

Introduction

Modernity is an endeavour: the discovery and appropriation of desire.

Henri Lefebvre, *Introduction to Modernity*

Sexuality is not the most intractable element in power relations, but rather one of those endowed with the greatest instrumentality: useful for the greatest number of maneuvers and capable of serving as a point of support, as a linchpin, for the most varied strategies.

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*

This book is a history of sexual knowledge in modern Japan and the uses made of that knowledge. It examines radical changes in the perception and description as well as the colonization of sex and sexuality. It follows the close and complicated exchanges about sexual behavior among governmental agencies, scholars and other intellectuals, social reformers, the media, and the wider public in order to reconstruct the processes of normalization, medicalization, and pedagogization. In addition, the book traces the countless modifications in the modes by which sexual knowledge was circulated, valorized, attributed, and appropriated. The underlying structure of this book is informed by various sites and the connections among them—sites where normative ideas about sex were created, examined, weighed, transformed, and translated into cultural practices in an effort to “colonize” the sex and sexuality of the Japanese populace.

As with other instances of colonization (Osterhammel 1999 [1995]: 41), the colonization I describe here was not carried out via swift attacks on unsuspecting victims but came about gradually. It began with what a geographer or military man would call the reconnaissance of the un-

known terrain, including the discovery by military surgeons of a high rate of venereal disease among members of the imperial army in the 1880s and the recognition by pediatricians of infantile sexual desire around 1900. Through several phases, the colonization of sex shifted toward the development of what a colonialist would consider a complete colonial ruling apparatus. For example, sex for soldiers was eventually provided within and restricted to “comfort stations” under military control; parents, school and factory physicians, teachers, and, later, officials in the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare became entrusted with the informed guidance of children’s sexuality; and ordinary women and men were expected to consult eugenic marriage offices in order to ensure that their sexual union would result in desirable offspring or birth control advice offices to prevent the birth of undesired children.

Perhaps the colonization of sex has never reached a state of completeness. At certain moments in the modern history of Japan, however, it seems as if the boundaries and the control of the new terrain of knowledge about sex and sexuality were firmly set, while places within this terrain were (re)named, once and for all.

My analysis centers on the strategies employed in the colonization of sex in Japan. I am interested in the techniques at work in the conflicts and negotiations that aimed at the creation of a normative Japanese sexuality. This sexuality was viewed as existing primarily between women and men, and it was documented in military data that reflected soldiers’ health, in moral police registers that tracked prostitutes and their diseases, in sex education for youth, and in pronatalist and expansionist propaganda that sought to reduce frigidity in women and impotence in men. This normative sexuality was declared vital to the health, improvement, and future of the Japanese empire.

The colonization of sex in Japan involved complicated power relations marked by two distinct technologies, those of bodily discipline and mass regulation. Power, as Michel Foucault noted, works on the entire surface of the social field via a system of relays, connections, and transmissions; it is never monolithic. Every moment of negotiation over the understanding of sexuality in modern Japan reveals power functioning in myriad small ways—in the various conflicts between scientific and popular knowledge, the political uses of science, and the interactions between Japan’s and other national cultures’ knowledge in the field of sexology.

Power relations formed the various threads—some tightly knotted,

some loosely woven—that came to constitute a complex texture of debates on numerous issues: the necessity of sex education in the broadest sense, to improve the physical and mental health of the populace on the one hand and to “liberate sex” on the other hand; the prevention of venereal diseases; the problem of masturbation (which was often collapsed into the new category of homosexuality) and its alleged consequences (including mental illnesses, venereal diseases, and tuberculosis); the legalization of birth control and other objectives of Japan’s nascent women’s movement; the fight against prostitution (which was most often a fight against prostitutes, rarely against pimps, and hardly ever against clients); the emergence of “positive” and “negative” eugenics; and eventually, the implementation of “racial hygiene” policies at the expense of sex research and education.

These debates were carried out in a heterogeneous, changing forum. I analyze shifts in the cultural meanings of sex and sexuality between various debates about sex and identify the main actors—scientific experts, administrators and politicians, media, and the wider public as represented by various social reform groups—involved in the construction and normalization of Japanese sexuality. Government agencies, scholars, and social reformers differed in their aims as well as their methods, but they were connected by a common desire to understand, document, and guide the sexual practices and attitudes of the Japanese populace. Even specialists’ efforts to encourage members of the public to reveal details about their sex lives in order to gain data, legitimacy, and status for their goal of launching a “radical sex education” program (*kyūshinteki seikyōiku*) were grounded in arguments about “scientific expertise.” Their expert status was contested, however, and was constantly being renegotiated.

Closely connected to the colonialist strategies I examine are the practices of medicalization and pedagogization that depicted the individual body as a miniature of the social, the national, and the imperial body. Throughout the late nineteenth century, the primary emphasis of these efforts was on the male body, thus designing the national body as decisively, if implicitly, male. The normalization of sex drew into its web all-male conscripts and soldiers who came to be considered constituent of the national condition, the consolidation of the nation, modernity, and progress—in short, who came to embody the Japanese nation to be achieved.

From the 1910s onward, these efforts seem to have been complemented or even superseded by a significantly increased medical and ped-

agogical interest in the female body. Curiously, when politico-economic activities decisively shifted toward imperialist actions in East and Southeast Asia, the expansive qualities of the (fertile) female physique appeared in the foreground of the discourse of sex, revealing a preoccupation with the womb, the uterus, fertility, and race. This singling out of the uterus as the most important organ of the female body and of the race may have had to do with obstetricians' anxiety about their status within the medical profession (Gallagher and Laqueur 1987:x–xi), but it also fed into efforts to elevate the value of women's reproductive organs for empire building.

Accordingly, the colonization of sex occasionally foreshadowed, or coincided and overlapped with, the Japanese imperialist penetration of East and Southeast Asia. In contrast to these external activities, efforts at national unity and imperial prosperity in the realm of sex and sexuality primarily produced processes and practices of “internal colonization,” or battles against enemies within Japan. These battles were driven by a historically specific, multifold rhetoric that consisted of cries for defense and security and for liberation and truth, thus emphasizing in every historical moment how the sexual body has been (and is) part of a much broader current in political and cultural life.

The first pair of powerful rhetorical figures, defense and security, referred not only to military operations or planning but also to a general state of mind. Defense, once classified by Henri Lefebvre (1995 [1962]: 190) as the key element of the modern notion of well-being, represented a political and intellectual commitment to the protection of Japan against Western colonial powers, disease, and moral degeneration. By the 1890s, military surgeons and administrators had begun to plead for the defense of soldiers' health against prostitutes' venereal diseases. Around 1900, pedagogues set out to secure children from their own (subconscious) desires and the (sexual) dangers of a modern society. During the 1920s and 1930s, some sexologists took it upon themselves to defend what they perceived as sexual normalcy against perversion. And during the occupation era, officials called for the protection of impoverished girls from (sexual) seduction by the occupation forces—even while aggressively recruiting women to serve the nation as prostitutes (Kanzaki 1954a, 1954b, 1955). The rhetoric of defense and security was applied to and connected with perceptions of the national body, public health, and sexuality. It also tied in with the language of liberation and that of its counterpart, oppression.

While Foucault (1990 [1978]) and subsequent historians of sex and

sexuality have questioned the assumption that repression was an evil reality and that a historical transition could be traced leading to emancipation, my study highlights the frequent recurrence—each time in a slightly different guise and at the hands of different actors—of the repression and liberation of sex throughout Japan's modern history. At the beginning of the twentieth century, medical doctors, pedagogues, and sex educators invoked the (necessity of) the liberation of sex in order to shed oppressive traditional beliefs and to unburden sex of mystification. Immediately after the end of World War II, officials in the ministries of education and health and welfare again declared sex and sexuality in need of liberation, this time from the militarist and fascist regulations of the wartime regime. For its proponents during the 1920s and 1930s, the liberation of sex implied the liberation of women from involuntary motherhood and from social inequity in general. In the minds of reformers of that era, a liberated sexuality would catapult the working class out of poverty. Very few of them imagined sexual liberation as a component or consequence of revolution; most insisted that its central tool was sexual knowledge based on scientific facts, or simply the truth about sex. While most historiographical accounts of sexuality in Japan focus on analyzing notions of gender and the erotic (Silverberg 1998), gender ambivalence and ambiguity (Roden 1990; Robertson 1989, 1992, 1998, 1999), homosexuality (Pflugfelder 1999; Robertson 1999), and other aspects of the eroticization of gender and sexuality (Muta 1992; Ueno 1990), I explore the obsession with the “truth about sex” and the use of the phrase as a discursive tool.

As much as negotiations over a modern understanding of sexuality in Japan intersected with concepts of nation and empire building and overlapped with debates about the nature of Japanese culture and the project of modernity, they also functioned to increase the premium placed on scientific-mindedness. On the one hand, scientific knowledge gained ground compared to other forms of knowledge claims. With respect to sexual practices, Yamamoto Senji, for example, forcefully proclaimed “seeking the truth” (*shinjitsu no tsuikyū*) as his goal (see Odagiri 1979a). On the other hand, knowledge about sex in modern Japan was perceived as dangerous to produce, possess, and spread. This book traces the specific activities and practices that complicated and diversified the discourse of sex by addressing questions of who was talking about sex, what they felt was at stake, and which state and private-sector institutions collected, documented, and disseminated material about sex and sexology.

One central idea was shared not only by the sexologists but by all participants in the modern and scientific-minded discourse of sex—an idea that would continue to inform ongoing arguments for and against sex education. Proponents and opponents of sex education were convinced that accurate knowledge would lead to “correct” behavior, and that the correctness of the latter could be measured by its social consequences. Advocates of divergent aims—such as individualization of birth control choices, improvement in the living standards of and liberation of underprivileged groups, and state enforcement of “racial hygiene” programs—could all successfully invoke science and the value of scientific-mindedness. Thus they contributed in very different ways to drawing more and more issues formerly not thought of as sexual under the umbrella of the science of sex.

The formation of the Japanese nation-state in the 1870s brought about new concepts of the populace as a social organism to be protected, nurtured, and improved by a public health system borrowed primarily from Prussia and other European countries. By the 1880s, the state had developed powerful instruments with which to investigate, manage, and control the health (more precisely, the sexual health) of the populace in order to build a modern health regime—the subject of chapter 1. Statistics and other forms of mapping the Japanese population seemed to play a modest supporting role for administrative mechanisms and military purposes. However, in Japan as in other countries, they also created new categories of people.

The new technologies of categorization and representation in social scientific terms created a national body that had not existed before. As Ian Hacking has suggested, its components were not “real” entities that awaited scientific discovery. However, once certain distinctions had been made, new realities effectively came into being. Far from creating a prioritized interest in a binary, dichotomous distinction between heterosexual and homosexual, the processes of “making up people” (Hacking 1999 [1986]:161–163) produced a great variety of sexual types—the syphilitic soldier, the masturbating child, the homosexual youth, the infertile (or frigid) woman, the neurasthenic white-collar worker, and the sexually and militarily impotent warrior.

Between the late 1870s and the early 1940s, debates on what had come to be known in Japan as the “sexual question” were as multifaceted as their participants were diverse. During that seventy-year period, a new system was established that enabled officials to undertake a detailed observation of the Japanese people in the name of public health.

The year 1872 marked one beginning of this new health regime, which was based on a new medical system and a strong emphasis on public hygiene and preventive medicine. Ann Bowman Jannetta (1987, 1997) has shown the enormous importance of this medical system in the prevention of epidemics in early modern Japan. I am interested in how the medical system contributed to the concern of the state and its agencies about matters of sexual practice.

The year 1872 also marked the introduction of compulsory elementary education for both sexes and compulsory military service for twenty-year-old men in Japan. Initially, soldiers and prostitutes were the main targets of investigation by the police and military authorities. They also were examined and observed by physicians and surveyed and documented by government public health agencies. Although only a small portion of the twenty-year-old male population was drafted for military service during peacetime, virtually all men of that age underwent a thorough medical examination and were categorized according to a four-tier system of physical fitness. Prostitutes were considered a necessary evil, mere instruments for keeping soldiers' and other men's sexual needs in check. They were regarded as primary carriers of venereal disease far into the twentieth century and were put under increasingly restrictive regulations in the name of the health and welfare of the population in general and soldiers and mothers and children in particular, all of whom were presumed "innocent."

In addition to conscripts and prostitutes, children were identified from the turn of the twentieth century onward as crucial to the health and future of the Japanese body politic. Their anatomical features were measured, their mental and physical conditions diagnosed, and their development closely monitored. Kathleen Uno (1991, 1999) has charted how social reformers at the beginning of the twentieth century widely promoted concepts of institutional child welfare. My approach allows me to examine how the newly developed academic fields of pediatrics and pedagogy identified children as sexual beings whose sexual desire (*seiyoku*) was recognized and repeatedly confirmed through hitherto unprecedented and regular examinations by a network of school physicians.

It was the new theories of child development that prompted discussions about the necessity of instructing children and youth on their sexuality and the obligation to help parents, teachers, and other social actors guide children's sexual development and maturation. In adults, an excessive sex life was perceived as a precursor to mental illness, tuber-

culosis, and venereal disease. In children, nervous exhaustion (*shinkei karō*) and masturbation were attributed to misdirected sexual desire. Hence, the sex education of children moved to center stage in the discourse on the improvement of the national body, a discourse that continued through the twentieth century.

In chapter 2, I analyze in depth the first debate on sex education printed in September and October 1908 in Japan's third-largest nationally distributed newspaper, the *Yomiuri Shinbun*. In this published debate, pedagogues and medical doctors presented their views on whether and how children should be educated about sexual desire. The confessions of children, ideas on masturbation and venereal disease, debates about normalcy and deviance, the responsibility of teachers and parents, the authority of experts, and the international character of sexual knowledge generated a discursive configuration that characterized the colonization of sex in children. Infantile sexuality was put under surveillance, became a "center of knowledge" (Stoler 1999 [1995]:142), was labeled both endangered and dangerous, and was exploited as a locus of defense: to defend the child came to mean to defend the nation. Infantile sexuality was of crucial importance because the child's body impersonated the empire's future.

Notions that connected the infantile body with the Japanese national/imperial body informed discussions and texts about sex throughout the first half of the twentieth century. By the second decade of the twentieth century, sexual issues previously discussed only within the boundaries of specialized journals of medicine, pediatrics, and psychiatry were capable of reaching the entire reading public of Japan, due to the introduction of universal education and the expansion of the print media market. The publication in 1908 of a series on the "sexual question" in the *Yomiuri Shinbun* was intended to provoke a sense of urgency among parents, teachers, scientists, and bureaucrats. It also effectively anchored the sexual issue in the public consciousness, as sex education became a perennial theme in general-interest papers and magazines, popular medical journals, and women's magazines.

The series of articles on sex education both broadened and deepened during the 1920s and 1930s. Self-appointed experts from the academic fields of zoology, biology, and medicine, as well as from education and the arts, attempted to create a new science of sex (*seikagaku* or *seigaku*). These sexologists (*seigakusha* or *seikagakusha*) are the protagonists of chapter 3. They were a mixed bunch of men and a few women at the margins of academia who set out to push for the creation and popular-

ization of sexual knowledge, the education of “the masses” about “correct” and “normal” sexual behavior, and the establishment of sexology as a field of knowledge.

Since James Bartholomew’s (1989) path-breaking investigation into the formation of science, a number of scholars have studied the development of scholarly disciplines and scientific ideas in modern Japan, tracing histories of the social sciences (Kawai T. 1989, 1991, 1994), ethnography (Silverberg 1992), history (S. Tanaka 1993; Conrad 1999), and eugenics and racial hygiene (Doak 1997; Otsubo and Bartholomew 1998; Morris-Suzuki 1998; Otsubo 1999; Robertson 2001). Compared to many of the leading characters in these stories, sexologists were marginal to the academic world. But at the beginning of the twentieth century, sexologists shared—along with representatives of the younger generation of ethnographers, historians, and social scientists—the will to establish a new field of knowledge and change society in general. Sexologists were less interested in the formulation of a theory of sex or the design of a sexual paradigm than in a comprehensive sexual reform centered on what some of them tried to establish as purely scientific sexual knowledge. In order to mobilize allies from diverse groups in pursuit of this goal, they created a new discursive space in which to generate public controversy about sexual questions. The success of their efforts hinged on connecting various scientific groups and their allies with the wider educated public and with more specific audiences. Moreover, they had to win over powerful elites and institutions and to lobby continually to ensure their own legitimacy as experts and control over the production of sexual knowledge.

This heterogeneous group did not produce the “truth about sex” in a singular, esoteric way but rather pursued goals that were articulated differently by each player at different historical moments. Statisticians of the Japanese Bureau of Hygiene who documented venereal disease among prostitutes in the 1890s clearly had different goals in mind than did the editors of sexological journals who in the 1920s published graphic images to illustrate a set of detailed instructions on the insertion and function of intrauterine devices, or the censors from special units of the Special Higher Police (Tokubetsu Kōtō Keisatsu) who confiscated sexological journals but let advertisements for potency-enhancing products slip through their otherwise tight-knit network of social control.

The statistics produced by Japanese government agencies after the 1870s are different in nature from the results of surveys conducted in the 1920s by sexologists: the former were large, homogenous samples fo-

cusing on disease, while the latter were small, heterogeneous samples focusing on a broad range of questions on sexual behavior and designed to explore the whole range of sexual practice and—in some cases—to eventually draw a line between “normal” and “abnormal” sexual behavior. Similarly, knowledge about sex was transformed considerably through the disputes on sexual questions that were engaged in by a variety of actors throughout the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. What began as a controversy over sex education resulted in highly diversified debates on masturbation, venereal disease, birth control, and prostitution.

Central to the discussion in chapter 3 are sexologists’ attempts to professionalize sexology through such measures as conducting an empirical survey of sexual practices (roughly two decades before Alfred C. Kinsey’s famous first report), founding sexological journals, and building alliances with other social reformers. Editors and contributing authors repeatedly emphasized the importance of a “truly scientific” knowledge of sex based on findings from the Japanese population rather than results of sex research conducted in Germany, Austria, England, France, or the United States. At the same time, they insisted that direct interaction and exchange with the general populace would ensure that sexual knowledge was adapted and disseminated to those who needed it most.

The publication goals of each journal were spelled out in prefatory editorials. For example, the editor’s note in the journal *Sexuality* (*Sei*) promised to guide young people’s sexual development so as to ensure that adultery, wild marriages, and abortions would disappear from society. Certain that critics would question the seriousness of the journal, the publishers of *Sexuality* addressed mothers specifically, declaring that they should at least have a look at the journal before dismissing it, especially as it had been approved as a professional journal by the authorities. “*Sexuality*,” the editor concluded, “represents the view that it is necessary to know about humans and to research them” (*Sei* November 1927: editorial).

Sexologists positioned themselves according to the needs and characteristics of their immediate audience, which was far from diffuse, undifferentiated, or passive. The audiences they reached were the educated public, various professionals, secondary school and university students, and business groups. These audiences were of course historically specific. In the 1880s, a typical seventeen-year-old girl from Tokyo most likely had no formal secondary education. By 1925, however, she had a

good chance of attending one of 618 girls' high schools and of reading one of the books or journals on sexual questions that flourished at that time.

Anticipating their audience's social makeup, sexologists posed as experts on sexual questions when criticizing sociopolitical policies for the prevention of venereal disease and as confidantes when asked by members of the literate public for advice on sexual problems. They presented themselves as defenders of scientific freedom when criticizing censorship of their publications and as progressive reformers when they railed against the unscientific, superstitious nature of traditional practices and those promoted by the new religions (i.e., Omotokyō, Tenrikyō, and Hitonomichi Kyōdan). Japanese tradition was denounced as uncivilized, and the authority of Western culture in general and of Western science in particular was emphasized to establish and ensure expert status for these first self-trained Japanese sexologists.

Sexologists pursued the appropriation and popularization of their special science with just as much enthusiasm as they engaged in actual empirical research. Chapter 4 sheds light on the problems involved in the popularization of sexological ideas within the politically, scientifically, and socially controversial conditions of the production, collection, and dissemination of sexual knowledge during the early twentieth century. The boundaries between "pure" scientific knowledge and "unscientific" popular knowledge were purposefully blurred; the popularization of sexual knowledge thus was not a straightforward, top-down process that disseminated preestablished scientific ideas to a less educated, anonymous public. Rather, in the case of sexology, it consisted of a set of strategies designed and deployed to further the development of a "science of sex" outside the universities.

These strategies included public lectures followed by question-and-answer sessions with local audiences, radio interviews with sexologists, publication of articles in a wide array of media targeting different levels of literacy and education, and extensive use of advice columns for sexual problems. The popularization of their ideas was crucial for sex reformers and researchers, who perceived the population as a whole to be their laboratory. Their science was not to be developed within the boundaries of academic institutions. It would flourish only if it grew out of interactions with a wider public and only if it were based on alliances with other social reformers who would make the search for the "truth about sex," along with the legalization of birth control and the liberation of prostitutes and of the working class more generally, one of

their aims. Certainly these alliances brought about the mechanisms of social management Sheldon Garon (1997) has discussed with respect to religious groups, the women's movement, and the anti-prostitution movement.

Simultaneously, Japanese government officials continued to gather statistical data on physical and mental health as well as on venereal diseases; scientists adopted the vocabulary and content of Western science and tested them in Japanese contexts; and social movements made the reform of sexual habits and behavior their main agenda. Each of these three actors—government officials, scientists, and social reformers—assumed several roles. Government officials supported and relied on the work of some scientific and medical experts even as they hindered or rejected the research of others. Scientists doubled as social activists, founders of political parties, and party functionaries. Doctors treated neurasthenia and venereal diseases and also wrote novels and journalistic accounts about sex. Politicians founded movements to abolish prostitution. Women's rights activists translated works by Western sex researchers and circulated petitions to repeal abortion laws, among other legislation.

Invoking the rhetoric of scientific authority, sexologists insisted that sexology was a science and defended it against criticism from the more established academic disciplines. Treading a fine line between collusion with and distance from government institutions, Japanese sexologists countered repressive state measures with arguments based on public health and population policy. They found allies among members of women's rights groups who were working to introduce new ideas about and techniques of birth control. Their attempts to propagate sex education were supported by representatives of the anti-prostitution movement. Meanwhile, the reading public was won over both by informative articles about sex and by erotic-pornographic stories published in sexological journals as well as in general-interest magazines and newspapers.

The late 1930s and early 1940s were marked by an increasing militarism that left little space for individual decisions in terms of sexuality and other realms of life, and which was accompanied by a pronatalist ideology best illustrated by the slogan "procreate and multiply." A new discourse of eugenics and racial hygiene—borrowed mainly from national-socialist Germany—brought about laws that enabled physicians to legally perform abortions and sterilizations of people with venereal disease, alcoholism, epilepsy, and other diseases that were defined as "hereditary." The sex reformers' program of creation and dissemination

of accurate knowledge about sex—which was directed toward the decrease of poverty, the promotion of lasting worldwide peace, the improvement of maternal health, the elimination of illegal abortions, and the improvement of the Japanese race—was hampered by the state's program of population growth, the object of analysis in chapter 5.

Albeit never completely out of sight, interest in the history of eugenics has been refueled by recent debates about euthanasia, scandals about forced sterilization of the mentally ill in some Western countries until very recently, and concerns about the reintroduction of the national-socialist concept of the “unfit.” Matsubara Yōko's intriguing study and Sumiko Otsubo's ongoing work on the subject in Japan highlight crucial actors at the center of the crossroads of academe and the state between the late nineteenth century and the 1950s (Matsubara 1997, 1998, 2000; Otsubo and Bartholomew 1998; Otsubo 1999).

In this book, I explore what the rise of eugenics and racial hygienic thought did to the sexological project when, from the 1920s onward, sexologists were lumped together with pacifists, socialists, communists, and anarchists and regarded as a nuisance or even a danger to the imperialist state. While some of the more outspoken sexologists were silenced through house arrest, imprisonment, or, in at least one case, murder, others were won over by an ideology that was directed at the multiplication of healthy citizens through all possible means. Yamamoto Senji was fatally stabbed in 1929 when he spoke out against Japan's aggressive policy toward China. Abe Isoo, on the other hand, the founder of Japan's first socialist party and a leading crusader for what he called the “liberation of prostitutes,” was celebrated for his promotion, in the late 1930s, of early marriages as an expedient means of increasing the population. Katō Shizue, eulogized today as the “grande dame of birth control” in Japan, did not speak publicly on birth control from 1937 to the end of World War II and, during the 1950s and 1960s, opposed the legalization of the contraceptive pill.

Debates about sex overlapped at times with eugenics, the science of “improving” the human race by controlling heredity. For example, in a reflection of an argument that was eugenic at its core, all participants believed that the spread of knowledge about sex would improve individual and social life and secure the future of the Japanese populace. However, sexology was a potentially explosive subject for two reasons, one concerning the nature of sexual knowledge itself, the other concerning the various publics that were supposedly in need of sex education. Like other intellectuals who advocated empirical research on Japan's social prob-

lems, sex researchers worked toward social reform and thus were often suspected—in some cases, rightly so—of sympathizing with socialist and revolutionary causes. In their eyes, the dissemination of sexual knowledge would help liberate the working class from its misery and women from their roles as “childbearing machines.” Anticipating this view, some government officials translated the sex reformers’ vision of a better society into a scenario of social unrest and disorder. They feared not only that women would turn the gendered order of society (as reflected in Japan’s Civil Code of 1889) upside down if given the means to control family size, but also that the middle and upper classes, which were considered intellectually and morally superior, would contribute less to population growth than would the lower classes.

Beginning in the mid-1920’s, the government implemented increasingly restrictive censorship regulations in order to shield the public from reformers’ dangerous thoughts. In 1925, universal male suffrage was introduced but was simultaneously tempered by the Peace Preservation Law, which was based on a very broad definition of what constituted a violation of peace and social order. The law was aimed at the more extreme left-wing movements, but the vagueness of its wording and the possibility of loose interpretation meant that thousands of people, including many liberals and some sexologists, were arrested in its name.¹

Thus, the sexologists’ task was not an easy one. Negotiations about what kinds of sexual knowledge should be created and with whom this knowledge should be shared were undertaken on three main fronts. Representatives of established academic disciplines denounced the sexologists’ knowledge as “obscene.” Social reformist groups such as parts of the women’s movement shared some of the goals of sex education but disagreed with others. And the influence of the state was felt most painfully in the form of censorship of sexological publications and the imprisonment and house arrest of sexologists. Yamamoto Senji’s career is a good case in point, as it exemplifies the sexologists’ antagonistic relationship to the various agencies of the state. Originally trained as a zoologist at the Imperial University of Tokyo, Yamamoto began to lecture publicly on human sexual development and practice. In 1922, he went on a lecture tour from Osaka to Kōbe, Nagoya, and other small cities throughout Japan. In Tottori, police observers interrupted his talk several times before they pulled him off the stage. The police report noted that Yamamoto had used technical terms but nevertheless had encouraged masturbation, approved of abortion, and talked about “other ob-

scenities” (see chapter 3). As a consequence of the scandal he was fired from his positions at both Dōshisha and Kyoto universities.

Publications that dealt with sexual desire, theories of pregnancy, neo-Malthusian assertions, women’s liberation, and critiques of the marital institution were viewed as a threat to social order and the educated middle and upper classes’ willingness to reproduce and thus were subject to censorship.² Until censorship policies brought (explicitly) sexological publications to a halt in the late 1930s, the readers of that literature also played a role in decisions that involved the execution of censorship regulations. Journals directed at an academic readership faced less restraint than did those with a broader audience. During the late 1920s and early 1930s, sexological journals, termed *seiyoku zasshi* (literally, journals of sexual desire) by the authorities, were the journals most often censored or confiscated.

Despite the significant ruptures of decolonization and democratization after 1945, previous configurations of sexuality persisted and several alliances of important colonialist players remained intact. Many of the actors who had dealt with sexual issues before World War II, and in some cases during the war, resurfaced in the tense political arena of the immediate postwar years, when Japan was still under the control of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP). The restrictive censorship policy of the early 1940s was not abolished at the end of World War II; rather, it continued in the form of neglect of sexology and sexologists in the immediate postwar period. The “*purely scientific sex education*” (*junkagakuteki seikyōiku*) as propagated by sexologists in the 1920s was rigorously replaced with “*purity education*” (*junketsu kyōiku*), which was advocated by officials in the Ministry of Education, representatives of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, and members of newly founded sexological organizations.

The end of the empire brought other important shifts as well. Perhaps the most significant was that the prewar and wartime obsession with the uterus and female fertility was replaced by a new emphasis on the mutual sexual satisfaction of both partners. This shift once again focused on the female body—more specifically, on the clitoris and the vagina—and on female orgasm. Wilhelm Reich (1974 [1936]) had optimistically framed this shift as the “liberation of the female sex,” while Henri LeFebvre concluded that “women’s road to freedom was via frigidity, or worse: faked passion” (1995 [1962]:192). Foucault, in contrast, dismissed Reich’s claims and simply noted that this shift was “nothing

more, but nothing less . . . than a tactical shift and reversal in the great deployment of sexuality” (Foucault 1990 [1978]:131). The Japanese sexologists of the 1950s stuck to the older generations’ rhetoric of liberation, as I will demonstrate in chapter 5 and the epilogue.

Some of the details of my study may seem bizarre or even comical. As I argue in the epilogue, however, some of the debates over sexuality in Japan—specifically those over the approval of the anti-impotence drug Viagra and the subsequent legalization of the low-dose pill in 1999, sex education and its relevance for the prevention of HIV and AIDS, sex research, and child prostitution—are again framed by the paradigmatic structure developed in pre-World War II Japan. Sexuality is discussed as a set of problems related to the necessity of defending and protecting girls and women from men, the populace from certain diseases, and the normal from the pathological. The liberation of sex is promoted to provide teenagers with more explicit sex education that includes information on HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Some participants in these debates even demand the truth about the variety of sexual behaviors actually practiced, not just what the majority admits to engaging in. The year 1992 was declared the First Year of Sex Education in Japan, by which time a media-generated AIDS panic had eased slightly. Subsequently, the Japan Association for Sex Education moved from supporting schoolteachers with advice and material on “purity education” to providing more concrete instruction on HIV and AIDS prevention to middle and high school students. Recently, child prostitution, euphemistically termed “compensated dating” (*enjōkōsai*), has emerged as an issue demanding urgent address. While it was initially portrayed as deviant behavior by a few female juvenile delinquents, the Japanese media quickly suggested that thousands of “ordinary” female (and male) teenagers were willing to provide sexual services in exchange for expensive presents. Once again the discourse of sex, fueled by the media, educators, and the state, not only revolves around the questionable morality of present-day youth, but ventures to suggest that their disturbing behavior may reflect larger social problems occasioned by a modernity gone sour.