

Special Feature

Reconsidering Prostitution under the  
Japanese Occupation:  
Through the Korean Brothels  
in Colonial Taiwan

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## Introduction

As is already widely known, state-regulated and licensed prostitution spread not only in Korea and Taiwan but also throughout East Asia, including Guangdong and Manchuria, with the expansion of Japanese imperialism. If in Japan state-regulated prostitution emerged as a device to legalize sexual exploitation in the society based on gender inequality, in Korea and Taiwan it acquired the connotation of colonial exploitation in addition. Hence, state-regulated prostitution in the colonies was perceived as a symbol of twofold oppression on women in the Japanese imperialism.

However, that most studies have focused on Korea and have been conducted since the 1990s contributes to the schematic understanding of the Japanese system of colonial state-regulated prostitution. These studies have compared Korean colonial state-regulated prostitution with Japan's domestic state-regulation prostitution and have described the former as a categorically colonial and exploitative institution. But in reality, state-managed prostitution in Taiwan was different from that in Korea; furthermore, the sex-trade regulated by this system created a different market in Taiwan. In other words, colonial domination itself did not provide sufficient conditions for the appearance of an exploitative legalized system of prostitution. This was not all. Considering the fact that many Japanese women worked as prostitutes in Taiwan and Korea, we cannot say that colonial exploitation always took priority over gender inequality. In other words, in order to understand state-regulated prostitution more concretely, we must move away from the narrow approach of taking Japan as the only comparable case. Instead, we must consider the different colonial realities and adopt a more comparative perspective on exploring the different colonial features of state-regulated prostitution.

With this in mind, this paper analyses the Japanese colonial state-regulated prostitution and sex-trade by comparing the Taiwanese and Korean examples. However, the purpose of this paper is not simply to list common features and draw a parallel between Korea and Taiwan, since comparative history writing without objective criteria for comparison might subordinate one's experience to the other's history. Even if objective criteria can be adopted in the field of colonial history, such criteria often are no different from the top-down perspective of the colonizers. Therefore, it is difficult to escape the danger that such comparative studies can subordinate the history of colonised people to the

history of their colonizers.

This paper focuses on the unbalanced migration of sex-workers between Korea and Taiwan as an example of the experience that allows us to construct a comparative discourse from the colonizers' perspective. A significant number of Koreans moved to Taiwan to work in Taiwan's state-regulated sex market, whereas not a single Taiwanese woman moved to Korea to work as a licensed prostitute. This shows that there was some difference in the state-regulated prostitution and sex-trade in the two colonies which caused the one-way migration. It also suggests that coloniality of state-regulated prostitution in Taiwan and Korea provided the necessary conditions which shaped the way sex was traded legally, but it cannot sufficiently explain the local details and specific realities of sex-trade in the two colonies.

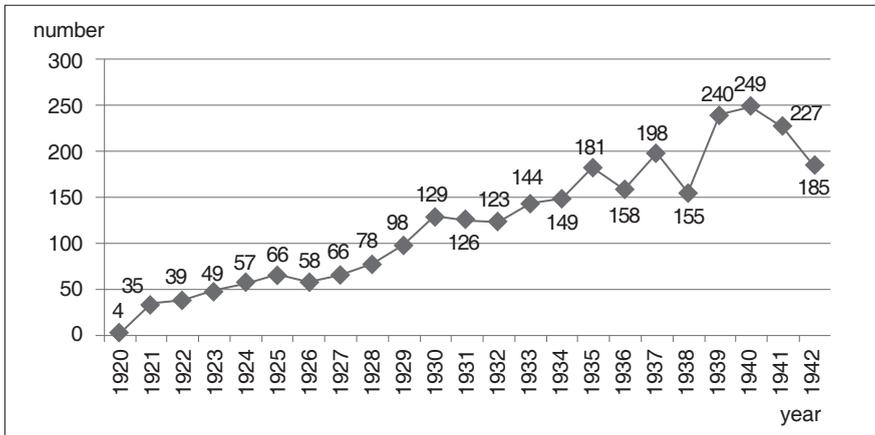
In order to examine the state-regulated prostitution system in Taiwan and Korea, this paper takes the procurers of Chosenros 朝鮮樓—brothels in Taiwan that provided sexual service by Korean women—as its primary subject and examines the difference in the system and the market in Taiwan and Korea which contributed to the Koreans' migration to Taiwan. By doing so, this paper compares coloniality of the state-regulated prostitution system in Taiwan and Korea. First, it examines previous studies on the history behind the appearance of the Chosenro in Taiwan and suggests that Taiwan's and Korea's state-regulated prostitution needs to be reinterpreted in order to overcome the limits of existing studies. Then, with the awareness that there may have been objectives other than colonial exploitation which influenced the Japanese decision to impose state-regulated prostitution, this paper explains separately the history behind how state-regulated prostitution was first introduced and localized in each society. In addition, it investigates the different prostitution markets created in Korea and Taiwan as a result of this history. The last section explains the differences in the prostitution markets and the factors that contributed to the emigration of Korean procurers to Taiwan.

## **Colonial Taiwanese Society and Chosenro** *Chosenro in Statistics: Human Rights Violation Legalised by the Colonial Power*

Korean *shogi* 娼妓—a prostitute who was licensed by the state—first appeared

in Taiwan in 1920. According to statistical data from the Taiwanese Governor-General, among the 168 prostitutes working in Takao-shu 高雄州, four were Koreans (TSKC 1922, 284-90). The surprising fact is that the number of Korean prostitutes increased fast and steadily since 1920: in 1921, the number increased almost ten-fold to 35; in 1930, there were more than 100 Korean prostitutes. A decade later in 1940, the number again increased to 249 (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> This was also one-fourth of the total number of prostitutes in Taiwan, which was maintained at about 1000 since the 1920s. More interesting is the influence the increase of Korean prostitutes had on the total number of prostitutes in Taiwan.

**Figure 1.** Number of Korean prostitutes in colonial Taiwan



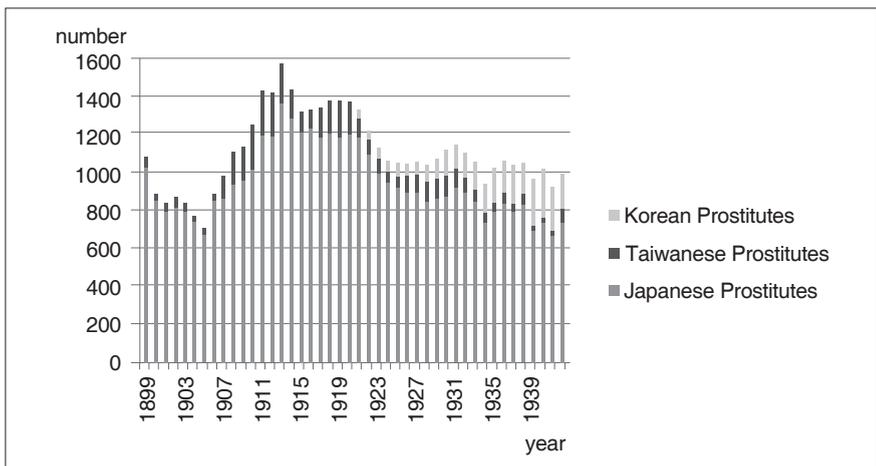
Source: Author's compilation of data from the corresponding year's *Taiwan Sotokufu Tokeisho* 臺灣總督府統計書

As we can see from Figure 2, the majority of prostitutes in Taiwan since the 1920s were Japanese, and the number of Taiwanese prostitutes never exceeded one-tenth of the total number of prostitutes, even when the number

1. This quantitative expansion simultaneously led to regional proliferation. According to the statistical data, every administrative district with a red-light district had a Korean prostitute by 1925.

of Taiwanese prostitutes reached its highest level.<sup>2</sup> Since the 1920s, however, the number of Japanese prostitutes began to gradually decline. The appearance of Korean prostitutes began in this circumstance, replacing Japanese prostitutes and thus maintaining the size of the market. In other words, the fact that the number of prostitutes recovered when a new source of prostitutes (i.e., Korea) appeared suggests that the decline in the number of prostitutes was not caused by a drop in demand but was due to a supply shortage. The question is then, why the Korean women had to make up for the supply shortage in Taiwan's society, which was composed of 5% Japanese and 95% Taiwanese.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the structure of the Taiwanese prostitution market, which consisted mostly of Japanese prostitutes, was one of the factors that contributed to the arrival of Korean prostitutes in Taiwan.

**Figure 2.** Number of prostitutes in Taiwan by ethnicity

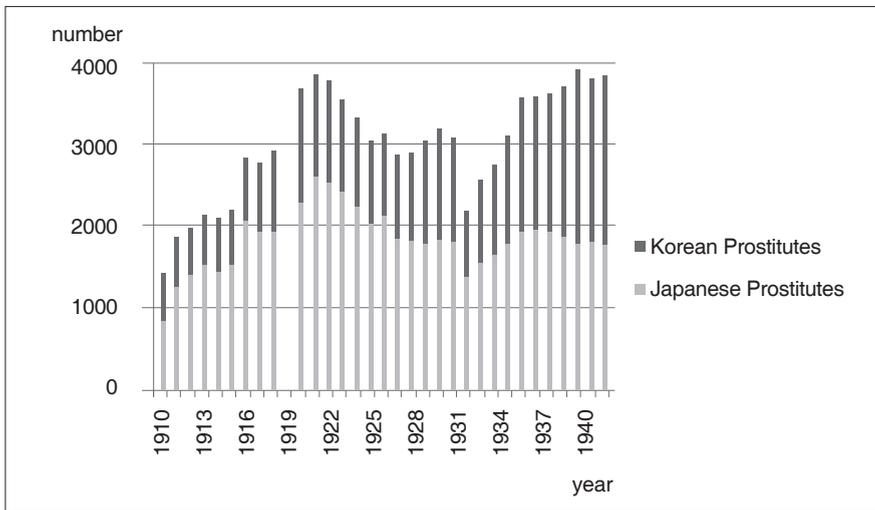


Source: Author's compilation of data from the corresponding year's *Taiwan Sotokufu Takeisho* 臺灣總督府統計書

- The fact that no Taiwanese *shogi* 娼妓 worked within the legal sex-trade market did not mean that prostitution did not exist in Taiwanese society at all. The introduction of state-regulated prostitution entailed the division of the sex-trade market into legal and illegal realms. In other words, there was no Taiwanese prostitute who acquired a license and worked in legal sex-trade, but there still were Taiwanese prostitutes who worked without a license in the illegal sector.
- For example, the average Japanese population of Taiwan was 232,299 whereas the average Taiwanese population was 4,400,076 in 1930 (Chen 1979, 97).

This question becomes more apparent when we cross-examine the prostitution market in Korea, which was also a Japanese colony. Unlike the Taiwanese case, the number of Korean prostitutes of colonial Korea increased steadily following the 1910 Annexation. By 1939, the number of Korean prostitutes exceeded that of Japanese prostitutes (Figure 3). In addition, the phenomena observed in Taiwan—such as the disproportionate number of Japanese prostitutes in comparison to those from the colonies or the large imports of prostitutes from other colonies—did not happen in Korea. This raises the question of why and how the Korean prostitutes began to enter the Taiwanese market, which obtained most of its supplies from Japanese prostitutes.

**Figure 3.** Number of prostitutes in Korea by ethnicity<sup>4</sup>



Source: Author's compilation of data from the corresponding year's *Taiwan Sotokufu Tokeisho* 臺灣總督府統計書

The first scholar to attempt to provide an answer to the question was Takeshi Fujinaga 藤永壯 (2000) who has focused on the relevance of “comfort

4. The data of 1919 was missing.

women” (*jugun ianfu* 從軍慰安婦) in understanding Japanese imperialistic expansion and spread of state-regulated prostitution across East Asia.<sup>5</sup> Emphasizing that not only prostitutes but also a significant number of Korean barmaids (*shakufu* 酌婦) and café-girls (*jokyu* 女給) were working in the Taiwanese entertainment industry, he interprets its historical significance by linking it with the Korean “comfort women” spread throughout the colonies via Taiwan.<sup>6</sup> According to Fujinaga, the problem of female trafficking along with the spread of the sex trade and the collapse of farming society in Korea was aggravated due to the state-regulated prostitution. Not a small number of young women were abducted and sold into prostitution all over Korea and even to Manchuria and China. Fujinaga (2000) identifies two factors that led the Korean women sold overseas to flow into the Taiwanese market: the intervention of Japanese procurers and the different age limits stipulated for prostitution licenses in Korea as compared with Taiwan. That is, the Korean women who had not yet reached the legal age for prostitution in Korea were brought to Taiwan and forced into prostitution by the Japanese procurers who had already run Japanese brothels in Taiwan. He argues that these brothels would eventually be differentiated and become Chosenros. Such interpretation describes the history behind the arrival of Chosenros in Taiwan as a process of women’s exploitation in the hands of imperialist Japan, and reflects the perspective of previous studies whose main purpose is to criticize violence and aggression inflicted by Japan’s imperialism by investigating the colonial state-regulated prostitution system.

First, the evidence which supports this interpretation and suggests the Japanese procurers’ intervention is the observation that the increase and decrease in the number of Korean procurers in the statistical data did not correlate with the number of Korean prostitutes. Furthermore, only the Japanese procurers who had made an agreement with Korean prostitutes before would have known whether it was more beneficial to employ Korean prostitutes than Japanese prostitutes, since they could save on the deposit-fee (*zenshakukin*) paid to the women. Second, concerning the age-limit for legal prostitution, Fujinaga (2000)

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5. Relevant studies include Fujinaga 1995; Fujinaga 1998; Fujinaga 2004; Fujinaga 2005a; Fujinaga 2005b; and Fujinaga 2013.

6. This awareness continued to Komagome Takeshi 駒込武 (2000) which surveyed the process behind delivery of Korean “comfort women.”

focuses on the fact that the legal age for prostitution in Korea was 17, whereas it was 16 in Taiwan. Therefore, he contends, the Japanese who wanted to exploit a workforce of even young Korean girls who were barely 16 were motivated to bring the girls from Korea to Taiwan.

The analysis of Fujinaga (2000), which separately explains the reasons behind the exploitation of the Korean women from Korea and their importation by Taiwan, is logical and persuasive. Nevertheless, his argument is merely an historical hypothesis derived from statistical data and legal documents, and it cannot be considered as historical fact without more specific evidence to back it up. This is because the statistical data cannot provide a definite answer without evidence that can address such questions as what was the age-range of the Korean prostitutes in Taiwan or who were the procurers who employed these Korean prostitutes.

### *Chosenros in the Personal Information: Business Strategy of Procurers from the Colonies*

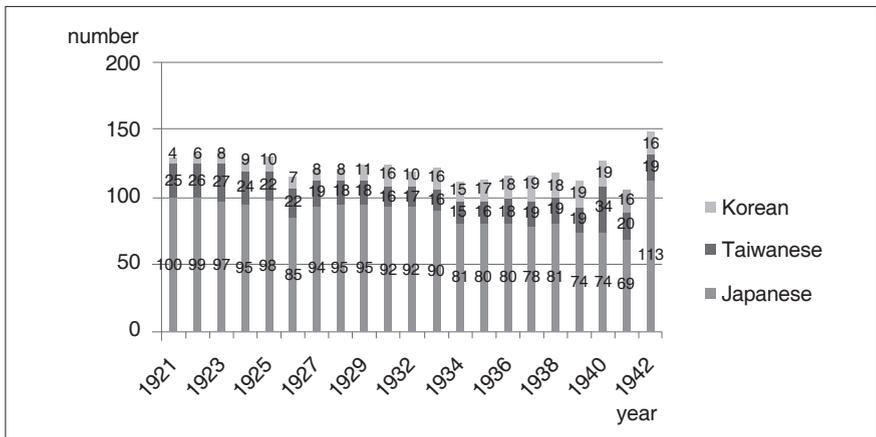
From the 1920s we find records of Korean prostitutes in documents other than the census. For example, reports that Korean prostitutes began to appear in several *yukakus* 遊廓—the red-light districts in Jiayi 嘉義, Tainan 臺南, Taipei 臺北, and other regions of Taiwan—continued in the pages of *Taiwan Nichinichi Shimpo* 臺灣日日新報, a daily newspaper from 1921.<sup>7</sup> However, what compels our attention in these reports are the facts that these prostitutes did not move to Taiwan individually or were not employed by Japanese procurers. In fact, they came to Taiwan with other Korean prostitutes through arrangements

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7. “Chosen geigi” 朝鮮藝妓 is posted on page 4 on March 24, 1921, “Manka Chosen giro” 艋舺朝鮮妓樓 on page 6 on May 11, 1921, and “Sensho kaigyō” 鮮娼開業 on page 6 of *Taiwan Nichinichi Shimpo* 臺灣日日新報 on October 31, 1921. On the other hand, in modern Japanese as well as in Taiwanese Mandarin and Korean, the word *yukaku* means both a brothel and red-light district where brothels are gathered. The term originated during the Edo period when all prostitutes scattered across the country were concentrated to an isolated zone called *yukaku* (Sone 1997, 387-96; Imanishi 2007, 14-161). The term, which was used for a legal brothel or a licensed zone for prostitution when the state-regulated prostitution system was institutionalized in the modern era, was then spread in other parts of East Asia with the expansion of the prostitution system. In this paper, *yukaku* denotes only for “red-light district.”

of Korean procurers and worked in brothels with only Korean prostitutes—that is, in Chosenro. Contrary to the suggestion of Fujinaga (2000), these prostitutes were first brought to Taiwan not by Japanese but Korean procurers. According to statistical data (Figure 4), the existence of Korean procurers in Taiwan was confirmed in 1921, a year later than Korean prostitutes first appeared on the record. Even though it was not as rapid as the case of the prostitutes, the number of Korean procurers increased steadily and maintained a certain level since the 1930s. As mentioned earlier, it is difficult to confirm from these statistical data if the Chosenros provide prostitution only with Korean women, as well as whether only the Korean procurers ran the Chosenro or Japanese too ran Chosenro with Korean prostitutes.

**Figure 4.** Number of procurers in Taiwan by ethnicity<sup>8</sup>



Source: Author's compilation of data from the corresponding year's

*Taiwan Sotokufu Tokeisho* 臺灣總督府統計書

If Fujinaga (2000) looks at macro-data such as statistics in order to interpret the significance of the process behind the Chosenro system's arrival in Taiwan in Korea's colonial history, Jin Jungwon (2010) focuses on the personal information contained in household register census called *Koko Chosabo*

8. The 1930s data on Koreans which was missing from the data are omitted to prevent confusion.

戸口調査簿 to examine its significance in Taiwanese social history.

Fundamental human rights of licensed prostitutes were violated by the state under the state-regulated prostitution system. One of such rights was the freedom to choose one's residence. From the moment a prostitute signed a contract with a procurer and received the legal permit from the state, she was bound to live at the procurer's brothel. However, the family registration act was not implemented in colonial Taiwan, so *Koko Chosabo*, which was based on the records of current residential addresses, was used instead of a family registry. In other words, every member living in the same address was all recorded under the same *Koko Chosabo*. Hence information about the prostitutes in Taiwan was included under the *Koko Chosabo* of the address to which their procurers were registered, even though the women were not blood related to the address-holder and had no registered address in Taiwan.

Based on Jin's (2010) survey of 2,926 personal information entries for 72 Korean brothels compiled from the 14 household registration offices (*huzheng shiwusuo* 戶政事務所) of the different regions of Taiwan, all prostitutes working in a brothel run by a Korean procurer were Koreans, without exception. Furthermore, often the procurer's family, other female employees such as waitresses (*nakai* 仲居), maids (*jochu* 女中), cooks (*itamae* 板前), workers in charge of bookkeeping (*choba* 帳場), other female and male servants, and even the illegitimate children of the prostitutes and long-term lodgers all lived together in a brothel. In the cases of Korean procurers, all the cohabitants were also Koreans. In other words, on the surface, Chosenros were brothels that provided sexual service by Korean prostitutes; on a deeper level, they were residential communities for Koreans expatriates in Taiwan.

Another point we should revisit in the study of Fujinaga (2000) is the age range of the Korean prostitutes when they acquired the licence for prostitution in Taiwan. According to Jin (2010), the number of Korean women who were 16 or underage for legal prostitution in Korea but acquired a licence in Taiwan was 235, whereas the number of Korean women who were 17 and could acquire a licence in Korea but came to Taiwan was 243. Moreover, the number of Korean prostitutes who came to Taiwan at the age of 18 and 19 was 167 and 125, respectively. Therefore, contrary to the hypothesis of Fujinaga (2000), the different age restrictions imposed in Korea and Taiwan could not have been a key factor which dragged the young Korean girls to the Taiwanese prostitution market.

From the above evidences, Jin (2010) contradicts the hypothesis of Fujinaga (2000) and concludes that Japanese procurers or their interventions, as well as the different age restrictions, were not key factors which drove Korean women into prostitution in Taiwan. In other words, the arrival of Korean prostitutes and Chosenros in Taiwan were not a part of the colonial violence and crimes committed by Japanese colonizers against women of the colony, the weakest members of the empire subjected to both ethnic and gender oppression. The arrival should be understood as a process of migration motivated by the colonizers, who sought ways to survive with limited social assets and opportunities. The more significant contribution of Jin's study on Taiwan's history is that it analyses how the prostitution market in colonial Taiwan was shaped by the state-regulated prostitution system, which provided the necessary conditions for the arrival of Chosenros and the business model in Taiwan (Jin 2010).

**Figure 5.** Korean prostitutes in Chokaro 朝花樓 and Sengetsuro 鮮月樓, the brothels in Gaoxiong 高雄



Source: "Watashi to ihu onna" of the February issue of *Kako* 華光 in 1939

By analyzing newspapers and magazines, Jin further suggests that Chosenros' target was not Taiwanese customers but Japanese who came to Taiwan as colonial masters, as we can see in the pictures of Korean prostitutes

in kimonos and their Japanese nicknames shown in Figure 5.<sup>9</sup> Emphasizing that this marketing strategy helped Chosenros to take root in the Taiwanese market, she further suggests that there was a separation between the Japanese and Taiwanese realms in the sex-trade market in colonial Taiwan. In other words, because Taiwanese customers did not adopt the alien practices of licensed prostitution while Japanese customers felt uncomfortable with the traditional Taiwanese prostitution customs, it was inevitable that separate sectors of prostitution—which included a legal realm occupied by Japanese prostitutes and Japanese customers and a realm outside the state’s regulation, occupied by Taiwanese—coexisted in Taiwan. This then caused the disproportionately high number of Japanese prostitutes we see in Figure 2. In the sex-trade market divided along ethnic lines, if one realm suffered from a shortage of prostitutes, the other realm could not replenish the shortage. This is precisely what happened in the Japanese prostitution market, i.e., the licensed sex-trade market in Taiwan. When there was a shortage of Japanese prostitutes to meet the demand, women from already-Japanified Korean sex-trade market and not Taiwanese prostitutes made up the shortage. For Chosenros, this gap and boundary in the prostitution market in colonial Taiwan guaranteed their business opportunity. This was their niche market which their Taiwanese competitors were neither willing nor able enter. Therefore, Japanification was an inevitable marketing strategy for Chosenros .

However, we find limits in the study of Jin (2010) in two areas. First, even though the boundary Jin (2010) describes was based on fundamental ethnic and cultural differences and thus could not be crossed over, in reality, many although not the majority of customers who visited Chosenros and even Japanese brothels were Taiwanese. For example, according to statistical data compiled in November, 1927 about the number of male customers who visited Shoka yukaku 彰化遊廓, the majority of Chosenros’ customers were Japanese, which accounted for 71 customers, but the rest (12) were Taiwanese.<sup>10</sup> Besides, a Taiwanese wrote in his journal that he visited the first Chosenro in Taihoku in

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9. In addition to the four prostitutes dressed in kimono, two prostitutes were in Western clothing here. Sometimes, prostitutes and café-girls (*jokyu*) were dressed in Western clothing, influenced by Western bars called “cafés,” which were also popular in Taiwan after the 1930s.

10. The source is the news article “Shoka Karyukai” posted on page 4 in *Taiwan Nichinichi Shimpō* on December 22, 1927.

groups out of curiosity when it first opened in June 1921 (Xu 2012, 211-12).

Such evidence indicates that even if the boundary did exist in Taiwan's sex-trade market, it was not manifested at the consumer level—or at least was not imperative in the customers' decision-making. In other words, if a rigid boundary not affecting the customers could really be preserved, as Jin (2010) has suggested, then this boundary was not maintained by the ethnic difference or cultural unfamiliarity between Japanese and Taiwanese but by a clear objective to impose the separation. In other words, power of domination was involved in preserving the boundary.<sup>11</sup>

Second, although the interpretation of Jin (2010) provides an answer to the question of why Taiwanese society needed Korean and not Taiwanese prostitutes when addressing the issue of the Korean prostitutes' and Chosenro owners' migration, she does not explain why the Koreans chose Taiwan over Korea to open their enterprises. Unlike Fujinaga (2000), Jin (2010) argues that the opening of Chosenros in Taiwan was the Korean procurers' conscious decision and business strategy adopted against the restrictive environment rather than being an example of forced and violent exploitation of Korean prostitutes by Japanese colonizers. Then, we also should consider the question of why these procurers spent the necessary expenses, time, and efforts in order to enter the market in Taiwan instead Korea.

To summarize, the historical process behind the arrival and spread of Chosenros in Taiwan can only be explained when we look at the different sex-trade practices in the two colonies regulated by the imposed state-regulated prostitution system. In order to find an answer to this challenge, Section 3 explores the reasons behind Japan's introduction of the state-regulated prostitution system in the colonies and explores the characteristics of the colonial state-regulated prostitution. Then, the paper proceeds to examine the process by which the state-regulated prostitution system was localized in the regions.

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11. This was already pointed out. Qihong Liang 梁秋虹 describes the inference of Jin(2010) as “theory of ethnic and cultural boundary within the market ruled by liberal demand-and-supply principle” (Liang 2013,14-18), and argues that the ethnic and cultural boundary is not a natural result of the liberal market principle. Thus, she suggests that “we must look at how colonial power influenced the sex-trade market” (Liang 2013, 22). However, she does not consider why the colonial authorities could not use the legislation but had to rely on such flexible and circuitous measures as the police force to impose their control..

## The Introduction of State-regulated Prostitution and Changes in the Prostitution Market of the Colonies

As is already known, the introduction of state-regulated prostitution in Taiwan and Korea was a part of the process of Japanese imperial expansion.<sup>12</sup> We should first consider the three distinct features of the colonial state-regulated prostitution when investigating the formation of sex-trade markets in the colonial territories.

First, the primary objective of the state-regulated prostitution system was to protect the health and sanitation of the Japanese males who moved to the colonies (Takenaka 1996, 197; Zhang 2008, 1-25; Song 1993, 54; Bak 2009, 63-64).<sup>13</sup> Needless to say, the first wave of people who moved to the colonies, whether it was to Taiwan during the early colonial period or to Korea during the forced Annexation period, consisted of predominantly male military personnel. One of the many dangers that threatened the minority foreign rulers was the high rate of infection from sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs). The most effective way of preventing the spread of STDs when the emigration of Japanese women was restricted was to prevent unregulated sexual contact with native women. Therefore, it was necessary to implement a state-regulated prostitution policy as the first step in colonial domination and have the Japanese procurers and prostitutes provide safe sex-trade in the colonies.

An interesting fact is that even though this was the case, both the Japanese colonial masters and the colonized natives were subjected to the same set of regulations under the colonial state-regulated prostitution policy. In order to fulfil the abovementioned objectives efficiently and effectively, the Japanese administration might have been expected to establish laws based on personal jurisdiction and thereby differentiate prostitution markets for Japanese and for the colonial subjects, so to exclude the natives from the Japanese market. On the

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12. Although this is outside this paper's scope, the state-regulated prostitution was legislated not only in Korea and Taiwan but also in Manchuria and Kanto-shu (Fujinaga 1998; Kurahashi 2010, 106-32).

13. To add, the primary purpose for colonial prostitution control was the protection of male colonizers' health. This was also the case for other colonial powers such as the British, who regulated only those prostitutes who received white male customers (Levine 2003, Howell 2009).

contrary, the Japanese state-regulated prostitution laws were based on territorial jurisdiction. In other words, everyone residing in the same colony abided by the same prostitution laws regardless of his origin. Therefore under the law, the prostitution market was undifferentiated.<sup>14</sup>

Studies on Korean colonial history suggest that domination justified by the forced annexation of Korea by Japan was the reason behind this discrepancy in the objective and actual implementation of the Japanese state-regulated prostitution policy in the colonies (Song 1998, 272). However, this situation was not unique to Korea: state-regulated prostitution was based not on personal jurisdiction but on territorial jurisdiction in Taiwan and Japan as well.<sup>15</sup> To understand why it was inevitable to base the prostitution laws on territorial jurisdiction throughout the Japanese empire, we must consider the progress made in the international negotiations on prohibiting women's trafficking (Onozawa 2010, Suzuki 2006).

As global migration increased in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the problem of international trafficking of women—that is, trading women internationally for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation—and its solutions became a global issue by women's emancipation activists in Europe (Corbin 1990, 214-58). The Japanese state-regulated prostitution which had already been raised as an issue in the diplomatic negotiations between Japan and European powers along with the 1872 Maria Luz incident as the archetype of sex-trade

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14. Note that Jeongmi Bak (2011) made a similar point concerning the irony that the laws of the state-regulated prostitution were applied not only to Japanese but also to colonial subjects (211). Noting that in Korea, prostitutes whose main customers were Koreans were also required to receive regular medical examination for STDs, Bak (2011) explained that this was because some Korean intellectuals saw the state-regulated prostitution as a civilized institution and voluntarily implemented it. However, as will be mentioned later, unlike the Western colonial system in which prostitutes were classified according to the ethnicity of their customers, the Japanese system did not divide the customers according to their ethnic and cultural identities. So there was no distinction between brothels only for Koreans or those for Japanese. Furthermore, even in Taiwan where an intellectual class had not yet emerged at the time of the system's institutionalization, the laws applied equally to the Taiwanese population.

15. Although it will not be dealt with in detail in this paper, the Japanese legal system practiced both "personal jurisdiction" and "territorial-jurisdiction," so there was institutional double-standard in jurisdiction, i.e., "territory (*hoiki* 法域)" and "ethnicity." For example, the laws of House of Representatives election (Shugiin giin senkyohō 衆議院議員選挙法) had territorial jurisdiction so colonial subjects living in Japan were granted voting rights, while Japanese in the colonies were not. On the other hand, personal jurisdiction was practice for conscription and family registry laws (Yamamuro 2009, 1-22; Asano 2008).

system which socially condoned women's trafficking. Therefore, the Japanese government could foresee that its state-regulated prostitution policy and Japanese sex-trade in the colonies could again emerge as a diplomatic issue when outside, international anti-trafficking agreements such as the International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic (1904) and the International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic (1910) were being adopted (Onozawa 2010, 157).

The state-regulated prostitution and relevant laws were improved in Taiwan and Korea under these circumstances. In other words, establishing the state-regulated prostitution laws to have personal jurisdiction over only Japanese nationals in the colonies was similar to officially admitting that Japanese women were being traded in Japan and its colonies—which meant that “women's international trafficking” existed in the Japanese empire—when in the rest of the world, women's international trafficking was becoming a serious issue. Consequently, the Japanese government could not apply different standards for sex-trade by the Japanese expatriates in the colonies and that by the colonial natives. To fulfil the objectives, it needed to mobilize a different device other than legislation.<sup>16</sup> The second characteristic distinct to the colonial state-regulated prostitution system should be understood in this context. That is,

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16. The bigger problem here was that there was no opportunity for improvement for the government-regulated prostitution system institutionalized under such circumstances during the colonial period. From the beginning, the Japanese government's response to the international diplomatic criticism was not to abolish public prostitution or actively inhibit human trafficking but to hide the fact of Japanese women in prostitution in Japanese colonies and East Asia. This has not changed since even government-regulated prostitution was abolished not only in the European countries but also in their colonies in the 1920s (Onozawa 2010, 143). But after 1921 when the issue was brought to the attention of the League of Nations, Japan which was a member and empire had to adopt a measure in accordance. Finally in October, 1921, Japan signed “The International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic of Women and Children” under the condition that age-limit and the Convention's applicability in the colonies were beyond the Convention's provision. As a result, the state-regulated prostitution systems in Korea and Taiwan were outside the Convention. As the international criticism and anti-prostitution movement became fiercer, the League of Nations' Committee on Traffic in Women and Children created an “Investigating Commission on the Traffic in Women in the East” in 1931 to study the situation on the grounds. However, studies on Taiwan were stopped entirely (Hong 2004, 245-76), while studies on Korea and Manchuria could not persuade the Japanese government's concealment policy (Onozawa 2010, 183-207). Finally the Japanese government declared it would end the government-regulated prostitution system in 1934, but this call was never materialized.

although the same laws applied indiscriminately to the Japanese and the colonial natives, the police force consistently enforced these laws on the Japanese and the colonial natives in a specifically distinctive manner. In order to understand the reality of the state-regulated prostitution, we should look beyond the surface of its legality and explore how the police force regulated and enforced the laws, and what kind of power were invested in the police force for its implementation.

The last distinct characteristic we should consider is connected to the fact that the Japanese state-regulated prostitution system essentially attempted to control the sex-trade by regulating brothels and prostitutes—service providers—but did not impose any restraints on the male customers—service consumers—apart from such minimum requirements as registering when buying sex. This irony is reflected clearly in how the system managed STDs infection. Whereas check-ups for STDs and quarantine treatment were compulsory for prostitutes, no restraints or preventive measures against STDs were required from the male customers. As a result, the state-regulated prostitution system fell into the dilemma that it could not prevent the spread of STDs. On the other hand, the Japanese state-regulated prostitution system founded on this self-contradictory idea was directly exported to the colonies without modifications, and influenced the colonies' sex-trade markets that emerged under the system. The actual enforcement of the regulations by the police targeted only the procurers and prostitutes; therefore, the ethnic division in the sex-trade market existed only at the level of service providers.

This feature becomes more visible when we compare the Japanese state-prostitution system with that imposed in the European colonies, where implementation was differentiated according to the ethnicity of the male customers regardless of whether a brothel provided white prostitutes or native prostitutes (Bashford 2004, 112-33). The Japanese state-prostitution system, on the contrary, did not differentiate the brothels according to their customers, and did not restrain native customers from visiting Japanese brothels.<sup>17</sup> Ultimately, whereas ethnic boundaries were made clear among the brothels and prostitutes, these boundaries were irrelevant for the male customers. Furthermore, as

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17. Such characteristics were reflected in the studies by general researchers. For example, the survey of Seiichiro Doke (1928) left a range of detailed statistical data of prostitutes and procurers of every districts according to their ethnicity, but did not leave any data on male customers (345-91).

colonial rule was prolonged, Japanese visiting native brothels, and vice versa happened more often.

Concerning the particularities of the two colonies' coloniality, we should emphasize that just because both Taiwan and Korea had the same status as Japanese colonies, this did not mean that the colonization process and specificities of colonial domination experienced by both were also analogous. Therefore, we should approach the questions concerning the state-regulated prostitution system also from a comparative-historical perspective. As noted above, the objective of the introduction of the Japanese state-regulated prostitution system in Taiwan and Korea was to provide a safe prostitution market for the male Japanese immigrants, so that they could settle in the colonies more safely and comfortably. Hence, the state-regulated prostitution and controlling of sex-trade were introduced during the initial phase of colonial domination. In other words, even though the state-regulated prostitution system imposed in the two colonies were based on the same principles, the fact that the process through which Japan took over Taiwan and Korea was different suggests that the way the sex-trade was regulated could also be different. The following discussion takes this into consideration and examines how in reality the state-regulated prostitution system created different prostitution practices in Taiwan and in Korea.

### *Taiwan: Logic of Exclusion*

Let us first look at the case of Taiwan. The Japanese colonial government in Taiwan proclaimed the establishment of a military government in July, 1895, when violent rebellions continued after Japan ceded Taiwan in May. When a civil government was restored in April of the following year, the colonial government delegated power to reorganize the basic social customs, including sex-trade, to the provincial governments the following month. As a result, Taihoku-ken 臺北縣 and Taichu-ken 臺中縣 passed laws concerning *kashizashiki* 貸座敷—brothels licensed by the government—and prostitutes, and selected areas including Manka 艋舺, Tansui 淡水, Kiryu 基隆, Rokko 鹿港, and Taichu 臺中, where prostitution was legally permitted. This was the beginning of the colonial state-regulated prostitution system in Taiwan. Since then, Taiwan's rural administrative districts adopted a state-regulated prostitution system one after

another. As the number of districts adopting licensed prostitution increased, the necessity to unify the system, which varied district by district, emerged. So in February, 1906, the central colonial government issued the Standard Regulations on Brothels and Prostitution (Kashizashiki oyobi shogi torishimari kisoku hyojun 貸座敷及娼妓取締規則標準) as the standard laws and ordered the district governments to make modifications in their prostitution laws accordingly. Therefore, after 1906, the state-regulated prostitution system was unified across Taiwan but the jurisdiction was still in the hands of the provincial governments (Zhang 2008, 1-25).

However, that the local authorities instead of the central colonial government had the jurisdiction over state-regulated prostitution,<sup>18</sup> meant that the implementation of the prostitution laws itself depended on the will of the provincial governors. This meant that not all districts implemented the laws uniformly, if at all. In reality, even when Karenko-cho 花蓮港廳, the last district to adopt this system, decided to implement the state-regulated prostitution in 1910 and Hualian (Karen 花蓮) became the 16<sup>th</sup> and the last *yukaku* where prostitution was permitted (Figure 6), and even though the number of provinces with the state-regulated prostitution system rose steadily, Taito-cho 臺東廳 did not adopt the system until the end of Japanese colonization.

If so, what were the specific criteria which determined whether an administrative district would adopt the state-regulated prostitution system? It was not the level of urbanization or the population density but the number of Japanese residents in the district (Zhang 2008, 16). With the exception of Hualian, which was built specifically to host immigrants, and the port city of Penghu (Hoko 澎湖) (Jin 2013, 70-73), when the number of Japanese residents in a district reach a certain level, the district's government adopted the state-regulated prostitution system as a way to manage the sex-trade within its jurisdiction. Conversely, no matter how much a district was urbanized or highly populated, or how vibrant its sex industry was, if the number of Japanese

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18. Only the approval from the Governor-General was required for implementation. An additional point is that, unlike in Korea, the demarcation of Taiwan's administration districts went through modifications eight times before the 1920s. Therefore, the legal red-light districts which were under the jurisdiction of their responsive districts had to be relocated or re-designated whenever there was a change in the district borders, until the system was unified in 1906.

living in the district was relatively small, the state-regulated prostitution was not legislated. If we remember that the state-regulated prostitution system was originally introduced in the colonies for the Japanese immigrants, this was a natural consequence.

Note that in order to fulfil the objective of protecting the Japanese from STDs, it was thought that Taiwanese women must be excluded from the legal prostitution market managed by the state. During the time when biased perceptions saw Taiwanese women as the ultimate carriers of STDs, and racial degeneration theory—which argued that long-term contact with the natives and the tropical climate could induce racial deterioration (Kanda 2009, 167-68; Fan 2005, 87-132)—were prevalent, securing a safe prostitution market seemed possible only if Taiwanese could be excluded from the market.<sup>19</sup>

However, exclusion of Taiwanese was not achieved by simply stipulating different set of laws for Taiwanese and Japanese. As discussed above, considering the international environment in which the state-regulated prostitution could have been seen as an institution of international women's trafficking that might trigger a diplomatic problem, it was more efficient and realistic to exclude Taiwanese by using the police force to implement the laws instead of establishing a separate set of laws. The question then is how the police force implemented the laws. As mentioned above, with the introduction of the Standard Regulations on Brothels and Prostitution in 1906 by the colonial government, the state-regulated prostitution system across Taiwan was unified at the colonial level, and there was little room for the provincial governments to exert their influence. The answer had something to do with what were called *yukaku*—the areas where prostitution was legally permitted.<sup>20</sup>

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19. In fact, Ishikuro Tadanori 石黒忠憲, who at the time was the chief military doctor (rikugun guni soka 陸軍軍醫總監) responsible for the well-being and hygiene of the occupied force, suggested that the state-regulated protection must be introduced in the colonies in order to prevent STDs. He also proposed that prostitutes operating within this state-regulated system must not be Taiwanese and that Japanese women should be brought to the colonies (Zhang 2010, 103).

20. The official terms for the zones where sex-trade was legal were not unified, and accordingly, there were various terms such as *Kashizashiki Eigyo Kuiki* 貸座敷營業區域; *Kashizashi Shitei Kuiki* 貸座敷指定區域; *Kashizashiki Eigyo Menkyo Chiiki* 貸座敷營業免許地域; and *Kashizashiki Eigyo Kyoka Chiiki* 貸座敷營業許可地域). However, *yakaku* was used in the more common term.

**Figure 6.** Distribution of *yukakus* during the Japanese colonial period (1906)

Source: Jin 2012, 12

The Japanese prostitution system restricted the qualification for prostitution not only to legal brothel and the individual prostitute but also to the prostitution zone; that is, it designated *yukakus* and allowed *kashizashikis* to do business only within these districts. However, even after the state-regulated prostitution system took its final form, the geographic size and position of the red-light districts could be changed by the local government. In other words, *yukaku*, in addition to the police force, represented the only tools other than the relevant laws to control prostitution. In fact, most *yukakus* were relocated or re-demarcated due to city planning or rearrangement of administrative units after 1906 (Jin 2013, 54-58). The intervention of the police force in the prostitution market through the *yukakus* was also used for excluding Taiwanese from the market.

For example, Taiwanese brothels and prostitutes who were concentrated around Taipei's Manka Yukaku 艋舺遊廓 completely disappeared from Taipei after 1910 when Manka Yukaku was moved. This was because Taiwanese brothels were driven out of the space of the *yukaku*—thus outside the realm of state-regulated prostitution laws—by the police force (Liang 2013, 120-52). Even though it was not illegal for Taiwanese to work as a prostitute or open a

*Kashizashiki*, the colonial police force used the restrictive space of *yukaku* to drive out Taiwanese from the realms of the state-regulated prostitution, and sought to preserve sanitation and safety within the prostitution market.

However if we look at the statistics, the number of Taiwanese prostitutes increased after they completely disappeared from Taipei in 1910, (Figure 2) because the first and last of the Taiwanese *Yukaku* 臺灣人遊廓 was designated in Tainan *Yukaku* 臺南遊廓, which traditionally had been as popular as Manka *Yukaku*. This was the last resort for the Taiwanese prostitutes. We cannot say that this is an exception to the Japanese colonial prostitution regulated system, whose primary agenda was to shut out Taiwanese. Tainan-cho 臺南廳, suffering from budget shortfalls, purposefully brought Taiwanese prostitution, which had continued outside the realm of the state-regulated prostitution system, into the official realm in order to secure new tax revenues.<sup>21</sup> By designating a *yukaku* exclusively for Taiwanese instead of bringing Taiwanese prostitutes into the Japanese market, the colonial government, which was under heavy pressure to increase tax revenues, chose the second-best option when it was absolutely impossible to exclude the natives from the sex-trade market (Liang 2013, 167-71). In the colonial government's statistics, Taiwanese prostitutes could only be found in the Tainan-shu 臺南州 where the Taiwanese *Yukaku* was run after 1920s. This demonstrates that the Japanese police force could successfully exclude the Taiwanese natives from the sex-trade market of Japanese and drive them into the Taiwanese *Yukaku*.

To summarize, on the superficial level, Taiwan's state-regulated prostitution system was adopted all over the colony except in Taito-cho after 1910, and could acquire regional homogeneity. However, this only meant that Taiwanese were effectively excluded from the legal sex trade market by the police force. Hence, different rules applied to Taiwanese and Japanese. If so, what was the situation in Korea? As was the case in Taiwan, the colonial state-regulated prostitution system was introduced in Korea for the purpose of protection for the Japanese (Bak 2009, 63-64). Unlike in Taiwan, the system "spread like wildfire to the whole land of Korea," incorporated Korea's traditional prostitution market, and many Korean women fell into "the pit of corruption"

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21. Licensed prostitutes and legal brothels were a significant source of tax revenue both in Korea and Taiwan for provincial administrations.

(Choe 1948, 78). What caused this difference? First, we should consider the fact that unlike Taiwan's colonization, which was the consequence of a negotiation between third parties, Korea's colonization was a much more gradual process of sovereignty infringement that occurred over the course of three decades. Therefore, the process involved many more conflicts and adjustments.

### *Korea: Logic of Separation*

Prior to the beginning of formal colonial domination in Korea, there were Japanese outposts with extraterritoriality rights around the port cities that were opened to foreigners. Hence, the sex-trade in the Japanese society and in the native society developed under separate sets of laws until 1910, when the two were integrated under a single prostitution system under the colonial regime. Here, we will investigate how the local sex-trade market was shaped by the process of integration, focusing on the relationship between Japanese and Korean procurers.<sup>22</sup>

Japanese emigration began when Korea opened its borders to the great powers and permitted foreign settlements around each port in 1876. This marked the origin of Japanese society in Korea and the beginning of the influx of Japanese sex-trade customs and procurers into Korea. In the Japanese settlements in Busan 釜山 and Wonsan 元山, the Japanese regulated prostitution through the institutions they exported from home, but in Incheon 仁川, where they formed a joint concession with Westerners, they could not ignore "international sentiment" and publically institutionalize prostitution. However, after the Sino-Japanese War and Russo-Japanese War, the number of Japanese emigrants to Korea increased dramatically, so it became impossible to ignore the procurers' activities. Japanese consulates in Incheon, Keijo 京城, and other parts of Korea came up with a short-term solution to bring state-regulated prostitution by using the terms like geisha (*geigi* 藝妓), barmaid (*shakufu*), Japanese style restaurant (*ryoriten* 料理店), and public house (*inshokuten* 飲食店)

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22. A significant volume of scholarship has been built since 1990 on the process behind of the state-regulated prostitution system in modern Korea. Some of the more important works include Yamashita 1992; Song 1993; Song 1994a; Song 1994b; song 1997; Yamashita 1997; Fujinaga 2004; Fujinaga 2005a; and Bak 2009a.

in laws to conceal the fact of sex-trade.<sup>23</sup> When the Residency-General was established in 1906, this solution expanded to twelve settlements where Japanese communities were already in place.

This development in the Japanese society in Korea led to the increase in the number of Korean prostitutes who received Japanese customers. Although the number of Japanese procurers increased, there was still a shortage of Japanese prostitutes since women's free travel to Korea was not permitted. Furthermore, there was a large pool of women, including the freed serf-women after the Gabo Reform 甲午改革 in 1894 and dismissed court-maids in the 1900s (Song 1998, 251-54; Bak 2009, 50-51), who could be recruited as prostitutes. Thus, prostitution regulations imposed only on the Japanese procurers could not effectively protect the Japanese male emigrants from STDs. Unless the supply of Japanese prostitutes improved, there was always the chance that the Japanese men would buy the services provided by Korean women, and therefore, the STDs of Korean women could not be neglected. However, Japanese colonial rule had not yet been made official. So in order for the Japanese authorities to regulate and exert consistent influence on Korea's sex-trade, they had to wait until 1907, when the police force of Korea was officially placed under the control of the Residency-General 統監府.

In other words, the reason behind the proclamation of Regulations on Prostitutes (Changgi dansokreong 娼妓團束令) and Regulations on Courtesans (Gisaeng dansokreong 妓生團束令) in September, 1908, which partly introduced the Japanese prostitution system in Korean society, was not to control Korea's sex-trade but to distinguish Korean prostitutes and contain STDs in order to minimize the Japanese customers' exposure to STDs. In fact, the two regulations adopted under heavy pressure from the Japanese authorities ignored Korea's customs (Song 1998, 259-60; Fujinaga 2005a, 33-34), which had not officially recognized prostitution, and differentiated between courtesan (*gisaeng* 妓生) and prostitute (*changgi* 娼妓) based on whether one provided sexual services. The latter was forced to take regular medical examination for STDs.<sup>24</sup>

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23. Implementing the state-regulated prostitution by disguising prostitution as ordinary entertainment when the Japanese colonial authority had not yet fully recognized was also used in Manchuria (Kurahashi 2010, 105-32).

24. Regulations on Prostitutes and Regulations on Courtesans did not include clauses on

Therefore, the two regulations did not have to include all the specificities of the Japanese state-regulated prostitution system.<sup>25</sup> Note that the Regulations on Prostitutes did not include designated specific zones where prostitution was legally permitted. This clause, which was at the core of Japanese state-regulated prostitution system, confined the actual space and persons of prostitution. It also served as a device for the police force in managing and controlling sex-trade in and through the space of *yukaku*. In other words, it was the most effective way of controlling the spread of STDs within the framework of the Japanese state-regulated prostitution system. Then, how can we understand the fact that the Regulations on Prostitutes lacked a clause on confining the space of prostitution?

What we should examine first is the way sex was traded in Korea at the time. As mentioned earlier, the number of Korean prostitutes rapidly increased around the 1900s. These women who deviated from the traditional social structure, due to waves of social changes like the Gabo Reform, preserved the traditional ways of trading sex, and thus were often tied to a *gibu*. Unlike in Japan, where several prostitutes were under a procurer and brothels located in *yukakus* were run professionally, most Korean prostitutes provided the service privately or at home.<sup>26</sup> In the 1900s, starting with Keijo, Koreans concerned over the spread of STDs tried to create a *yukaku* to confine prostitution several

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STDs and, except for the terms courtesan (*gisaeng*) and prostitute (*changgi*), they were identical. Nevertheless, they deliberately differentiated *gisaeng* from *changgi*, and imposed the requirement for medical check-ups only on the latter group through implantation laws 施行心得 and allocutions 通牒 諭告, according to *Gisei oyobi Shogi ni kansuru shorui tsuzuri* 妓生及娼妓二關スル書類綴, which was compiled in 1908 by Tokanfu Keimu Dainika 統監府警務第二課, and currently kept in National Archives of Korea. In order to prevent the spread of STDs, first, sex-trade must be separated from ordinary entertainment industry, and intensive control must be imposed only on the sex-workers.

25. If we limit our scope to the clause of laws, what differentiates the regulations on prostitutions in Korea from that of Mainland Japan is that married women were prohibited from acquiring a license, the age limit was younger, and a union was focused. Especially regarding the prohibition on married women, the authorities included the clause and introduced a measure to abolish *gibu* 妓夫, which had traditionally managed and exploited prostitutes, in order to make the direct control over prostitution possible (Song 1998, 261-62; Yamashita 1992, 33-39).
26. See “Changnyeojonggu” 娼女定區 posted in *Hwangseong Sinmun* 皇城新聞 on April 27, 1904. As will be explained later, this condition did not change much after the establishment of the Regulations on Prostitutes in 1908 (Nakano 1916, 110).

times,<sup>27</sup> without much success (Bak 2009, 55). In other words, the *yukaku* policy promoted even by the Korean authorities was absent in the Regulations on Prostitutes adopted as a consequence of the Japanese pressure.

In conclusion, this shows that the Japanese objective was to contain and manage STDs among Korean prostitutes, but also neither to impose Japanese customs nor to allow them to enter the Japanese sex-trade market. In Korea, where prostitution was often a one-woman enterprise, professional procurers had yet to emerge. In this context, there was no difference between imposing *yukaku* regulation on local prostitutes and letting them flow into Japanese brothels. Namely, the enforcement of *yukaku* regulation in Korea, which was designed to control Korean women who were likely to infect Japanese men with sexual diseases, turned out to be served as a threat to Japanese who had exclusively secured the sex trade.

However, these measures left open the possibility that Korean prostitutes might disperse outside official stipulations. The Regulations on Prostitutes was supposed to control STDs effectively among the Korean prostitutes, but could never suppress the sex-trade in Korean society. If we look at the distribution of women labelled as *changgi* by district (Song 1998, 268-69), we find that Korean prostitutes were spread all over the country except near Hwanghae-do 黃海道. In comparison, eight districts did not have Japanese prostitutes.

However, even though colonial rule was officially established in Korea, control over the sex-trade was not immediately incorporated into the colonial legislation, and state-regulated prostitution was not introduced right away across the country. As explained above, women's trafficking was internationally criticized, and having complete authority over a colony did not mean that Japanese could ignore international sentiment in its territories. In this context, installing state-regulated prostitution as a part of the colonial legislation meant applying the same rules for both Japanese and Koreans in colonial Korea. In other words, there was no reason to officially implement state-regulated prostitution and enforce zoning with the Regulations on Prostitutes still effective under the law for Koreans since 1908. Adjusting sex-trade laws by police bureau as a part of district governments after the 1910 Annexation was an efficient

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27. See Son 1980, 110. The news articles "Changnyeojeonggu" 娼女定區 and "Maeumnyehapju" 賣淫女合住 in *Hwanseong Sinmun* on April 27, 1904 and March 5, 1907 also covered this topic.

solution under the circumstances.<sup>28</sup>

It was six years after Annexation that state-regulated prostitution was installed and the same set of laws was applied to Koreans and Japanese. By the order of the Police Bureau of the Colonial Government (Keimusokamburei 警務總監部令), the Regulations on Brothels for Prostitution (Kashizashiki shogi torishimari kisoku 貸座敷娼妓取締規則) was adopted in March 1916.<sup>29</sup> Then, why did the Japanese abandon the policy of separately regulating the sex-trade for Koreans and Japanese? As seen in Figure 3 and Figure 7, we should focus on the fact that the number of Japanese procurers and prostitutions increased by twofold in the six years since the advent of the colonial administration. As was the case in Taiwan, with the introduction of Standard Regulations on Brothels and Prostitution in 1906, it was difficult to regulate prostitution with multiple prostitution laws that were different district by district.<sup>30</sup> In addition, it was not easy to justify legalized prostitution applicable to only Japanese also extended to Koreans, considering international sentiment and the anti-prostitution movements in mainland Japan. In this circumstance, how did the state-regulated system introduced in Korea attempt to maintain the boundary between Koreans and Japanese?

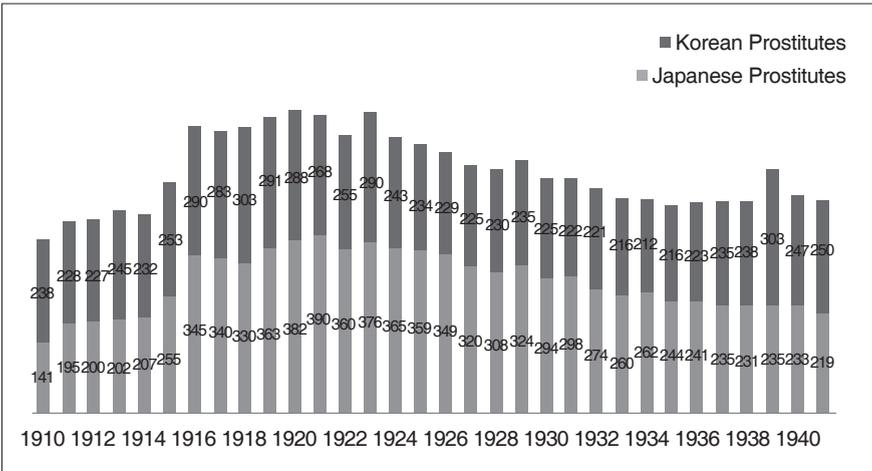
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28. In this process of legislating the laws, there was the case where Korean prostitutes were completely exempted from the laws while there was also districts where different regulations applied as in Keijo, Pyeonganbuk-do 平安北道, and Hwanghae-do (Bak 2009, 59-60).

29. See “Keimu sokamburei yongo, Kashizashiki shogi torishimari kisoku” 警務總監部令四號 貸座敷娼妓取締規則 posted on page 1070 of *Chosen Sotokufu Kampo* 朝鮮總督府官報 on March 31, 1916.

30. Nakano Arimitsu 中野有光 (1916), the chief of Internal Security Department of the Police Bureau (Keimusokambu Hoankacho 警務總監部保安課長) warned that “we should consider the temporary problems in regulating [Japanese and Korean sex-trade] together.” As we can see from this warning, the objective of the common implementation of the state-regulated prostitution system to all ethnicities was not to impose the same laws on Koreans. On the contrary, the system was imposed to prevent their entrance to the market. However, the “number of Japanese immigrants reached a significant increase” and thus, the authorities could not neglect the immigrant population. They decided that it was more efficient to create a new red-light district for the Korean procurers, who had “now became similar to the Japanese procurers,” instead of preventing their entrance in the pre-existing Japanese red-light district (108).

Figure 7. Procurers in Korea by ethnicity



Source: Author's compilation of data from the corresponding year's *Chosen Sotokufu Tokei Nempo* 朝鮮總督府統計年報

The second-best option was to add an appendix to the zoning laws which exempted already-existing prostitutes from the regulations. That is, prostitutes and procurers, who had been operating under the 1908 Regulations on Prostitutes before May 1916, could continue their business outside *yukakus*. Of course, primarily this was a grace-law which considered the business livelihood of those who had been operating without spatial limits.<sup>31</sup> But policy makers were not concerned with securing the Korean rights of trade.

31. In fact, it was customary to respect the continued business rights for the already-existing operating procurers when *yukakus* were relocated in both Taiwan and Japan (Jin 2013, 83-84). The situation in Korea was different from that in Taiwan in that the specific grace period was not stated in the appendix. Meanwhile, from the standpoint of Korean history, this appendix is thought to be an important factor along with the Regulations on Prostitutes, which did not specify *yukaku*, contributed to the spread of Japanese sex-trade customs in Korea. In other words, the authorities tried to nurture pro-Japan sentiment by protecting the business rights of pro-Japan Koreans (Song 1993, 63). Furthermore, scholars of Korean history argue that by exempting Koreans from the zoning requirements and ultimately spreading the sex-trade across the country, the colonial authorities caused the dramatic increase of the number of prostitutes, as shown in Figure 3, thereby facilitating the rampant spread of prostitution throughout Korean society (Yamashita 1992, 51). However, as described below, the Korean procurers were too poor and small to be expected to become a powerful pro-Japanese collaborators; furthermore, this exemption law was not permanent.

If the government applied the same zoning laws to those Korean procurers, they would have to enter *yukakus* solely occupied by Japanese procurers unless they closed down their business. This would ultimately cause intermingling of Japanese and Korean procurers in the *yukakus*. In other words, the exemption law was the minimum measure for not only preventing Korean procurers from being absorbed into the Japanese *yukakus* but also a grace period for a Korean *yukaku* to form, as the old and small-scale practice of Korean private prostitution died out and new procurers were encouraged to choose zoning.

In fact, it was after the 1916 the Regulations on Brothels for Prostitution was passed that *yukakus* were created across Korea, except in Busan, Incheon, Pyeongyang 平讓, and other cities where *yukakus* already existed (Fujinaga 2005a, 45). As had happened in Taiwan earlier in the 1900s, procurers were reorganized through a process of abolition, relocation, and expansion of *yukakus* in every province. For example, when Korean procurers scattered around Keijo were zoned gradually after the Regulations on Brothels for Prostitution, they moved not to the Japanese *yukakus* but to newly formed Korean *yukakus* on the outskirts of the capital (Kim 2011, 122). Moreover, Keijo was not an exception. According to a survey that traced the process of formation of *yukakus* in Wonsan, Daejeon 大田, Jinnampo 鎭南浦, Jinhae 鎭海, Hamheung 咸興, Jeonju 全州, and Gyeomyipo 兼二浦 from 1916 to 1920 (Fujinaga 2005a, 45-46), reorganization of procurers and brothels happened not only to Japanese but also to Koreans. But this does not mean that they were relocated to the same *yukakus*. Even if they were assigned to the same *yukaku*, in reality, they occupied different parts within it. In Korea this kind of *yukaku* system, where Japanese *yukakus* were assigned to Japanese prostitutes while Korean *yukakus* were assigned to Korean prostitutes, or even if the both co-existed in the same *yukaku*, they usually continued to occupy separate parts within the *yukaku*, was continued after the 1920s. (Kim 2011, 123-25; Hong 2007, 50, 82).

Another noteworthy aspect is that this ethnic separation and boundary within Korea's sex industry based on spatial separation not only was applied to both of procurer and prostitutes but also existed at the level of the prostitutes and procurers relationship. In other words, a Japanese procurer normally employed a Japanese prostitute and a Korean procurer employed a Korean prostitute. This was true even in the 1930s, when 15 years had passed since state-regulated prostitution was legalized. By the late 1930s, the gap between the deposit-fee a Japanese prostitute received and that a Korean prostitute received

began to widen, causing Japanese procurers to employ Korean prostitutes, but this entailed overcoming numerous social obstacles for the Japanese procurers (Yun 2003, 340-41).

Considering all these factors together, we can conclude that sex-trade in colonial Korea had changed significantly due to the implementation of the Japanese state-regulated prostitution system. Nevertheless, the state-regulated prostitution system was not imposed with this objective, and the boundary between the sex-markets of Koreans and Japanese did not collapse completely. If in Taiwan, the state-regulated prostitution system maintained the boundary between Taiwanese and Japanese by excluding the former from the space of *yukakus*, in Korea, the ethnic boundary was preserved by separating the zones of sex-trade activity, using the spatial device of *yukaku*, because it was impossible to prevent the state-regulated system and practices from expanding to Koreans.

To emphasize, the state-regulated prostitution system in Korea was a way to protect Japanese health and sanitation from the “exotic” environment of colonies. In other words, the most ideal result would have been secluding colonial women and leaving only Japanese within the realm of state-regulated prostitution. But unlike in Taiwan, where official colonization preceded the legislation of the state-regulated prostitution, prostitution laws were gradually implemented with regard to Korean prostitutes in Korea under partial colonial rule. Therefore, under the condition that Koreans were not separated from Japanese at the level of the law, it was difficult to exclude Koreans from the state-regulated prostitution system. As a result, although in the legal sex-trade market of Korea, both Koreans and Japanese were located within the same legal system, the Japanese authorities adopted the subsidiary regulations in order to prevent Korean inflow into the Japanese *yukakus* and to maintain the minimum ethnic boundary within the market.

However, if we look at the superficial legislative level, the state-regulated prostitution systems in Taiwan and Korea were united under the centralized colonial authority in 1906 and 1916, respectively, and this caused the sex-trade markets of the colonies to share the same legal framework as that of mainland Japan. However, even though there was uniformity on the level of legislation, which made it seem that the same laws were applied equally to all, in reality the state-regulated system internalized boundaries that separated Japanese from the Taiwanese or Koreans. This internalized boundary also worked differently in Taiwan and Korea.

This paper focuses on the fact that Korean prostitutes were shipped to Taiwan by Korean procurers and that Chosenros appeared all over Taiwan's *yukakus* beginning in the 1920s, some five years after state-regulated prostitution was established and the ethnic boundaries internalized in the colonial prostitution markets of Taiwan and Korea had taken roots. Then, what factors and realities of the two different colonial prostitution markets played into the Korean procurers' decision to move to Taiwan from Korea?

## **Comparing Korea and Taiwan's Prostitution Markets through Chosenros**

According to statistical data from the Governor-General of Korea (Chosen Sotokufu 朝鮮總督府), the number of Korean procurers increased steadily in the 1920s after Annexation. In the beginning, there were more Korean procurers than Japanese procurers, but when the state-regulated prostitution system was introduced in 1916, the latter outnumbered the former (Figure 7). The data compiled from 1910 and 1913 is particularly interesting (Table 1). Although showing data from only 4 years, it indicates that over 70% of Korean procurers were concentrated around Kyeonggido 京畿道 which embraced the cities Incheon and Keijo. Although the proportion of Japanese procurers operating in the region was also high, they accounted less than 50% of the total number of procurers. This means that at least 1.5 times and at most 5 times more Korean procurers as Japanese procurers were operating in Kyeonggido. What we should note is the reality behind these statistics.

**Table 1.** Number of workers in the sex industry of Korea and Kyeonggido (unit: person)<sup>32</sup>

Year	Koreans					
	Colony-wide			Kyeonggido		
	No. of procurers	No. of prostitutes	No. of prostitutes per procurer	No. of procurers	No. of prostitutes	No. of prostitutes per procurer
1910	238	569	2.39	182	253	1.39
1911	228	616	2.70	150	305	2.03
1912	227	569	2.50	156	298	1.91
1913	245	585	2.39	151	331	2.19
Year	Japanese					
	Colony-wide			Kyeonggido		
	No. of procurers	No. of prostitutes	No. of prostitutes per procurer	No. of procurers	No. of prostitutes	No. of prostitutes per procurer
1910	141	851	6.03	38	328	8.63
1911	195	1248	6.40	97	657	6.77
1912	200	1409	7.05	87	664	7.63
1913	202	1551	7.68	62	705	11.37

Source: Author's compilation of data data from the corresponding year's

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The reality of Korean procurers becomes more apparent when we compare the increase in the number of the procurers to that of Korean prostitutes. If we calculate the average prostitutes per one procurer in conjunction with the fact that these small-scale procurers could only employ inexpensive Korean prostitutes, we see that the procurers could contract fewer than two prostitutes. As mentioned earlier, the Regulations on Prostitutes was established when liberated female serfs after the Gabo Reform and dismissed courtesans who had formerly been registered to district governments were pulled into prostitution. These women became licensed prostitutes who worked as procurers themselves (Nakano 1916, 108). This reality had not changed until the 1916 establishment of the Regulations on Brothels for Prostitution (Nakano 1916, 110).

As explained above, the Regulations on Brothels for Prostitution of 1916 exempted existing Korean sex-workers from the yukaku requirement

32. This is a simple count of the number of prostitutes per one procurer, by ethnicity.

and allowed the old procurers to maintain their businesses; this drove the old procurers out of the yukaku and created Korean-only *yukakus* separate from that of Japanese, with new procurers who opened their business after 1916. This artificial generational change within the sex-trade market succeeded in concentrating Korean procurers in the new Korean-only *yukakus*.<sup>33</sup> However, this did not mean that business conditions for the new Korean procurers were improved.

In 1928, ten years later, a total of 538 legal brothels operated in Korea (CSK 1931, 380-81). Data on the address, the owner's name, tax amount, and other details about 271 brothels is preserved (CSK 1929, 115-26), which included 50 Korean and 72 Japanese brothels. When we compare the average amount of tax they each paid, the Koreans paid around 16.16 yen while the Japanese paid 81.57 yen, which was five times the amount the Koreans paid. The fact that the data does not list all big-and-small brothels indicates that it only included those of considerable size. In other words, the data reflects that Korean brothels were relatively smaller than their Japanese counterparts, which indicates that there was a more severe gap between the two in reality.

The reason behind this gap was not that Confucian values had not collapsed completely in Korean society, which treated prostitution as the lowest profession. Neither was it the case that the Korean procurers faced poorer conditions compared to their Japanese counterparts, due to the colonial setting. The primary cause was that the sex-trade market in colonial Korea did not differentiate customers by ethnicity. As explained earlier, unlike in Western colonial settings, Japanese state-regulated prostitution did not differentiate the male customers as it did at the level of service providers. Therefore, the Korean procurers who were new to the market had to compete for the same pool of customers against their Japanese forerunners, who dominated wealth

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33. For example, according to *Gisei oyobi Shogi ni kansuru shorui tsuzuri*, 27 prostitutes submitted a petition to form the Keijo Sex-workers Union (Keijo Yujo Kumiai setsuritsu koi 京城遊女組合設立請) in June, 1908; 17 union members created the Hanseong Sex-workers Union (Hanseong Changgi johap 漢城娼妓組合) in April, 1909; and 20 prostitutes submitted a petition for Hanseong Bar-owners Union (Hanseong Jusang johap 漢城酒商組合) in September, 1909. Through the names of the union members, we can also find the names of 64 people who worked in the sex-industry in Korea at that time. However, 20 years later, we cannot find these names among the 50 persons recorded as owners of brothels, nor in the list of the owners of Japanese-style restaurants, as shown in CSK 1929, 115-26.

and business advantages.<sup>34</sup> Under such circumstances, the Korean brothels had to target poor lower-class, whether they were Japanese or Korean customers, and thus lower the fees and save on business expenditures.<sup>35</sup> As a result, the Korean brothels occupied the lowest level of the sex-trade market in Korea. It was a rather obvious consequence that the 1916 Regulations on Brothels for Prostitution and the re-organization of the prostitution market could not bring improvement for the small-scale Korean procurers. This was not all.

The poor business conditions of Korean brothels led to the downfall of the entire Korean *yukakus*. For example, in Keijo, Korean *yukakus* created due to the zoning policy were dramatically different from those of the Japanese, which boasted of scale and glamour (Kim 2011, 124). The former was described as “unhygienic and primitive” (Okumura 1926, 20-21). As a collective of poor and small brothels, Korean *yukakus* were considered unhygienic and unpleasant spaces.

The problem was that this absolute disadvantage could not be changed by improving their business operation in Korea. Although the laws did not differentiate Koreans from Japanese, in reality, there was ethnic separation between the *yukakus*. So, as long as the Korean procurers operated within these districts, they could not do anything but accept the condition. Then, what was the business environment like in the sex-trade market of Taiwan, which had institutionalized a similar state-regulated prostitution system?

As explained above, the state-regulated prostitution system applied the same laws to all sex-workers within the same colony. Thus, Korean ethnic status did not present a problem for operating a brothel or working as a prostitute in

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34. See, for example, the news article “Samcheonman palcheonwon bakramhoe baram-e sunan yugwak, longjungjo sibwoljung hwadae” 十三萬八天圓 박람회 바람에 수난 유곽, 籠中鳥 十月中 花代 posted on page 2 of *Donga Ilbo* 東亞日報 on November 1, 1929. In reality, not a few Japanese accumulated great wealth by working in the sex-industry since the time of the Residency-General (Tokanfu 統監府) (Bak 2009, 65-66). Even after the establishment of the state-prostitution system in 1916, they continued to run their business and occupied leadership positions in unions to which membership was compulsory for all procurers. For instance, the annual tax Akahagi Yosaburo 赤萩與三郎 paid amounted to 298 yen (CSK 1929, 115).

35. In reality, there were many occasions when Japanese visited Korean brothels, due to the cheaper price. See “Sahoe-ui banyeong geuneul-e jaraneun yeoja-ui muri gongchang pyeji undong-eun geunyang gyesokhajiman sinjeong byeongmokjeong-eun haemada beonchanghae ganda” 社會의 反映 그늘에 자라는 女子의 무리 공장 폐지 운동은 그냥 계속하지만 新町 竝木町은 해마다 번창해 간다 posted on page 5 of *Donga Ilbo* on November 28, 1925.

Taiwan, at least at the legislative level. In addition, unlike the Taiwanese, who were excluded from the legalized sex-trade market after 1910, the Koreans had learned how to do business under the Japanese state-regulated prostitution system in the past decade.<sup>36</sup> In other words, even though the Koreans were entering the foreign market in Taiwan as newcomers, there was nothing they could not expect.

Furthermore, the fact that Taiwanese were excluded from Taiwan's market meant that there was one market targeting only the Japanese, unlike in Korea, where separate market zones existed for each ethnicity under the same prostitution system. Therefore, entering Taiwan's market meant entering the market for Japanese access, which was never allowed in Korea. In fact, the owners of Chosenros maintained a close relationship with Japanese procurers in Taiwan through money-lending or union activities (Jin 2010, 134).

Japan could not ensure safe sex-trade in the colonies for its nationals just by introducing the state-regulated prostitution system, because it was impossible if colonial women were not completely secluded from the prostitution market. In Korea, the native sex-trade structure itself was going through a change. The state-regulated prostitution system could not be legislated swiftly by fiat but could only be gradually incorporated into the local society, because the society was not yet officially under the Japanese colonial administration. Under these circumstances, the Japanese authorities could not completely exclude Koreans from the legal sex-trade market. As a result, they had to secure safe sex-trade market for Japanese by separating the zones of prostitution for Koreans and Japanese under the state-regulated prostitution system. This separation doubled the oppression imposed on the Korean procurers, because it posed serious obstacles for them to enter the Japanese zone, at least in Korea. In other words, for the Korean procurers, Taiwan's market was a place ruled by the familiar state-regulated prostitution system, and gave them the opportunity to enter the more promising Japanese zone.

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36. As explained above, except for the age limit, the state-regulated prostitution system in Korea and Taiwan shared the same institutional framework (Fujinaga 2000, 98).

## Conclusion

“The Japanese colonization left two evils to the women of this land: first was the state-regulated prostitution, and the second was preserving their feudal discriminating view towards women....The human market officially called “*kashizashiki*,” also known as “*yukaku*” began to erode women’s body immediately, when the Japanese vehement teeth bit this land after March 1916....Once the seed of curs was spread in this land, it spared all over the country in a blink of time, rosy *yukakus* in every city swam in the nightmarish vision. This lost paradise grew every day....so many peasants who were all skin-and-bones and starved workers to cut the dream-filled red *danggi* of their young daughters, drag them into the devil’s pit and end youth that had not yet flowered....This evil continued during the war when Shylock with money-bags made of seal’s skin around their necks to take the sad women to North Manchuria and the battlefield of the Second Sino-Japanese War for the loyal and brave soldiers and officers as “comfort women.” This was one of the ugliest examples of the reality of Japanese colonial exploitation and moral corruption.” (Choe 1948, 78)

The state-regulated prostitution introduced during the Japanese colonial period was abolished in 1948, two years following Independence. From the above excerpt, which exposed the seriousness of the scars and evils done to Korean women and society by Japanese colonialism, we see that Korean society’s perception of the Japanese state-regulated prostitution has not changed much in the 60 years since then. In other words, the state-regulated prostitution was the most demonstrative example of the violence and exploitation of Japanese colonial rule in Korea. Under this system, not only were countless Korean women subjected to sexual exploitation but also the new structure of the sex-trade, represented by the red-light district, took deep root in Korean society.

There is no gainsaying this perception itself. However, when only such facts are over-emphasized, we should remember that there are also other aspects in history. For example, among the women who were sexually exploited by the state-regulated prostitution in Korea, there were also those who were not Koreans. Moreover, Japan was not alone in having used legalized prostitution as a device to oppress women. In fact, many more Japanese women than Korean women became prostitutes and worked in the sex industry, while among those procurers who used women to earn profits were not only Japanese but also

many Koreans. In other words, we cannot see the whole picture of the colonial state-regulated prostitution through the narrow lenses of colonial exploitation by an imperialist power.

In order to move away from the narrow perspective of looking at the colonies' sex-trade markets as the symbol of Japanese colonial domination and violence, this paper focused on the reasons behind the opening and spread of Chosenros—Korean brothels, in Taiwan, which became popular in the 1920s.

When we look at the previous scholarship that emphasizes imperialist violence reflected in the legalized prostitution system, we see that Chosenros were interpreted as a phenomenon of colonial exploitation on women, expanding from Korea to another colony, Taiwan (Fujinaga 2000). Even if we overcome such schematic understanding and accept the fact that such Chosenros were run by Koreans, studies that lean towards Taiwanese history can explain why colonial Taiwan society allowed the Koreans to enter the market, but cannot answer the question why they chose Taiwan over Korea (Jin 2010). In order to overcome such limitations, this paper points to the fact that the history behind Chosenros is much more than an example of Japanese colonial exploitation and oppression of Korean women, and that the cultural and ethnic differences between Japanese and Taiwanese could not provide the sufficient condition for the appearance of Chosenros. In order to grasp the whole picture, we much reinvestigate how Japanese state-regulated prostitution was adopted in Korea and in Taiwan as separate foreign cultures.

Unlike in mainland Japan, where the state-regulated prostitution system developed domestically and historically, the colonial state-regulated prostitution system was artificially imposed with the purpose of protecting Japanese colonial masters from STDs. In other words, even if the Japanese practice had “spread all over the country in a blink of time,” changing the native sex-trade institutions and customs was not a part of the reason the prostitution system was introduced. Rather, this was far from what the authorities who imposed the system had in mind. Similarly, making prostitutes out of colonial women by “dragging young daughters to corruption” was essentially not a goal of the system since the main purpose was to actually prevent the native women from flowing into the legal sex-trade markets in order to protect Japanese men.

However, the regulations were not implemented uniformly in Taiwan and Korea, and consequently, two different sex-trade markets emerged in the colonies under the same system. The most dramatic result was the statistical

data that indicated that there was almost no Taiwanese sex-workers in Taiwan whereas there were as many Korean sex-workers as Japanese sex-workers in Korea. Note that although this was the case, the Japanese authorities did not abandon the original objective of the system's imposition, which was excluding colonial women from the market. Therefore, an ethnic division between Koreans and Japanese was still needed within the sex-trade market in Korea.

Due to this ethnic boundary, Korean sex-workers who obeyed the same prostitution laws as their Japanese counterparts had to endure these disadvantageous conditions because they were the colonized people. Thus, for these Korean procurers, the market in Taiwan, which was operated within the same legal framework, seemed to enable them to enter the Japanese market.

To conclude, we can say that Chosenros were the result of how some Korean procurers used the common state-regulated prostitution system and differences in the colonial sex-trade markets to their advantage. The history attests that Japanese were not the sole perpetrators of violence and exploiters of colonial women's rights and that it was a structural problem on the Taiwanese part which not only accepted but demanded the entrance of the Korean procurers. As economic conditions in colonial Korea continued to worsen, more and more young Korean women became potential prostitutes. Behind the forces that pulled those women to Taiwan's sex-trade market were the poor business conditions the Korean procurers faced in the domestic market and the difference between the markets in Taiwan and Korea that make the former look more attractive.

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## Abstract

This paper investigates the history behind the appearance of Korean prostitutes and brothels (Chosenro 朝鮮樓) in red-light districts (*yukaku* 遊廓) across Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period from the 1920s, and the different sex-trade markets created in Korea and Taiwan under the Japanese state-regulated prostitution system. As we can see from the appearance and spread of Chosenro in Taiwan, although the two colonies adopted the same state-regulated prostitution under the Japanese colonial rule, sex-trade markets in Korea and Taiwan were shaped quite differently, causing the one-way migration of procurers and sex-workers from Korea to Taiwan. In addition, in light of the fact that Japanese state-regulated prostitution created different structures of sex-trade market in Korea and Taiwan, instead of looking at it within the scope of Korean history and using Japan as the only comparable case, this paper suggests an alternative approach to examining the colonial prostitution policy.

**Keywords:** Chosenro 朝鮮樓, state-regulated prostitution, sex trade, *yukaku* 遊廓, STDs regulation