. And once a week, a military doctor from the rear would come with an assistant to conduct routine medical check-ups. When he was busy, he would sometimes miss a visit. We had no set holidays and had to serve soldiers even during menstrual periods. After a month, I began to realize that the same men kept coming back, and that there were no new soldiers. Usually, they would come in the afternoon for about half an hour, but when they had been out on punitive expeditions, they would visit us in the morning. On such days, they would return in the early hours of the morning, singing as they marched, and we had to be up early to serve them, usually at about seven or eight. Soldiers who came in the afternoon would stay for about thirty minutes each. When they visited us in the evening, they would often come drunk and demand that we entertain them by singing or dancing.

After about two months, the military unit moved in a great hurry

one morning. We were told to ride in the truck with the soldiers. The new place was not too far away, but it seemed to be further out in the countryside. We could hear much more shooting than in the previous location. The house was smaller, and fewer soldiers came. The military doctor seldom visited the new place. Soldiers went on expeditions more frequently than before, and quite a few of them brought bottles of alcohol with them when they visited us in the morning after such trips. Life seemed more miserable than before, and I continued to look for ways to escape as I did before the move.

One day a Korean itinerant merchant of about forty years of age managed to sneak into my room. Upon confirming that he was a fellow Korean, I appealed to his sense of ethnic solidarity, begging him to take me with him. After servicing his sexual desire, I desperately pleaded again with the rather reluctant compatriot before I was able to flee with him. We became man and wife, and I gave birth to a daughter and a son before our return to Korea in 1946.

On first reading Kim Hak-sun's published testimony, prior to meeting with her in September 1995, I felt the primary tone of her narrative was fatalistic resignation tinged with a sense of *han*. In fact, the bitter memories she did not wish to "even recollect" included not only the four traumatic months at the two comfort stations in China, but also her childhood resentment toward her remarried mother and her own unhappy marital life. She concluded sadly that her "dirty lot" (*tŏrŏun p'alcha*) had started with her unlucky relationship with her parents, which led to her unfortunate young adulthood at the comfort station and marriage to an abusive husband. Most of all, as a mother she suffered dreadfully from the premature deaths of her children.

The Criminal *Ianjo*

Unlike the categories of *ianjo* described above, makeshift facilities that can only be called criminal appear to have sprung up during the final years and months of the war. They seem to have been improvised by combat soldiers on the battlefronts of occupied territories such as the Philippines. Life at the criminal *ianjo* bore little resemblance to those where commercial sex was provided, nor did these operations observe health regulations or hygienic considerations insisted on by the military authorities.

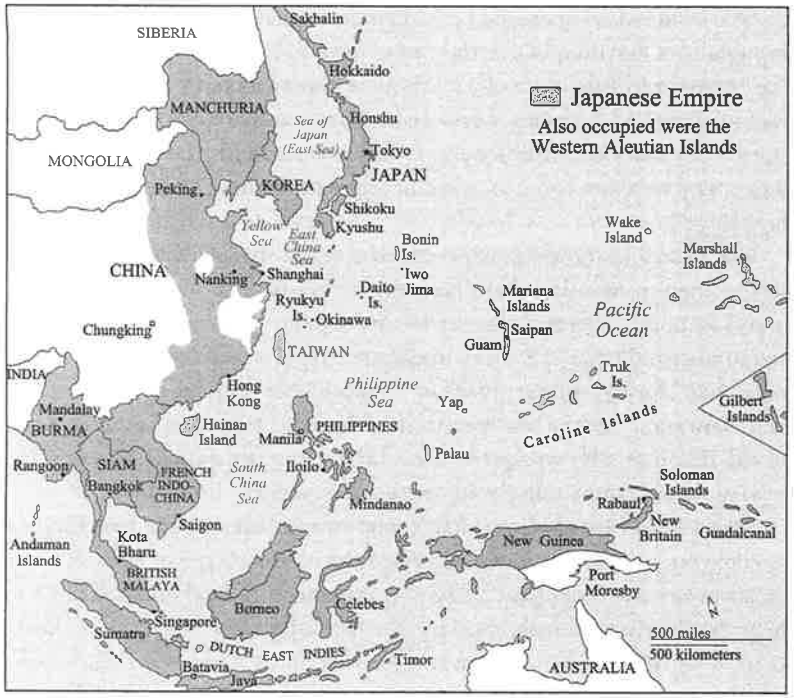
A general picture of the criminal *ianjo* may be drawn from the testimonials of Filipino victim-survivors who lived in provincial towns near the battlefronts after the Japanese invasion in December 1941. Their personal

ordeals included being caught by soldiers and raped in the field before being brought to a garrison, where they were forced into sexual slavery. Among the twenty-two Filipino women whose testimonials have been published, the majority had been held between one week and a few months, but five stated they had been held for more than a year. Most managed to escape when they were not being watched or when the American military started bombing.[101]

The situations these women endured contrast sharply with that of comfort women in Manila, where Japanese nationals (then including Koreans and Taiwanese) operated dozens of concessionary *ianjo,* including special restaurants and what U.S. army intelligence reports translated as "houses of relaxation" for the military.[102] They employed not only Japanese, Koreans, and Taiwanese "geisha" or "prostitutes," but also Filipinas; however, none of the Filipinas who worked at these urban comfort stations are included among the litigants suing the Japanese government.

Maria Rosa Henson (1927–1997), who in 1992 became the first Filipina to come out as a former *ianfu,* described the criminal type of *ianjo* in some detail in her autobiography.[103] Henson was carrying food and medicine to help the Filipino guerrilla movement when a Japanese soldier at a checkpoint took her at gunpoint to a comfort station in April 1943. That *ianjo,* which was operated as a sort of "impromptu rape camp," was located on the second floor of the building that had been the town hospital but had been turned into the "Japanese headquarters and garrison."[104] Henson found six other women there. Henson was given a small room, which had a bamboo bed and a curtain but no door. Soldiers stood guard in the hall outside the rooms. The next day, a soldier entered her room and pointed his bayonet at her chest. He used his bayonet to tear her dress open before he raped her. When he was finished, other soldiers took turns.

The criminal *ianjo* Henson described, at least on the surface, resembles the "rape centers" of the Serbian forces during the Balkan conflict, except in one respect: the subjective and underlying motives to rape seemed to have fundamentally differed. Despite the claims of Korean activists that the Japanese use of Korean comfort women was a "genocidal act," rapes at the Japanese camps, from the viewpoint of soldiers, were committed for sexual release and satisfaction.[105] The Serbian military, however, used rape as a weapon intended to help carry out "ethnic cleansing" in the Balkan war.[106] Women held in rape centers in Bosnia-Herzegovina were subjected to "deliberate impregnation" and public display.[107] Some rapes were turned into "sexual spectacles" that were filmed for mass consumption as war propaganda.[108]



Map 3. The Japanese Empire, circa 1943

The Japanese *ianjo* of the criminal category, however, was rooted in centuries-old masculinist sexual culture and represented an embodiment of aggressive and violent military hypermasculinity. Soldiers at the criminal *ianjo* seem to have raped in private for personal sexual recreation. This point is driven home when we learn from Henson that one officer who raped her said "Arigatō" (thank you) before he left her room.[109] In addition, condom use was an important behavioral requirement at the Japanese comfort stations, even though some men ignored the regulation, as survivors' testimonials have disclosed.

EVOLVING PHASES OF THE *IANJO*

It is important to emphasize that the multiple categories and varying types of *ianjo* discussed above were created in the context of Japan's fifteen-year war—from their first appearance in 1932 in China (primarily in Shanghai and Manchuria) to their proliferation in number and variety during more than thirteen years across the vast expanse of the Japanese wartime empire, which included not only the Japanese archipelago, the Korean peninsula, Taiwan, and major parts of the mainland China, but also the Pacific Islands and Southeast Asian countries under Western colonial rule. These comfort stations represented the militarized behavioral practice rooted in Japanese masculinist sexual culture that regarded prostitution as among the "customary businesses" (*fūzokueigyō* or *p'ungsokyŏngŏp,* in Japanese and Korean, respectively) requiring licenses for the provision of "adult entertainment."[110] The starting point for the creation of comfort facilities for the Japanese military in China was commonsense recognition of normative heterosexual masculinity, tacitly acknowledging Japanese men's customary sex-right to seek and enjoy heterosexual entertainment and coitus outside matrimony. A theoretical model I am positing to explain the phenomenon of the Japanese military comfort station system and its evolutionary transformation across time and place is encapsulated in table 3.1.

The model postulates that the historical evolution of the comfort station system roughly coincided with three pivotal events in the trajectory of

Table 3.1. Three-phase evolutionary model of Japanese military comfort stations (MCS), 1932–1945

MCS category	Phase: Post–Manchurian invasion, 1932–1937	Phase: Post–Nanking massacre, 1938–1941	Phase: Post–Pearl Harbor attack, 1942–1945	Means of wartime liberation from MCS
1. Concessionary	Houses of entertainment (urban areas)	Houses of prostitution (ubiquitous)		Payment of debt or officers' personal intervention
2. Paramilitary	Maidens' auxiliaries (front lines)	Quasi-brothels (ubiquitous)		Officers' special favor or (rarely) escape
3. Criminal			Rape camps (battlefronts)	Escape or outside intervention

the war: the Manchurian Incident of 1931, which launched Japan's military aggression in China; the Nanking massacre (from December 1937 to early 1938), which intensified the Second Sino-Japanese War; and the Pearl Harbor attack in December 1941, which expanded the continental war into the Pacific.

Working with this periodization, I posit that the diversification of the concessionary and the paramilitary *ianjo* roughly coincided with war's escalating phases as follows: following the Manchurian invasion, houses of entertainment and the maidens' auxiliaries predominated in urban areas and at remote front lines, respectively. After the Nanking massacre, however, new types of comfort stations of both the concessionary and paramilitary *ianjo* categories, which I call houses of prostitution and quasi-brothels, respectively, emerged and mushroomed in response to the rapidly increasing numbers of troops. Finally, the criminal *ianjo* that embodied violent military hypermasculine sexuality emerged after Pearl Harbor, when the fighting raged in a total war of massive destruction of human lives in enemy territory until Japan's unconditional surrender.

In the post–Manchurian Incident phase (circa 1932–1937), facilities of the entertainment house type existed in urban centers as civilian-run special restaurants or exclusive clubs for military personnel, offering commercial sexual entertainment supplied by predominantly Japanese female employees or Japanized Korean women who wore kimonos and were identified for professional purposes by Japanese first names.[111] In addition, as shown in the case of Ch'oe Il-rye, maidens' auxiliaries were embedded with military units at the front, which directly managed the women for the exclusive use of their troops. Official documents reveal that in Shanghai, at the end of 1936, there were ten special restaurants, seven of which were comfort stations reserved exclusively for naval personnel. Official records show 102 Japanese women and 29 Korean women worked as *shakufu* (barmaids or women serving sake, in Japanese) at these restaurants.[112] There are no records on their recruitment methods, which makes it impossible for us to know whether Korean women were forcibly recruited by the state agents or had been *shakufu* when they arrived in Shanghai accompanied by their recruiters, who put them to work at houses of entertainment. Korean survivors' testimonial narratives, however, have revealed that liberation from the concessionary category of *ianjo* was possible when they paid their debt or a military officer intervened on their behalf.

In addition, official records kept by the Japanese Consulate General in Shanghai have revealed that, from the mid- to late 1930s, some Korean residents in Shanghai became business owners and managers in the "customary trade," and that five comfort stations with capital of more than 20,000 yen were run by Koreans.[113] In the particular case of Pak Il-sŏk (also known by his Japanese name, Arai Hakuseki), who served as an officer in the Shanghai Korean Association, the increase in scale of his business between 1937 and 1940 was spectacular. Pak began his Café Asea with capital of 2,000 yen in 1937, but when he turned his business into a comfort station in October 1939, his officially recorded capital was 30,000 yen, which quickly doubled to 60,000 yen in 1940. One may surmise that the Korean entrepreneur undoubtedly succeeded in making a great deal of profit by operating the comfort station for the military during the post–Nanking massacre phase (approximately 1938–1941).[114]

Indeed, it was after imperial Japan engaged in all-out war against China in July 1937 and expanded its occupied territories that the need for a great number of *ianfu* arose. The army was more systematically involved in building *ianjo* of the prostitution house and the quasi-brothel types during the second phase of the military comfort station system. The authorities believed such facilities would help prevent soldiers from committing random acts of sexual violence against women of the occupied territories—a greater concern after the infamous Nanking massacre, during which tens of thousands of Chinese women were raped.[115] In addition to safeguarding its own reputation, military authorities were concerned with the health of their troops, which prompted close supervision of hygienic conditions in the comfort stations. As noted previously, the gynecologist and army doctor Asō Tetsuo submitted a report in 1939 that suggested unmarried Korean women with no prior history as sex workers would be free of venereal diseases and thus more appropriate than Japanese prostitutes as "gifts for the imperial troops."[116] This report was based on his examination of Korean and Japanese women ready to be dispatched to an army comfort station in Shanghai in 1938. The Japanese military authorities soon began to look to colonial Korea as a preferred source of comfort women.

Here it is noteworthy that "comforting" the Japanese soldiers became a national project of wartime Japan in the late 1930s. As shown in plate 3.2, Mitsukoshi Department Store in Nihonbashi, Tokyo, for example, sold a range of "comfort bags" (*imon bukuro*) priced between 3 and 5 yen, to be sent to soldiers, in July 1938, the first anniversary of the Second Sino-Japanese War, and it offered shipping services to Shanghai and Manchuria. By 1939 "adolescent boys and girls in the cities" in Japan were mobilized to perform patriotic service through labor once every three days.[117] Their main activities included writing letters of encouragement to soldiers and making *imon bukuro* and shoulder straps for military uniforms.

Plate 3.2. Mitsukoshi Department Store advertisement of the "comfort bag" sale. (Source: *ASAHI-GRAPH,* July 13, 1938 special edition commemorating the 1st anniversary of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Courtesy of Asahi Shimbunsha.)

A Japanese woman who participated in the patriotic mobilization as a schoolgirl and made comfort bags reminisced:

> The majority of the students' fathers and brothers were in the military. We made efforts, on a school basis, to make *imon bukuro* and write compositions of comfort. We were not allowed to write our individual names on our compositions but only our school name. . . . We made face cloths, folding them in two and putting them in bags. We used a writing brush to write the word *imon,* or "comfort," on each bag. Daily groceries, medicines, loincloths, and letters of encouragement were already in the bags. It was a must that a letter of encouragement be in each bag. On those bags we wrote our names and addresses. The soldiers soon wrote back to us. Most of them asked us to send them our photographs. They sent theirs first, and because we admired the soldiers as the equals of the gods, we were all busy writing letters.[118]

Remarkably, these comfort bags from the Japanese people apparently were distributed not only to soldiers, but also to comfort women. A Korean survivor who labored in China from 1938 to 1945 and is a complainant in a class-action lawsuit against Japan, *recalled that receiving a comfort bag* about once a month was one of the exceptional moments of pleasure during her life at the comfort station.[119] According to the 1944 U.S. military intelligence report (on twenty Korean "comfort girls" who were captured in Burma),

> [The soldiers] also mentioned the receipt of "comfort bags" filled with canned foods, magazines, soap, handkerchiefs, toothbrush, miniature dolls, lipstick, and wooden clogs. The lipstick and clogs were definitely feminine and the girls couldn't understand why the people at home were sending such articles. They speculated that the sender could only have had themselves or the "native girls" in mind.[120]

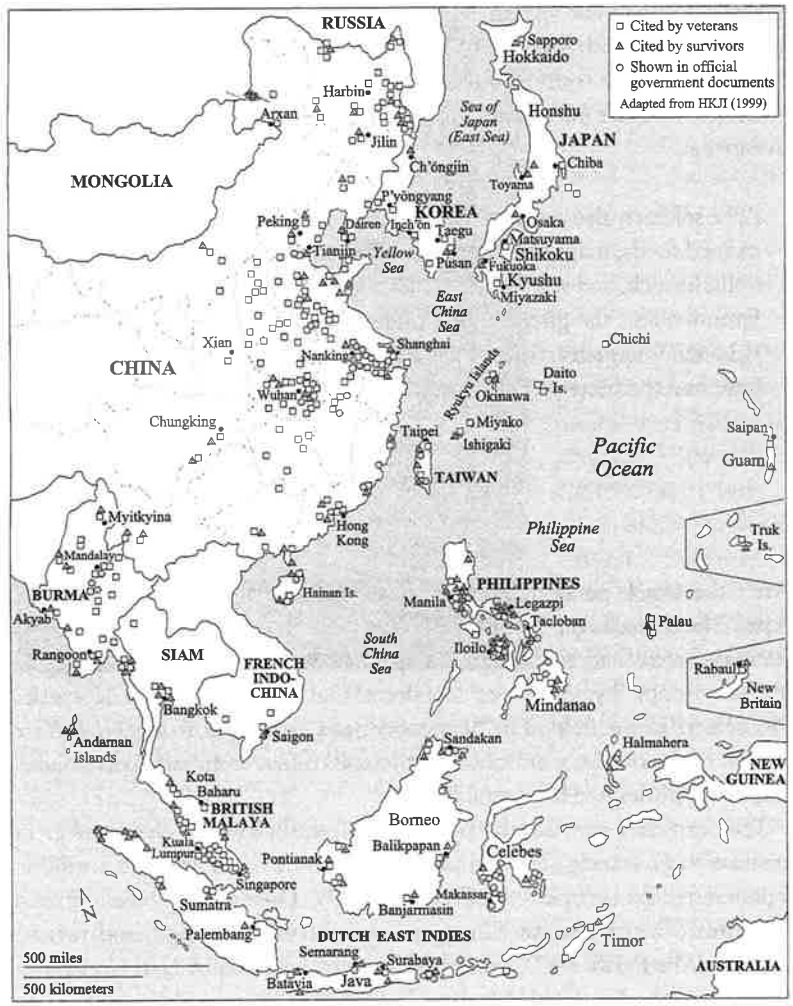
* * *

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, 400,000 troops were dispatched south. After March 1942, the Ministry of War took charge of building comfort stations for enlisted soldiers and cooperated with the army in sending to overseas troops "hygiene sacks" (condoms) that were regarded as necessities for soldiers in the field. The September 1942 newsletter from the welfare section of the ministry indicated that a total of four hundred "permanent" comfort facilities had been established.[121]

One can only surmise the possibility of an increase in the number of criminal *ianjo* during the final phase of the war, when about one million Japanese troops occupied the Philippines, the Dutch East Indies, French Indochina, British Malaya, Singapore, and Burma, Thailand, and various islands in the Pacific.[122] Testimonials of Dutch and Filipina survivors prove that during the post–Pearl Harbor phase of the war not only Japanese subjects (including colonial Koreans and Taiwanese), but also local women, were recruited into compulsory sexual labor. As in the Korean cases, some women were recruited by local collaborators with false promises of well-paying jobs, while others were forcibly abducted by the military.[123]

COLLABORATION, COMPLICITY, AND COERCION

One must note here that, in the social history of colonial Korea, it was pimps, as well as state administrators, especially petty functionaries in rural areas, who became complicit in the systemic exploitation of the most



Map 4. Major military comfort stations

vulnerable and powerless. Local elites in colonial Korea entered into relationships of collaboration with the state in order to continue to exercise power in their locality under the pressure produced by the presence of the Japanese colonial occupiers.[124] One of the most salient examples of this Korean collaboration took place in 1941 when the Japanese army was preparing to invade the Soviet Union. The Japanese Kwantung Army requested that the colonial Government-General of Korea assist in the recruitment of twenty thousand Korean women.[125] The Government-General responded by enlisting the assistance of Koreans, such as the *myŏnjang* (head of the township), who visited and persuaded indigent families with many children to send their unmarried daughters to work in Japan. The only recourse for such indigent parents was to marry off their daughters, even if on paper only, because married women were exempt from the draft. This does not, however, mean that all Korean comfort women were unmarried. The statistical data on Korean survivors shows that slightly more than 10 percent of the survivors were married, divorced, widowed, or cohabiting at the time of their recruitment.[126]

The colonial government's collaboration resulted in the speedy assemblage of about eight thousand young girls and women who were sent as comfort women to the northern regions of Manchuria, where seven hundred thousand troops had mobilized along the Chinese-Russian border.[127] It is remarkable that the colonial Government-General of Korea could recruit less than half the requested number, which suggests that large-scale abductions in the manner of Yoshida Seiji's discredited confessional story of "slave raids" in Chejudo (discussed in chapter 4) could not, and probably did not, take place. It showed that, without the use of physical force, the organizational power of the local administration and the effectiveness of the collaborators proved to be limited.

In fact, the statistical analysis of the data on Korean survivors, which was jointly published by the Korean Council and the Ministry of Gender Equality (MOGE), reveals that most were recruited by either Korean (64) or Japanese (35) civilian procurers, whereas police (45) and soldiers or civilian employees of the military (45) also played significant roles as recruiters.[128] Some of the respondents listed multiple agents as their recruiters, including local administrative heads (17), teachers (4), and family members and relatives (2).[129] The MOGE collection also reveals that at the time of recruitment more than one-third of 172 cases worked as maids (26), factory workers (20), employees at restaurants or *kisaeng* houses (9), farmers (5), students (5), or merchants (1).[130] Further, statistical records on 181 cases showed that more than a quarter (48) were already living away from their families when they were taken to military brothels and that the majority (112) were taken to China, including Manchuria and Taiwan.[131] These figures illuminate the contours of the personal ordeal facing individual Korean comfort women. They highlight the depth of structural violence—that is, institutionalized gendered social injustice—inflicted primarily upon working-class women. The data not only confirm the criminal role played by the wartime military government of imperial Japan in the exploitation of colonial subjects, but also reveal the significance of local collaboration. It is striking that accord-

ing to the accounts of survivors, Koreans actually outnumbered civilian Japanese among those seeking profit by human trafficking, forcing prostitution and sexual slavery upon young female compatriots.

It is now instructive to consider the recollections of a Korean man whose father had worked as a *myŏnjang* during colonial rule.[132] In an interview with the Japanese journalist and writer Senda Kakō he explained that out of fear for his and his family's security, his father carried out the recruitment order and managed to recruit two young women in the township by visiting indigent households and encouraging parents to send their daughters to work in Japan. He concluded tearfully, "One might say that my father was weak. But few Koreans at that time could do otherwise. [Because of his collaboration] my father had to vanish from his hometown after liberation, and I think this was his bad luck. I think it was his tragic fate to be appointed *myŏnjang* then."[133]

CONCLUSION

The Japanese military comfort system must be characterized as fundamentally rooted in a masculinist ideology that privileged men's presumably uncontrollable "biological need" for sex. The paternalistic Japanese state methodically assisted in the system's implementation and development, especially from 1938, after the Nanking massacre, believing that it would help maintain the morale of the troops and prevent rapes of local women. Although the system may have contributed to restraining and pacifying the troops' "savage feelings and lust," it is not surprising to learn that it did not in fact prevent rapes.[134] Reporting on 610 crimes committed by troops after they had invaded countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands in 1942, an army document noted the prevalence of rapes, a situation caused both by "insufficient comfort facilities and insufficient supervision."[135]

In addition to the lack of comfort facilities, however, one might further consider financial factors that contributed to battlefield rape. Problems cropping up at comfort stations in China in 1938, for example, included soldiers not paying for services rendered. A variety of survivors also mentioned this problem. Mun P'il-gi, whose deceitful recruitment into a comfort station in Manchuria was described in chapter 2, related that she would sometimes take pity and send a soldier away without having been paid.[136] Yi Sang-ok, who labored in Palau, first receiving 30 yen a month as a comfort woman and later only 50 sen as a medical assistant, stated that some soldiers stole her personal belongings when she left her room to wash.[137]

The monthly salary of an enlisted man was only 6 to 10 yen, depending on rank, so the service charges at the *ianjo* were not cheap for rank-and-file soldiers. The entries in the "Battlefield Diary" of an Imperial Army unit in central China dated March 3, 1938, for example, listed the service charges for the various ethnicities of women: Chinese (1 yen), Korean (1.5 yen), and Japanese (2 yen) an hour, with added warning that "Money must be paid without fail."[138] As mentioned above, Korean comfort women could earn the same rate as Japanese in Manila, where the comfort station rates were 1.5 yen for a thirty-minute service by either. This equal valuation was an improvement over the situations that prevailed in China, where the rates for Korean women ranked below those for their Japanese counterparts. This improvement arguably reflected the greater assimilation of Koreans as the subjects of imperial Japan at this point in the war and signified a formal endorsement of the official *naisen ittai* policy. The rate for Chinese women in Manila remained at 1 yen, the same as it was in China.[139]

In the experience of many Korean comfort women, however, their ethnicity was only a source of social discrimination. For instance, according to the ethnic hierarchy followed in Okinawa, Korean women were used by enlisted men, while Okinawans were reserved for officers. Furthermore, as Japanese nationals, Okinawan women were remunerated, while Korean women, being despised colonial subjects, had to supply the same services for no pay. Although local Okinawans were cruelly mistreated by mainland soldiers, natives of Okinawa in their turn were contemptuous of Koreans as colonial subjects.[140] Ethnic discrimination by the Japanese military was most transparently exercised at the end of the war, when soldiers informed *Japanese* comfort women of Japan's defeat and fled with them. Many Korean comfort women were simply abandoned, and it has been reported that in some extreme cases the retreating Japanese army killed the women by driving them into trenches or caves where they bombed, burned, or shot them, creating mass graves on the spot.[141] The massacre of Korean comfort women at the end of the war by retreating Japanese troops may have reflected the military's fears about the revelation of atrocities. But it was also likely rooted in the generally disdainful, ethnocentric, and sexist attitude of the Japanese military toward Korean comfort women. As colonial subjects reduced to sexual objects for the troops, these women were seen as expendable military supplies, too cumbersome to be taken along at the end of the lost war.

As noted previously, the Dutch government regards the comfort system primarily as "prostitution," while acknowledging an element of forced prostitution as well.[142] The Dutch interpretation of the Japanese military comfort system is only partially correct insofar as it represents the experi-

ences of Dutch women residing in occupied Dutch East Indies. In another reckoning, Vera Mackie, an Australian feminist historian of modern Japan, has presented Japan's comfort system as enforced military prostitution, referring to *ianjo* as military brothels and *ianfu* as military prostitutes.[143] Although one may appreciate Mackie's transcending mere political correctness and the inflated blanket characterization of the system as sexual slavery,[144] hers is also a partial portrayal that glosses over multifarious criminal sexual behaviors committed by the military within the institutional framework discussed above.

To be sure, the intended purpose of the comfort system was to regulate military sexuality and discourage battlefield sex crimes. The comfort system, however, did not—and could not—prevent rapes, though it did help curb mass rape—especially in "pacified" areas in occupied territories. This curbing effect was acknowledged by none other than a Chinese prosecutor at the Tokyo War Crimes Trials and, more recently, by scholars of Japanese history.[145]

This chapter has demonstrated the complexities of the Japanese military comfort system, which was orchestrated by the paternalistic state and the military leadership to cater to what they—along with many other people in Japan and other patriarchal societies—regarded as the "normal" heterosexual needs of servicemen, as well as to forestall violent military hypermasculine sexual behaviors of wartime troops. In its operations it clearly straddled commercial and criminal sex. Although a statistical overview of the different categories of comfort stations may never be available, it is clear that some Japanese soldiers perpetrated collective acts of sexual violence and enslavement primarily against women of occupied enemy territories. At the same time many soldiers used the state-regulated and -endorsed concessionary or paramilitary *ianjo,* availing themselves of what they regarded as a form of licensed prostitution. In sum, both public sex and war crime sex were part of the fabric of imperial Japan's military comfort station system. This distinction more fully engages historical fact, but it in no way detracts from the overall oppression exercised in acting out a broader masculinist sexual culture in this historical institution during the more than decade-long and evolving phases of Japan's last war.

Part 2

Take as your time-span the course of human history, and locate within it the weeks, years, epochs you examine.

—C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination,* 1959

"What's Wrong with Prostitution?"

—Igor Primoratz, *Philosophy,* 1993

"Prostitution: Buying the Right to Rape"

—Evelina Giobbe, *Rape and Sexual Assault III,* 1991

PUBLIC SEX AND WOMEN'S LABOR