

Episode 18: History of the Korean Sex Industry w/ Shawn Yoon Pt. 1

[00:00:00] **Drew Stegmaier:** Hey everybody. This is The Steg Drew Show and I'm your host Drew Stegmaier. This show is new, evolving and finding itself. We don't yet know what it will turn out to be. And that's exciting. I believe the world has a current civility deficit. And with this endeavor, I'll be exploring tough and taboo topics with compassion and incivility so you can do the same with your friends, family, kids and co-workers..

[00:00:25] This episode covers a big, important topic. I cannot overstate how important this topic is. We talk about the sexual history of Korea with some interplay with Japan because states mingle as states frequently do and we cover some heavy stuff guys. We cover the history of Geisha's prostitution, Confucianism, samurai, Japanese imperialism, and Shaun posits that you cannot have capitalism without prostitution. And again, my main message with this show is bridging the civility deficit and promoting unity. And one of the ways that we promote unity is by learning from our history and often learning from our history involves talking about inconvenient truths that may or may not be in your textbooks and human trafficking at scale is one of these inconvenient truths.

[00:01:41] This episode was really illuminating for me. I admittedly do not know a ton about Asian history, partially because I wasn't taught it in school. And I hope you enjoy this. Stay tuned for part two, where we will cover Korean sexual history from roughly world war II to the present.

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[00:03:38] **Shawn Yoon:** Uh, yeah. Hi, how are ya? Um, no, I have some questions like asked how are you? Like a million times? Thanks for, um, delaying this recording. I, um, you know, I appreciate it. Um, so I guess I'll just kind of, um, begin by saying who I am. Um, uh, my name is, uh, Saki. Uh, I am Korean and,

um, trying to talk about, uh, the history of prostitution in Korea mainly, but also because it is very, um, difficult to separate the two histories.

[00:04:25] I'm also going to be talking about the history of Japan, uh, and prostitution in Japan. And one thing that I do, there are a couple of things that I wanted to start with, which is that first I'm not an expert. And, uh, I D only quote, unquote expertise that I have is that I've lived in this country and that I have participated in, uh, in prostitution.

[00:04:52] It's been a long time, but culturally, uh, I am. Part of this society and, you know, all that, all the, all that that entails. And, um, another thing that I wanted to hit upon is that, uh, I'm not, although it might seem like that at some points, I'm not trying to hate on Japan. And, and a lot of people might feel that way because I think of three separate factors.

[00:05:28] Number one, I do have a deep disgust for a Japanese imperialism. And, uh, and you know, I think also a lot of people will see read into that because, uh, you know, Koreans are well known to be a racist, uh, and be racist against Japan. Uh, But I would like to sort of transcend that by saying that really my enemies here is not a Japan as much as the state of Japan, as well as the state of Korea.

[00:06:12] And this is something that this is something that I would like to, uh, sort of emphasize as my thesis. My thesis is that when we look at prostitution, we see truly the ugly face of the state. And I would like to posit of, uh, the profit motive and the objectification of humanity overall. Now, uh, I would, I will probably more than once use capitalism as a shorthand for that, even though capitalism is such an ideologically charged word.

[00:06:52] I know that everyone has different conceptual ideas behind it. Um, but that's something I'm sure you can push back on. I hope so. Yeah. Those are my, um, I guess disclaimers. I'm not an expert I have participated in, um, and the practices that I am going to criticize and try to elucidate. And, um, my enemies are, uh, it's not a special nationality.

[00:07:26] It really is. I'd like to say, uh, you know, our civilization, uh, as a whole.

[00:07:33] **Drew Stegmaier:** Alrighty. Um, thank you for that. I'm curious about a number of things. Um, so I guess to, to clarify a little when you mentioned, um, kind of Koreans being racist and then, uh, being racist against Japan, Um, I interpret that as more like nationalism.

[00:07:55] Cause like as a white dude, I'm like, oh, they're both Asians. Is it like Asian on Asian racism? Or how, how are you trying to say that? Like, cause some people say you can't be racist against your own race, but I'm not aware of a different race existing between those nations. If that makes sense. I, I think of it as it's like when people say common thing in us, oh you're racist against Mexicans.

[00:08:20] Mexican is not a race. Mexico is a country. Right. Um, and I, I think racial boundaries often, uh, breed division, but I guess the crux of what you're saying is, Hey, this group of people tend to have prejudice or discriminate against this other group. Right.

[00:08:39] **Shawn Yoon:** Uh, yeah. But also like, okay. I mean, yeah. W what race is a social construct?

[00:08:47] Uh, Koreans and Japanese people look very similar. We're, um, very difficult to tell apart I would argue, but, uh, as a social construct, it is clearly two different races, uh, in the sense that in both Japanese and Korean histories, uh, they have always seen, um, each other as another. Right. And there was a very concerted effort during the Japanese Imperial age to S not only to differentiate between Koreans and Japanese, but also to create a class of, uh, Asian racial hierarchies.

[00:09:32] Whereas like Southeast Asians were at the bottom, uh, the Chinese were a little above that Koreans are a little above that and the Japanese were at the top. So there was. Always a, um, um, in modern Asian history, there has always been a concerted effort to racialize these, uh, nationalities into, um, uh, into categories.

[00:10:01] And that's a great place for our story to begin because, um, um, I, I want to reach into history to try and make sense of prostitution. And based on I'm going to begin with something, a lot of people will often say, which is that, uh, prostitute is the, uh, as the oldest job, right? It's the oldest job. It's the first job, et cetera, et cetera, very, um, very common saying, but I actually think beyond it being just a cliché, it actually elucidates something that I'm going to refer back to constantly.

[00:10:42] Um, so. If, when we look at the history of prostitution in Korea, some people trace it back thousands of years, uh, which seems natural. Right. But I would actually like to sort of, um, dig into it because records show that for example, in 600 AD there were a class of women who were organized around providing, enter, you know, quote unquote entertainment, uh, such as dancing, singing, and, uh, and being a part of rituals, which often involved sex, which from our, and, you know, for this, they were, um, supported by the state or supported by their society overall, which, you know, makes us feel like they were perhaps a bit like prostitutes.

[00:11:43] I would like to say that in fact, what was happening was that these, uh, these women were performing socially vital functions, which allowed the existence of the state. What w what I'm trying to say is that you can't have a state without music and dancing women, uh, because this is, I think something that I can support, um, and that when you look at Roman history, for example, you also see, uh, these priestesses or these female Oracles who allow the concept of the state to be popular, right.

[00:12:31] People don't really believe. I mean, you know, especially in the ancient era, it was hard to make people believe that, you know, oh, this guy is the king. You should all obey him even on today. And the lubricant that allowed that were these religious sexualized rituals that also had a cultural aspect to them.

[00:12:57] Uh, but that's really, you know, just way into the weeds of ancient history, which I don't want to get too into. So I'm really going to start my story at the end of the 14th century, when, um, the chosen dynasty, uh, was formed, the chosen dynasty was formed, uh, with a specific ideological intent. Uh, the Korea dynasty, which came before it was a, uh, was a Buddhist country and didn't have a strong state, um, some have some, uh, historical records and, uh, Cultural records.

[00:13:39] We have showed that it was a sexual, it was a very sexually permissive and open society with, um, a much more equal power between, uh, sexist. Uh, you know, there were many Queens, there were, um, you know, other female leaders and so on and so forth, but the chosen dynasty was formed with a strict Confucian ideology.

[00:14:06] And so Confucian ideology is the idea that, well, at least for the purpose of this conversation is the idea of a patrilineal, uh, class-based society. And in order to legitimize patrilineal class, they needed to ban, uh, What's it called? What's that? Uh, having many wives.

[00:14:35] **Drew Stegmaier:** Oh right. Polygamy.

[00:14:36] **Shawn Yoon:** Yes. So like 15 years, 20 years after the chosen dynasty was formed, they were arguing about this.

[00:14:47] Right. Everyone was like, well, what are you going to do? You can't just ban polygamy. And the, I guess the hard liners, the ideologically motivated hardliners were saying, well, uh, we'll never have a proper Confucian country with properly defined classes with centralized power and, uh, and have a efficient state without enforcing monogamy.

[00:15:19] **Drew Stegmaier:** Why, why is that? Because I guess I'm not understanding like, if there is one man, Many women, why would it have to go down to one-to-one to ensure a patrilineal thing? Like what, what's the thinking there?

[00:15:36] **Shawn Yoon:** The thinking there is that, um, you'll have too many sons you'll have too many children. The blood of the bloodline will be diluted.

[00:15:45] Also property will be diluted. So classes. So if you have, if you have polygamy and you have a rich man, and you know, as Richmond, I want to do, they want to have multiple wives, but if all of these wives are legitimate, then you'll have less of a class, a society. So what they did when they were enforcing monogamy is they create a class of concubines.

[00:16:12] So concubines enters into history at the same time as the Confucian order and forces monogamy. So I think that's kind of where we first see. The, uh, the beginning of, uh, prostitution in a sense.

[00:16:32] **Drew Stegmaier:** In, in Asia, right? Cause I've heard of like biblical concubines.

[00:16:36] **Shawn Yoon:** Right. Uh, well, yes, in Asia and uh, in Korea, I'm not, I'm not, I'm not sure how the Bo how the, the, the Hebrews did it, but in, it seems like from what little research that I've done, it seems like that previous to this decree wives had equal standing, regardless of, uh, you know, so if you were going to have multiple wives, they were, uh, they were legally equal, so to speak.

[00:17:11] **Drew Stegmaier:** Basically if I'm understanding, right. Um, in order for the state to flourish, Or the hypothesis was that in order for the state to flourish, they had to basically reduce the power of women or legitimacy of women.

[00:17:27] **Shawn Yoon:** And, uh, also reduce the power of matrilineal lineages. Right. So, uh, it's not really as, as, um, just like women becoming less powerful it's, uh, it's making motherhood less of a, uh, a right and a privileged position, but rather as a working position, you become a mother of a husband as opposed to being your own matriarch.

[00:18:04] **Drew Stegmaier:** Yeah. And it's funny you say that because, uh, this is something I think of somewhat often is if you look at, uh, matriarchal versus patriarchal and the concept of. Genetic certainty, you know, pre DNA testing. We don't know who your dad is, even now people often aren't sure. Right. Cause they're too embarrassed to get a DNA test.

[00:18:28] When that question comes up. No, one's on sure. Who their mom is or right.

[00:18:34] **Shawn Yoon:** 99% of the time. Right.

[00:18:37] **Drew Stegmaier:** I mean, it's like, if we knew you came from a woman, a particular woman, we can say that with a very high degree of certainty, but we all come out of our moms. So we can't prove so-and-so is the dad? Yeah, no.

[00:18:52] **Shawn Yoon:** Also like, like, think about like previous to doctors, right?

[00:18:58] Like when there were midwives, literally like your next door neighbor or that lady down the road would have been the one that took, you know, that, that, you know, that grabbed you out of your mom's. Right that, I mean, that is certainty beyond reasonable doubt. Um, I think actually with the modern hospital system, you might have more doubt, right?

[00:19:21] Like, uh, you know, there's like, you know, Porter stories of kids being switched into nursery, stuff like that. Yeah. Um, yeah. I mean, it's, it is. Yeah, no, that, that, that definitely is one of, I think the driving forces behind, uh, you know, like the male domination and like the male quest for power in, uh, using the tool of the state.

[00:19:52] But, uh, but that's not actually, um, I actually tend to think that that's way, way larger than this, this conversation, because wow. That's so big that that's such an inherent. Like part of humanity, like how can we, uh, change the fact that it's kind of like when, when, um, when you look at like childbirth as like essential workers, right?

[00:20:26] Like, you know, you need mothers. It's like, literally they're the most essential workers, uh, and it's, uh, on, it's on, it's on substance and it's on substitutable, right? No one else can, uh, be, well, guys can't really be, uh, be taken on that labor, which is why I think the ultimate, like technology would be 100%, uh, like test tube babies.

[00:20:55] **Drew Stegmaier:** Um, yeah.

[00:20:57] **Shawn Yoon:** Yeah. Like completely what what's the, yeah. What, what was that thing? Some process that is dystopian and utopian it's somewhere. Shit. And that is, yeah, this is super cool. It's such an amazing topic that I would love to hear more about.

[00:21:16] **Drew Stegmaier:** So what is, uh, let's I guess let's rein it back in a bit. So basically Confucianism comes in and then, um, there's this patrilineal system, what is a concubine?

[00:21:29] **Shawn Yoon:** So is a, is it's it's so, okay, so a concubine is basically like a mini white, right? Um, you don't get the full legal rights. Uh, you do have some legal rights, but essentially as a mother in, in Chosun dynasty, as a mother, you have actually quite a lot of rights. So if your husband dies, you have

control over his property or, you know, uh, Uh, collective property until your son, if you have a son comes of age or, um, or, uh, you know, there was a will or whatever, right.

[00:22:12] But if you're a concubine, your son is not of the same class as a, as a, as a proper wife, son, right? Like a, so if you are a rich man, if you're a upper-class aristocrat in chosen dynasty and you have a son, this guy is also, uh, also upper-class right. But if you're a concubine as a son, uh, that child becomes of a lower class.

[00:22:44] What if you have a daughter? Uh, same thing applies, except it would also be worse, right?

[00:22:53] **Drew Stegmaier:** Because women are second class citizens as a default in this one.

[00:22:56] **Shawn Yoon:** In this model as well, but also like if you're, if you're a, a bottle of a concubine, you, you have very few alternatives, especially if you're from, like, if you are the co if you're in a rich household, right.

[00:23:13] You, you do not like, so in Chosun dynasty, like if this changes throughout the period, because it's really hard to change society in one fell swoop. So like, uh, remnants of that, you know, more equal Buddhists, uh, dynasty society sort of remains, especially in the lower classes for hundreds of years after the beginning of the chosen dynasty, right.

[00:23:39] That Confucian order is really top down and it takes hundreds of years to reach, uh, the masses and really it persists one could argue to this day and definitely until the advent of capital. Um, but the problem is that in these upper-class and these aristocratic households, unlike peasant households, women are not even allowed to like talk to men, right?

[00:24:10] You're not allowed to go outside of the house. You're without a veil on, right. It is a heavily policed, um, society and it's, but if you're rich, you get, you know, you get some stuff, right. You get, you know, you get, uh, servants, you get privileges. But if you are in a rich household and you are a lower class daughter of a concubine, literally your only option would be to become a, uh, a servant.

[00:24:47] Right? You, you couldn't, for example, like if you were a peasant woman, you could have the opportunity. To be maybe a merchant, right. You could do, uh, you know, you could sell stuff or you could just be a farmer, like 90% of the population. But if you were born into a rich family or if you're born in a rich household, but without the power and privilege that that entails, then you become of a lower class.

[00:25:18] So, yeah, so that is so actually, um, so 500, you know, like half, half a millennium later that will have strong implications because all of these aristocrats are becoming impoverished through the, uh, marketization of Korean society, right? As capitalism enters into, um, Korean society and the feudal order is being broken down.

[00:25:50] All of these Cyrus to Kratz are becoming impoverished. These former SERPs who were merchants and merchants were extremely lower class, uh, in traditional Confucian order, these guys are now able to, uh, put these rich folks in debt and therefore by their daughters and their women's servants. So that is, you know, that's something else as well.

[00:26:20] **Drew Stegmaier:** Basically, if I'm understanding, right. Um, capitalism often gets a bad rap and I think it has some inherent shortcomings, but there's also, I don't know if I'd call it flavors of capitalism, but I think the Boone here, at least in this particular example, is that it introduced a meritocracy, right, where it's like, Hey, if you've got something to sell and you can provide value, you can receive value for that.

[00:26:50] And if you just. Inherited, whatever it is that you have, you better bring something else to the table, right. Or hopefully what you inherited is sellable. And so all these merchants who are seemingly low class, um, you, you could say when mercantilism starts booming globally, these people rise up.

[00:27:12] **Shawn Yoon:** Oh, absolutely. I think one can criticize both. And that is what I would, I am trying to do. I'm criticizing both the feudal order, which is horrible and, uh, and capitalism as well, because I actually don't believe that capitalism is meritocratic. Like I, and, and this is something that's an argument that I would like to continue to make throughout the process.

[00:27:39] So like, I would love. Uh, as we sort of step out of like these ancient histories into sort of, um,

[00:27:47] **Drew Stegmaier:** so let's just call it more meritocratic than feudalism, but by no means a be all end all.

[00:27:53] **Shawn Yoon:** I would, again, disagree actually, because, uh, but, but again, I would say that there's, there are places to talk about it further, but I, and simply put, I don't think it's meritocratic because the accumulation of capital and the exploitation of women's bodies, I think is a completely on alienable.

[00:28:20] Uh, they're two parts of the same, same coin. Like you cannot have accumulation of capital without exploitation of female bodies, and you cannot have just like I was, I am arguing that the state requires. The domination of women. I am going to argue that capitalism and the accumulation of capital requires, uh, exploitation of women's bodies.

[00:28:49] Now, I think before we get into the arguments and the weeds of that, I would like to sort of, uh, differentiate economy and the accumulation of that. Right? Like, I don't think, for example, like, um, let's say, you know, you have a farm and, you know, you work your farm and, you know, like, uh, like, uh, you know, you're like, you're a hardworking yeoman farmer and you through the sweat of your, you know, your own hands, you turn a relatively, like, you know, like, uh, you know, a shitty plot of land into a very productive plot of land.

[00:29:32] Now one would in our current world, we would call that capital, right. This man has turned what was not very well, you know, what, what was sort of, you know, like shitty land and to very productive land, thus adding and accumulating capital. Right. And I don't, I don't think there's anything wrong with that.

[00:29:54] Right. I, when I talk about accumulation of capital, it really is, um, capital divorced from, uh, land and labor. So it it's, I don't know, you might call it a financial gap at all. Um, you might call it a fictitious capital, but that's what I'm talking about. I'm not talking about, uh, working hard to, uh, store value.

[00:30:24] I'm talking about, um, creating an accumulator. Uh, you know, capital artist, I don't know.

[00:30:35] **Drew Stegmaier:** Yeah. Yeah. There's as far as I understand, there's a decent model that says there's 10 different types of capital. You could say social capital, knowledge capital. Um, yeah. Um, I'm

tracking that. And, and I guess to clarify cause I wanted to circle back in terms of capitalism versus feudalism.

[00:30:55] I'm not saying capitalism is meritocratic or isn't, I'm saying just relative to feudalism, it allowed some people to come up, right. It comes with downsides as well. But for many people, if you had nothing, there was a chance to better your situation, um, that maybe wasn't previously available in a feudalistic system.

[00:31:17] And I'm not, I'm not lauding it. I'm not saying it's great, but I'm saying opportunities became available that previously weren't.

[00:31:25] **Shawn Yoon:** I think that is actually an undeniable truth. In the sense that, uh, opportunities as a value, neutral word? Uh, yeah, I think, but here's the thing. Like I would argue that if that's the case, and this is where I'm going to jump back into chosen dynasty, which is that capitalism gave women the opportunity to sell their bodies.

[00:31:53] Right. And that's something that I would like to, um, take up as we talk about both as we compare Japanese society and Korean society, uh, starting in the S in, in, and around this time period, as the, as the feudal ages, turn into the, you know, the, the high feudal ages of, uh, east Asia what's going on. Right.

[00:32:18] So Korea, uh, whether it's because of its, um, geography. Or because of the, uh, the strong state that was created through those Confucian quote-unquote reforms. And I don't mean reforms as in like, oh, they were great, but I mean, they were trying to reform the society into a Confucian order. Uh, they maintained that Confucian order for quite a long time, compare that with Japan, which moved from its sort of Shinto, aristocratic, like, uh, ancient order through the, through the absolute fire and warfare of, uh, you know, the, the, the, you know, the often in a it's in a lot of video games, uh, I don't know if you played Shogun too, but, uh, I haven't.

[00:33:19] It was a good game. It's the, uh, the, uh, it's the war, it's the age of the warlords, right? And they fought for a hundred years for an entire century because of the Japanese. I mean, you know, because of the Japanese, uh, geography actually, except Japan is a bigger country than Korea is a country that is, uh, formed of multiple islands, a lot of different coves, um, and which allowed these local warlords to fight for power for quite a long time.

[00:33:57] And this is very reminiscent of, uh, uh, middle Europe, right? Compare that with, um, say Korea or China, where you have these strong ruling, um, bureaucratic states. You know, which are not always super well-organized, but which still maintain sort of quote unquote, the mandate of heaven in China where, you know, the emperor is, uh, they they're they're the dynastic order retains its power structures.

[00:34:32] So that like, you know, everyone is trying to kowtow to the king versus in Japan where you have these, this chaotic, uh, anarchistic, uh, geopolitical order, right. Which allows Marietta a meritocracy, right. It allows these merchants, these, uh, power brokers, these thinkers, and really actually, and I would argue, um, these, uh, individual, uh, movers of history to try and fight against you.

[00:35:15] Which leads Japan to become more market friendly, which is why I think Japan was the first, I mean, you know, there's other factors as well, but which is why Japan had a very developed proto capitalism before either Korea or China. And related to that is I think we should look at the 17th and 18th century.

[00:35:43] So the high middle ages. So in Chosun dynasty, 17th, 18th century, prostitution is, uh, if not unheard of definitely heavily prohibited and really the domain of the ruling class, right? The ruling class are able to, um, sort of transcend their own laws and. You know, pay women or force women to have sex with them.

[00:36:17] **Drew Stegmaier:** Now, during this time, did they still have concubines as well? I'm just trying to get them to track timeless. Okay. So, so basically there's this time period where if I understand, right, um, there's this feudalism things become patrilineal and then that births concubines, right? Cause you go from having multiple wives to having one plus concubines, but then capitalism sneaks in there and over time capitalism facilitates the exploitation of women via capital.

[00:36:49] **Shawn Yoon:** Uh, yes. Um, absolutely because, and, you know, uh, deep market towns form and prostitutes are, um, they, and, and we can see some records of prostitution in these market towns. They are serving these, you know, Uh, roaming merchants, et cetera, et cetera. Because, because again, like prior to this, it's 90% peasant farmers and these farmers are all married.

[00:37:22] So, you know, you might cheat around, there might be like a village, um, woman who's, uh, oftentimes who's lost her husband. And again, uh, the Confucian order for bids remarriage. Another thing that changed from the cornea dynasty to the chosen dynasty is that women are no longer allowed to get divorced or get remarried.

[00:37:46] Uh, and you know, these women might, you know, uh, have sex with, you know, with a local farmer or a local, you know, slightly richer well-to-do farmer for, you know, an exchange for a little money, which I don't think is, I mean, which is, I don't think is fully the kind of prostitution that I'm talking about.

[00:38:07] Right.

[00:38:10] **Drew Stegmaier:** I don't know how many people take this for granted, but let's say present day, right? We have a lot of knowledge work, right? The idea of knowledge work is a new-ish thing, right? And men generally have more upper body strength than women. Right? This, this is just facts, you know, I'm sure there are individual exceptions, right.

[00:38:36] But at a population level, men generally have more upper body strength than women. So when most economic activity is moving heavy shit, um, guess what? That makes things tougher for women in terms of earning money or the ways they can earn money shift. Right? And so if you have that kind of economic activity, plus a patrilineal system where rights are being removed from you, and that is enforced by law.

[00:39:06] Like, Hey, you can't remarry and that shit's enforced by law. Um, how are you supposed to provide for yourself?

[00:39:14] **Shawn Yoon:** You know, I, I don't think so. First of all, you're right about that, but there is a corollary to that, which is that, um, women had their own way, right? They, they were for example, right? Uh, when we, when we look further back into history, um, women have had a monopoly over cloth making cloth making was definitely something you didn't need a lot of upper body, upper body strength to do.

[00:39:49] And cloth making, being the domain of the feminine was a source of income and a source of. Uh, of, of livelihood for many women, even when they lose their husbands. Right? So this is something that we can see throughout history as well. And, you know, there's not only that, but things like making music, making art, um, um, there's one other thing.

[00:40:13] Oh, and, and food making, right food, making, being, um, the commodity, the de-industrialization of food making has really, um, really made things quite terrible for women. Um, in some, you know, from, from some perspective, one can see how it took away a huge source of women's, uh, jobs. But anyway, the, the, uh, the, these women were becoming through the, uh, there were becoming prostitutes, there were becoming, uh, key saints, right?

[00:40:53] So key saying engages it's the same Chinese character. Uh, but they are, uh, you know, it's just different pronunciations. They're the same thing. Right. And they really begin as the same thing as well. I'm sure you might've heard from some, um, you know, maybe the memoirs vacation that geishas are not prostitutes.

[00:41:11] Right. And it was the same thing in Korea as well. Teasings were not prostitutes. They were, as I argued earlier, uh, integral to the state organization, you need to have these women perform music. You need to have these women perform rituals and rights in order to legitimize state powers. Which is sort of how geishas began as well as keyset right.

[00:41:39] They, they performed very similar functions in the state, however, as this feudal order sort of intensifies and, uh, calcifies, you don't need that anymore, right? Like, whereas like in D ancient, an era like, you know, in the early iron age or whatever, you need it to have these rituals in order to, to make people fight wars for you.

[00:42:03] But once you have a class society, once you have police forces, once you have a standing military, you no longer need women to sing, then surround the king to prove that the king is divine and thus you should, you know, pick up arms for the guy. And that is how key sayings engaged has become more and more.

[00:42:29] Uh, relegated. Right. And this is sort of where I think I'm going to reach back into Japan. So, uh, early geishas were, uh, apparently actually men, right? Uh, these men were, uh, uh, you know, Japan has a long history of homosexuality, which is also really interesting, but, uh, you know, not something I'm an expert on, in any, any in, not even in like, you know, in a crammed way, which is what I am doing right now.

[00:42:58] But anyway, by the 18th century, uh, Japan has become really urbanized. And this is another one of my, uh, uh, sub pieces, right? My, my main thesis to, you know, to, to drive the point home is that you need the, you need prostitution to have a state. You need process, you need the, uh, exploitation of women's bodies to have the accumulation of capital and you need.

[00:43:28] Uh, urbanization to have proper, you know, some high level accumulation of capital and you cannot have a city without prostitution.

[00:43:40] **Drew Stegmaier:** Well, let's, let's like sit with that for a minute. Cause that is a, that is a big deal, man. I don't think I've ever heard someone say that, like that, that sentence. And then I really want to, uh, you know, get in the weeds because to, to circle back, um, just to make sure like I'm understanding properly and then, you know, air go listeners as well.

[00:44:03] So if I heard, right, uh, geishas are not prostituting. Right. But geisha is gave legitimacy to the state. Right. But then you're making the claim that the state can't function without prostitution. Right. Because I'm hearing that. Right.

[00:44:20] **Shawn Yoon:** Right. So let me, let me sort of, uh, uh, clarify that. So geisha. In the original form.

[00:44:28] We're not prostitute. Um, today the blind is very blurred. Uh, but, but what I'm trying to argue, my argument was that in the ancient age, prior to Confucian orders, prior to a formalized, uh, established states, you needed, um, you need geishas, you need functions like geishas in order to legitimize the state.

[00:44:55] **Drew Stegmaier:** Yeah. I'm with you. It's like, uh, I think also along this timeline, we have what I would call the, uh, commoditization of religion. So basically often states in order to maintain control, basically had to serve as middlemen between individuals and God source, spirit, et cetera. And geisha is we're a tool to basically promote the illusion of legitimacy 100%.

[00:45:27] Right. Okay. Yeah.

[00:45:29] **Shawn Yoon:** So, uh, so I, um, that was perfect. And the second part of that statement that I wanted to clarify, which is you can not have a state without prostitution. You cannot have a city without prostitution. I would like to add the corollary, which is that you cannot have a capitalist state without prostitution.

[00:45:52] Um, you can not have a market urban population without prostitution, and you can not have a capitalist state without, um, an urban market and a, uh, an urbanization and capitalism, I think are, uh, you know, they're joined to the hip, you know, they're joined at the hip they're on. Alienable uh, parts.

[00:46:17] **Drew Stegmaier:** Yeah, because as far as I understand, urbanization basically increases market velocity.

[00:46:23] Like the amount of transactions by volume and frequency go up a lot. When you have a lot of nodes, AKA humans in a tight space transacting, right? The simple logistics, right? I mean, it's like, if I'm Amazon, there's a reason why I can have one truck. Like you gonna have one truck in one building in New York city deliver a hundred packages to a hundred people in a single building and you go out to Kansas and to deliver to a hundred people.

[00:46:55] If they're on farms, I can take a lot more time, forget about it. Right. And then of course you have everything in between those two extremes.

[00:47:05] **Shawn Yoon:** Uh, I also like, no, that that's, that's, that's say great. Uh, like, like that is the material reality of our world. Right? You need that. Uh, but I would also say like, it also involves, um, labor, like you need.

[00:47:23] And I think the labor part, which is the nodes part, uh, that requires, um, prostitution, which is that urban laborers and, uh, they are destined to be, um, single many of them. You cannot have a city that is, uh, full of married couples. I think that is a logistical impossibility. Um, because, because I don't think they will.

[00:48:03] They will stay in the city. Right? I think, I think if you have, so one of the things that draw people to cities historically, uh, is lack of jobs, right? You don't have any jobs, you don't have money, you cannot have money in the countryside, which leads you to the city. And this is the case for both men and women.

[00:48:31] And because marriage is an expensive affair, married life, and a, you know, having a family is an expensive affair. It seems impossible to imagine a city that is full of families and only really full of families, unless you're imagining utopia. Uh, I think, I dunno, I'm not super confident about what I just said.

[00:49:03] I am quite confident that you cannot have a, a city that is not generally full of single people. Uh, and I think history, uh, all over the world, all cities are full of, uh, unmarried, uh, and mostly actually men. Right? I think that's changing a lot in the modern age as we move towards a less, uh, manual labor based, uh, world.

[00:49:35] You know, we have a lot of single women, for example, I think New York, there's more women than men, but certainly before say 1930 or 19, I would say maybe even all the way to 1950s, you, when you look, when you imagine the city, you are imagining tons and tons of single guys.

[00:49:58] **Drew Stegmaier:** Yeah. I want, I think part of that.

[00:50:00] Is again, circling back towards, um, knowledge work versus physical labor. If the city is the place where the jobs are and the jobs are lifting heavy shit, right? Men are going to go to the city, right? Cause those jobs might not be as available to women or there might be jobs that women can have. But those jobs, I would say are often limited or we're limited.

[00:50:28] Right. And now, as we're shifting more towards knowledge work that is shifting where it's like, Hey, if the job is pick up bags of potatoes all day, like good luck women, right. And I'm not saying women are weak, I'm not making that claim, you know, for the big it's out there. But when that shifts towards, Hey, the job is, use your brain and bang on a keyboard.

[00:50:53] Okay. Well, all of a sudden your candidate pool. Doubles, boom. Right. You know? Um, and so I think that's why we have some of the, the current shifts we're seeing is like, Hey, the, the type of jobs that are available shifts. Right. And so let's say a hundred years ago, if most of the jobs were not female friendly, the women don't have as much incentive to move to the city.

[00:51:22] Right. Because it's tougher for them to find suitable work. That doesn't mean there wasn't any work. Right. But relatively speaking. Right.

[00:51:31] **Shawn Yoon:** I, I, you know, I, I kept not even disagreeing with you. What I'm saying is that to posit that women were not moving to the city voluntarily, just like men were moving to the city voluntarily seems to me to be a bit, um, simplest.

[00:51:56] I, I really don't see, um, the history of humanity as mostly voluntary. I see the history of humanity as mostly, um, indentured right now, uh, because, and you know, like in the 18th century, like women in, uh, Japan, uh, urban women in Japan, uh, there was a huge population of, uh, prostitutes right now. These were, they at this point by 18th century, they had made the class distinction between geishas and prostitutes.

[00:52:37] Right. Um, and if you are a prostitute, then you, um, were locked in a, literally locked in an area. Um, they, they built a moat around these pleasure quarters and the, the gates were locked. After sundown, um, women, once you were, uh, you know, if you were born there, if you were sold there, you know, you had no way to leave.

[00:53:07] Right. And it was only until it wasn't until 1872. So late in the 19th century, uh, when they were

[00:53:17] **Drew Stegmaier:** imagining, and this is Korea, Japan, both, this is Japan, right? This is like governed by the state. Like prostitution is legal, but regulated

[00:53:28] **Shawn Yoon:** prostitutes. One is legal, but regulated is, uh, it, it, it, it becomes, it becomes a symbiotic relationship between the proto capitalist, Japanese state, you know, between the pro capitalist, Japanese feudal state, and, uh, you know, the, the, the pimps and prostitutes and, you know, the whole industry of, uh, sex.

[00:53:55] Which is why I think the comparison with Korea at the comparison and contrast with Korean Japan is really interesting because in the 18th century, the Korean, uh, Confucian state was still, uh, quite powerful and they were able to largely stamped that shit out, or at least confine it to very limited sort of situations.

[00:54:21] Right. Not only were, uh, so for example, you know, there are a couple of things that the government did in order to limit these things, which is that, you know, if, if a guy, you know, if a peasant had had trouble getting married, like, you know, the state and, you know, the whole society will like try to get him married.

[00:54:42] Right. It was, it was, it was definitely like. Um, a social endeavor to make sure that there aren't unmarried men there aren't unmarried women. And it was a social endeavor also to if, for example, there were, uh, there were widows, um, they were, like I said, they weren't allowed to remarry, but, uh, the state would provide stipends and if they were not, you know, and if they weren't, you know, getting remarried on the down low, which a lot of people did, right.

[00:55:16] Because like I said, the peasants, you know, didn't have too much respect for, you know, what the Confucian order argued. Right. They, they had their own customs, they had their own beliefs. Uh, but the state would provide some stipends. If you were a widow who refused to get remarried. Right. Because they were like, wow, congratulations.

[00:55:36] You're really helping us uphold the Confucian order. Right. So that, that's the contrast that I would like. Um, uh, you know, elucidate the, the high middle ages, you have a weakened, um, state that had to, you know, because of the hundreds, because of the, you know, because of the warring errors, because of the largeness and the islands nature of the Japanese peninsula, the Japanese archipelago, you had this state that needed to ally itself with merchant powers, with local powers in order to maintain a state.

[00:56:17] Right. And that was what allowed, that was what made them legitimize prostitutes and pleasure quarters. But on the other hand, you had, uh, you know, you had the chosen dynasty, which was, uh, you know, an ideological state from the beginning and really had a, sort of an iron grip. Again, due to, um, the geography, you know, the, the, the, the historical context, which allowed them to limit and, you know, sort of keep the prohibition against prostitution, uh, you know, and give it some teeth.

[00:56:55] Okay. So from there, I think I want to jump to the mid, uh, sort of, sort of the late 19th century, where Japan is starting to open up, you know, Dutch tradesmen are, you know, they have, they have arrived to the far east port to geese are coming and so on, and they are, uh, quite excited and extremely, uh, enamored by, uh, these prostitution quarters.

[00:57:28] Right. Uh, you know, this is sort of when, um, you know, this is. You know, this, this sort of leads into the, uh, age of, um, you know, you know, there was like a period where like, Parisien like artists, like band golf and old, maybe not bang God, but Monet. And those guys were drawing pictures of Japan. They were fascinated by this foreign culture.

[00:57:54] And a big part of it was that these sailors, uh, you know, were using these pleasure quarters and, you know, being, um, and, and seeing, uh, prostitution, which was completely different from what was available to them back home. Uh, again, I'm not trying to know. I can't really go into don't really know much about the history of prostitution in Europe, but, uh, you know, both in Europe and the United States, you, you know, the, the, the, the Puritan culture, the Christian culture, Um, laid out certain, you know, they, they, they created the context for prostitution that was very different from Japan.

[00:58:36] Right. Which made, I guess it seemed, uh, better, or at least more exotic, whatever, whatever. Right. But also it led to two big things, which was a syphilis and international human trafficking. So by the mid 19th century, the mid to late 19th century, like Japanese merchants, we're increasingly seeing that, oh, like these, um, you know, we can get women from other countries and, you know, they, they, they fetch a better price because, you know, it's more exotic also if we, you know, take Japanese prostitutes and, you know, maybe take them to, uh, Shanghai or to Indo, uh, to Indonesia.

[00:59:28] We can have these colonies and provide sex work there and make money. So they become sort of our, uh, Japan's first global corporations, quote unquote global corporations, uh, and in 1872. And I'm going to talk about the immense, the patient act, uh, basically think something happens. So a, a ship carrying, I think Indian women, uh, arrives to Japan and they, uh, and you know, it becomes an international sort of scandal.

[01:00:10] There's a huge movement. And because the Japanese state at the time wanted to become accepted as like a civilized country. And, you know, not be treated as a, um, as you know, a, yet another country to be colonized. Uh, they emancipated all prostitutes, engages.

[01:00:34] **Drew Stegmaier:** What was the scandal? Cause it sounds like just another day at the office, like that's what they'd been doing.

[01:00:38] Right. Well, what about this particular event made them change their minds? Like, um, I mean, I would assume it was because someone got upset, right. Or someone power got upset. Right. I assume that people who were being trafficked were obviously not okay with that since.

[01:00:57] **Shawn Yoon:** Right. They were always not okay with that, but I think here, which is really interesting is let me, uh, read the, uh, the paper that I'm reading the Peruvian ship.

[01:01:07] The Maria loose sailed into Japanese harbors for repairs carrying 230 Chinese slaves. The Japanese government officially stated that it did not recognize slavery. And the Peruvian government claimed no, you don't. Oh, hell no, you don't. You have prostitutes.

[01:01:27] **Drew Stegmaier:** Oh, okay. Oh man. Okay. So let's yeah. Let's, let's hang with this for a minute because that's epic basically.

[01:01:37] Let's say, uh, for lack of a better word. I mean, maybe it's a pretty good word. You have this slavery and then you have prostitution. And both of them fall under the umbrella of super fucked up coercive. Right.

[01:01:55] **Shawn Yoon:** Right. I mean, you're not allowed to leave the place. It's a class society. Okay. What about that is not slavery, but.

[01:02:03] **Drew Stegmaier:** Right, right.

[01:02:04] So the approving ship rolls up. It has all these Chinese slaves on it and the Japanese government's like, whoa, whoa, whoa. We're not about slavery. And they're like, whoa, whoa, whoa, what is all, this is this not slavery. And, and basically called out the Japanese.

[01:02:22] **Shawn Yoon:** And it was so embarrassing, so embarrassing that they decided to immense the pate, uh, prostitutes and geishas.

[01:02:34] **Drew Stegmaier:** Right. What I'm curious. And I assume it's a different word, right? Because it's Japanese. What was the word for their situation prior to emancipation, right? Cause you could say, oh, the word is slavery. Right. But what did they call it? If they clearly thought, I guess what I'm trying to say is this, the Japanese government thought they were anti-slavery rest of world is like, not so sure.

[01:03:00] What did they think they were doing? What, what did they call that?

[01:03:03] **Shawn Yoon:** Well, this is really interesting because, uh, they just called them. Uh, so you Joel and geisha, right? So you, Joe is I guess, um, sex worker, right? Let's start by, you know, in Japanese it's uh, it's like, um, what do you, what do you totally forgot?

[01:03:21] What a, you know, what's, uh, what's that word when it's a euphemism, right? It's a euphemism for, you know, it's like a pleasure worker, right? So you, Joe would be like a pleasure worker is like a, you know, a technical pur you know, like none of it mentioned sex, but, um, The, the, I think what was really going on was that a lot of these, uh, prostitutes were, and you know, this is also interesting, which is, uh, so samurai, right?

[01:03:54] So we're looking at the social, uh, context. The samurai were not allowed to participate in, uh, paid labor, um, you know, a calmer commercial labor, right? They were only allowed to do stuff related to the warrior stuff. Right. Which, you know, by the late 19th century, they're like, oh, not a lot of worrying to do anymore.

[01:04:19] Which was why the many of them became basically, um, civil servants. But you need a lot more soldiers than you need civil servants, which meant a lot of samurais became impoverished. And what these impoverished samurais did was to. Uh, give their daughters up for adoption and these daughters would be adopted into these pleasure quarters and, uh, be raised as these, uh, specialized workers.

[01:04:58] **Drew Stegmaier:** Lets us do that in plain speak. Um, the samurai go broke because of these global economic shifts. Right. And as a result, they sell their own children into sex slavery.

[01:05:13] **Shawn Yoon:** Basically. But it's very important, not actually really important. It was very important to them that they were not actually selling them into slavery.

[01:05:22] Right. They were like, they weren't. No, no, no, no, no. We're selling them into geisha hood.

[01:05:27] **Drew Stegmaier:** Okay. So they're basically lying to themselves. And then also the people buying them were likely lying to them as well. And that was in order to save face in status.

[01:05:38] **Shawn Yoon:** Yeah. Actually there was a, there was a surface, um, lie.

[01:05:44] That was ideologically enforced. You know, they were like, look like, and you know, this is really interesting because like samurai were really, they were like, oh my God, I don't want to sell my daughter as a huge Joe. Right. I don't want to sell them into like, you know, the pleasure quarters. It's, it's much more saving face if I sell them into geishas.

[01:06:07] Right. Because then I can tell myself that, but apparently my daughter's not doing it. Right.

[01:06:15] **Drew Stegmaier:** And I, okay. Okay. Sorry, I didn't mean to cut you off.

[01:06:17] **Shawn Yoon:** Continue. Uh, no, they could, they can tell themselves that I am my, daughter's not actually going to be doing sex work. She'll just be doing like, you know, art and stuff.

[01:06:29] **Drew Stegmaier:** So th this is fascinating because it provides a perfect explanation for a question I had earlier, which is you, you mentioned right. Oh, geisha and prostitute are. Right. And then you explain historically what a geisha is. I think people have a general understanding of what a prostitute is. And I think this moment in history was basically like, Hey, you have the downfall of the samurai and the samurai basically co-opted the term geisha, right?

[01:07:03] Because geisha is associated with legitimacy and honor prostitution is not.

[01:07:10] **Shawn Yoon:** Sure. Yeah, no, that's actually a fine way. Yeah. Geisha had some class prostitutes did not. And what, you know, what really had no class slaves had no class. So when the Peruvian government claimed that Japan was a slave state, right.

[01:07:30] They were, uh, really embarrassed because like, they were like, no, no, we have geishas this slavery.

[01:07:38] **Drew Stegmaier:** I mean, it makes me think of sharecrop. Pender Sam sharecropping is like, oh, here's the deal. You were a slave. You're not a slave. You're just in debt forever. And oh, by the way, you, you have this land and you work on it.

[01:07:54] I just own all the fruits of your labor indefinitely, but you're, you're free.

[01:07:59] **Shawn Yoon:** Yeah. You can go look, I'm lending your money so that you can buy seeds.

[01:08:06] **Drew Stegmaier:** Right.

[01:08:07] **Shawn Yoon:** This is a free exchange.

[01:08:08] **Drew Stegmaier:** It's interesting. Cause when we talk about capitalism, I think these are perfect examples of what we'd call predatory capitalism.

[01:08:15] **Shawn Yoon:** So as Japan opens up to the west, it creates, um, these more like strict class system. With geishas. Right. And this is where I want to switch back into Korea. Right? Because just as Japan is becoming more of a world power of a accepted civilized country in the global order, Hey, we're not a slave state.

[01:08:48] Hey, we trade with Peru, but we're not doing slavery is the exact moment where they're like, okay, so we need to push out. Right? We need to, because we have an urban population, uh, we need, we need, we need surplus. Uh, and we need, we have surplus production. We need, uh, raw materials. We need labor. We need, uh, we need women.

[01:09:16] **Drew Stegmaier:** And on top of that, I would say the samurai represented, um, a lack of unification and. Like, intransnational not international intra national, Hey, we're going to squabble over Japan. That's like, Hey, Japan becomes unified and then metastasizes basically via imperialism.

[01:09:37] **Shawn Yoon:** I think that is, um, it is both correct, but also, um, a bit of a, uh, a little bit of a, a, a simplification, because.

[01:09:50] **Drew Stegmaier:** I am oversimplifying everything you're saying.

[01:09:53] **Shawn Yoon:** Yeah. I have a problem of complicating, even pretty simple things. Right. Which is why this is working well. But what, what what's going on is when Japan first, uh, unifies, they obviously have a huge surplus of samurai, right? Like they're like, oh, wow. Don't eat any samurai anymore, but like we have a hundred thousand like unemployed soldiers basically.

[01:10:18] Right. And that was their first imperialistic move. Uh, and, and they almost immediately, uh, invade Korea, uh, way back in the 17th century. Uh, and you know, they, and, and, you know, they're like

we're going to invade all the way to China. Um, the, the, the Chinese and the Koreans, uh, out, uh, you know, had on the lions, they push Japan back, which also kills a lot of samurai, which, um, puts Japan into a, more of a, um, I guess, a more stable state, right.

[01:10:55] They don't, they no longer have hundreds, thousands of unemployed soldiers because they all been killed in the war. Uh, and it takes, uh, and I would say that it, you know, for it to move directly into imperialism, it first needs to go through. The process of both a, uh, creating a fully bureaucratic state, as well as having these merchant powers form into corporations, uh, that, uh, which are able to have their own interests represented at the national level.

[01:11:32] Right? So these corporations, these merchants by de late 19th century, they were not allowed. They were not able to do that really in an organized way in the middle ages. But as the middle ages rolled to a stop, they are able to say, oh, look, we have, and you know, Japan had a lot of these for example, are these coal mines, right?

[01:11:54] They had a lot of these coal mines, uh, and they were creating these industrial towns using coal. But Japan had a huge lack of, uh, metals. Right. Which was one of their, uh, huge impetus behind invading, uh, Korea and China

[01:12:19] **Drew Stegmaier:** That was oil.

[01:12:21] **Shawn Yoon:** Right. Exactly.

[01:12:22] **Drew Stegmaier:** You know, inconvenient, cough, cough in Korea.

[01:12:27] **Shawn Yoon:** They had, uh, because they had, they had, they had one thing and they were like, look, if we only had a couple of more things like, you know, wood and metals, we could make so much profit.

[01:12:39] Right.

[01:12:40] **Drew Stegmaier:** And they invaded, and this is what, when is this happening? Cause there'd be samurai invasions. You're talking about the next round of invasion.

[01:12:48] **Shawn Yoon:** Yes. So the first round of invasions would be like 17th century. This D uh, the new, the moderate round of, you know, uh, Imperial invasions was, uh, early 20th century.

[01:13:01] So this is a prior right to the right on the right, at the Eve of the first world war. Okay. So Japan was actually on America's side in the first world war, which is something that most people don't really know, uh, because Japan didn't really do anything in that word. They just sort of joined, um, when it was quite clear that the allies were, um, dunno.

[01:13:29] Is it the allies it's deep? Uh, there some, some tripartite, there's some other word for it. Anyway, the American team was winning. They joined, uh, on the American side at the, nearly at the end of the world war one, but, uh, it, all of this was happening. While Japan was, uh, Japan had invaded Korea, right? And Japan's invasion of Korea is a little bit different from, uh, Japan's invasion of China.

[01:13:57] Uh, and Japan's invasion of Korea is also a little bit different from say Japan's invasion of Taiwan. There's all, all of these, uh, neon says, which I'm not really going to get into because we're talking about prostitution. But when so many soldiers in Korea, they needed a active, uh, they needed a prostitute, right?

[01:14:19] If there's, if what I said earlier about how you can not have without prostitution, while that might be somewhat debatable, I think one could imagine it. It is, I think perhaps even less, uh, easy to imagine a, an invading army. That does not require prostitution.

[01:14:43] **Drew Stegmaier:** And I guess you've been lumping prostitution with, to just make it even more simple, um, access to sex slash women.

[01:14:54] Right? Cause I think in many instances, conquest wasn't, Hey, we're going to go on a conquest and we'll get some prostitutes it's Hey, we will just, uh, kill the husband, take the wife as property.

[01:15:07] **Shawn Yoon:** It, it, it was actually a little bit different because what you're thinking is, you know, like it's a bit, it's a bit feudal, right.

[01:15:14] That that's, you know, there's raping and pillaging, but, uh, the, the modern military is a little bit different.

[01:15:21] **Drew Stegmaier:** This is like the evolution of it.

[01:15:21] **Shawn Yoon:** Right. If you look at Japan, like they, they were like, okay, we need prostitutes so that they won't rape and pillage.

[01:15:27] **Drew Stegmaier:** Right. Because also they're trying to be a legitimate state.

[01:15:30] **Shawn Yoon:** Right. And also like they don't want, um, soldiers, uh, Uh, deserting and like making babies with the local women and then, you know, maybe forming some weird, uh, you know, attachment to the land, you know, basically a heart of darkness shit. Right. So they need, so they actually, um, in, in, uh, they, they hire women, um, as part of, you know, they, they, so, you know, these prostitutes are not like private contractors.

[01:16:02] They are, uh, members of their, of the camp right there in the corner.

[01:16:09] Backtrack a little. So we're talking about Japan and I don't know if you're going to get to this. So we're talking about prostitution in Japan, and now we're talking about Japanese conquests or imperialism, and Japan is basically sending prostitutes with the troops.

[01:16:29] **Drew Stegmaier:** Before, before we go further down that road, just to, uh, I'll say set the scene, so to speak is, can you tell us about the cause we, we focused on Japan a bit and now we're focusing on I'll call it the connection between Korea and Japan. What is the state of prostitution sex work in Korea historically leading up to this point before they blend, I want to, we got in Japan, I want to get Korea and then blend.

[01:16:59] **Shawn Yoon:** Um, so let's, let's then take us to the Eve of, uh, the Japanese, like, I guess, uh, over, you know, uh, over overlord ship of, uh, of the Korean peninsula. Right. So right before that happens,

Korea is desperately trying to modernize. They're desperately trying to play the game that, um, Thailand played successfully in Southeast Asia, which is playing powers against each other.

[01:17:28] They're trying to play the, the, the, the chain against Japan, uh, against Russia, against the United States and really quite miserably failing, um, because, uh, you know, because the geopolitics were not quite right, they were not able to hold that balance. But while this is happening, what was happening with prostitution?

[01:17:52] Well, it's unclear. Uh, but, uh, the society was becoming more market oriented. Women were, uh, uh, women were coming to the cities and searching for, uh, labor, uh, and search for jobs. There was not a, there weren't enough jobs, which probably led to. Prostitution. However, because, uh, the Confucian order was still a socially accepted, uh, value.

[01:18:25] **Drew Stegmaier:** They were still underground, right? I guess there's a couple of shifts to call it the difference between Korea and Japan pre uh, pre blend, for lack of a better word. Um, Korea didn't have samurai history, right. And I think what prompted some of the rise in prostitution slash sex slavery in Japan was the fall of the samurai, right?

[01:18:50] The samurai needed to come up, you know, so they sold their daughters into sex, slavery. Korea didn't have this samurai aspect. And then also, as far as I was understanding with the Confucianism in Korea, you basically had some aspect of a welfare state. For single women, whereas in Japan, and I don't think we covered this.

[01:19:14] What happened to women in Japan? If they were widowed, were they allowed to remarry? Would the state give them money? What happened there? Because in Korea, as far as I understood the state would give them money to not remarry, to enforce Confucianism. Did Japan do that too?

[01:19:30] **Shawn Yoon:** I don't know, but I don't think they, I don't think they would have, but I don't know.

[01:19:35] **Drew Stegmaier:** That's a, I mean, that's a, a huge deal is like, Hey, if you're not allowed to remarry and the state gives you money, there's much less financial pressure to go and get money. Right. I'm not sure.

[01:19:48] **Shawn Yoon:** Uh you're right. That is a good question. Um, but I'm not sure. Uh, one more thing I would like to say is that, um, that even until the Eve of, uh, of colonization.

[01:20:03] The Korean states Alliance with the merchant powers with the merchant forces, uh, or a very weak. So this is another thing, uh, that I think, you know, that you mentioned two things, but I think this would be a good third, uh, factor to add in there, which is that, um, merchants in Korean society and market transactions overall in Korean society had, uh, less power.

[01:20:35] **Drew Stegmaier:** Okay.

[01:20:37] **Shawn Yoon:** So once, uh, colonization happens, um, like I said, the Japanese military police have to, um, control Korean, uh, the Korean peninsula, which means they need prostitution and they try to bring Japanese women over. But because Japan was becoming, uh, a richer country. They were really, uh, Japanese women were more expensive.

[01:21:04] **Drew Stegmaier:** So they subjugate the Korean women.

[01:21:06] **Shawn Yoon:** Yes. Uh, so the, uh, they, their career became a, uh, there, they became classes of prostitution. Right? So the key things. So the, uh, they, so the top key things still had their pseudo artistic functions. So pseudo cultural functions, there were the middle classes that had, uh, that became geisha eyes.

[01:21:35] That means they were more prostitute. Uh, but you know, they had more of a choice. Uh, you know, it was more of a market transaction. And then you had the lowest tier of impressed. So like, you know, like, um, you know, they were impressed into military service. Prostitutes. So, uh, so as a colonial, as a colonized nation, Korea had three classes of prostitutes, one being, one, serving the traditional cultural roles on other serving sort of the modern market roles.

[01:22:10] And finally the third serving pseudo slavery, uh, uh, militarized, uh, roles. And so, you know, so as the war, uh, as the war of Japan against all of Asia continues, the, you know, the, this becomes worse and worse. And like I said early about, earlier on about the racial hierarchy that Japan tried to impose over, uh, They had, um, you know, Japanese women were there, there was like this, um, document that I was reading about how, like, in the, in the war camps of, uh, of Southeast Asia, there were, you know, clear cut price differences between, um, you know, the locals and Korean women, Chinese women, Japanese women with, uh, with Japanese women, of course being the most expensive, a lot of apparently generals and the official officer classes, they brought their own Japanese concubines or their own Japanese geishas from the, uh, from the Homeland.

[01:23:20] Uh, whereas like, you know, the, the, the, I guess the luckier ones or the, uh, the richer ones, uh, uh, had, um, you know, had money enough to pay for, uh, Korean prostitutes and, you know, the poorest, uh, privates and the lowest enlisted men would be. Um, you know, would be limited to, uh, local women and, and, you know, and, and again, like I said, you know, this was, um, this was incredibly, this is incredibly interesting and disturbing because like I said, these women were, were not, um, uh, free agents, right?

[01:24:00] They were not like free agents that congregate around a military base because they know that's the place where they can make money. They are, uh, sexual slaves, but also they were, um, they had a price, right. And the price was apparently quite high. Apparently it was a half a private's monthly wages to have sex with one of these women.

[01:24:28] **Drew Stegmaier:** The Japanese or with anyone, right?

[01:24:30] **Shawn Yoon:** With the Japanese women, the Japanese, the prostitutes were, would have been completely. Out of, out of, uh, out of their reach. Right. Right. But even the cheapest, uh, uh, and would have been half or one third of these, uh, lower, lower soldiers, uh, monthly wages, which was Y um, w which really created a, you know, a cycle of both of debt for both women and these enlisted men.

[01:25:04] **Drew Stegmaier:** Wait, how does that create debt for the women?

[01:25:07] **Shawn Yoon:** So the women were up, so nominally, apparently they were paid, but because, you know, again, it's, it's the sharecropping story all over again. They had to pay for their, uh, you know,

their ship, you know, their food getting exploited. Yeah. But there's like, you know, nominally an exchange of a, you know, like point or whatever.

[01:25:29] Right. Um, okay. So, so. Just gets worse and worse and worse as the, the Japanese empire is just gradually, they're like, oh, we're disintegrating. We cannot hold this anymore. Like, and you know, 1945, the war ends, I want to return, uh, almost for the final time to Korea. Right. We're going to return to Japan one more time.

[01:25:57] Uh, but, uh, so now Korea is no longer under Japanese rule. Uh, there's their new boys in town and they're the Americans. So, uh, American soldiers are all over the country. And, um, there immediately, actually in both Korea and in Japan, uh, military base, Oh, I think it was called, uh, Japan organized, like something called a leisure association or something, which was a S you know, they, they organize these Japanese prostitutes to serve American soldiers, uh, MacArthur.

[01:26:40] And, you know, uh, the other members of the American military brass did not look too kindly upon it. And, uh, they shut it down. However, you know, the reality of the situation on the ground obviously required military based prostitution.

[01:26:57] **Drew Stegmaier:** It's like the war on drugs, making that stuff illegal does nothing to stop it.

[01:27:01] **Shawn Yoon:** Right. But they, you know, but, but the officer's love to make it illegal anyway.

[01:27:05] **Drew Stegmaier:** Yeah. It's like the war on sex. You make sex illegal that doesn't make sex. Go. They go on the shadows.

[01:27:11] **Shawn Yoon:** They, in both Japan and Korea, they had, uh, they had special areas where the military police would, you know, turn, you know, they would just be like, oh, oh, you know, we don't go into that area.

[01:27:25] Uh don't don't ask why. Right. And then we arrived into the 1950s. So, so D you know, the time between 1945 and 1950 is an interesting time. It's a time, I guess, when things could have been different, maybe. Right. Uh, when the cold war haven't really been gone like America and the Soviet union were, you know, they had just been allies, uh, you know, the things were, you know, uh, MacArthur wanted to turn Japan into like an agrarian nation.

[01:27:58] He famously said, uh, Japan should be like the Switzerland of Asia. Um, but all of these things change very quickly. As, uh, you know, the, as the Korean war erupts and the cold war, uh, you know, I guess it's not the cold war at that point. It was just a hot war, uh, between communism or between Stalin and the United States kicks into high gear.

[01:28:29] Um, so, you know, don't want to get into too much of the war. The war ends, uh, it's a disaster.

[01:28:37] **Drew Stegmaier:** You're talking about the Korean war?

[01:28:38] **Shawn Yoon:** The Korean war, the Korean war ends. It's a disaster three, 3 million civilians, dead hundred thousand widows. And the Korean peninsula and the United States has now has a permanent, uh, because you know, actually between 1945 to 50, the United States wanted to leave Korea.

[01:29:00] They were like, okay, like, all right, you know, we've liberated you guys. You know, hopefully you guys will make a new constitution. You know, we want you to become a democracy, you know, join the capitalist block. But, you know, after the Korean war is over, they're like, okay, Nope, we got to stay here and this will be an occupation.

[01:29:22] Uh, and you know, we'll, we'll be here, uh, for a very long time. We're still there. Yep. Now the term occupation is a highly charged word. And I would like to add that, uh, I don't actually think the American military in Korea are occupiers. They are here by invitation. I just don't think again, my beef is not with the U S soldiers or American citizens.

[01:29:58] It's with states. And our global system of, uh, capitalist states, uh, constantly warring, uh, and so on. And this is not actually just about capitalism it's before it's pre capitalism. But anyway, so we have a hundred thousand widows and a lot of soldiers, uh, you know, uh, the situation could only go in one direction and this is where I'll return to Japan for the last time as well.

[01:30:27] Japan also has the exact same situation, lots of coal mines, lots of, uh, you know, lots of industrial areas that are no longer necessary because mercantilism has gone. It's free market. Baby Japan now has to become an export oriented economy instead of, you know, trying to become a, uh, you know, a, a, an empire of its own prostitution booms in Japan.

[01:30:57] There are, again, three classes of prostitutes. There's the red light district where Japan had legalized prostitution and, uh, blue light districts where, uh, you know, it was, it wasn't legal, but it was semi-legal. And apparently they called it white light districts where these women are walking the streets under, uh, extremely dangerous circumstances, not only from, uh, the state, but also from the Yakuza and, uh, uh, and their clients as well.

[01:31:30] Often, it's the case. And that's Japan until in 1957, they, uh, create the, uh, prostitution free venture and act, which is the law that's still in effect today. So Japan's stance on prostitution has not changed since 1950s. And that stance is. That bonding sex and selling sex is technically legal. It's uh, it's that, it's just that, you know, they, they don't, uh, encourage it.

[01:32:04] And if you are trying to, uh, you know, make money off of it, you know, it's technically illegal. So like pimping or I would say it would be decriminalized. Yes. Okay. So sex work in Japan is decriminalized there, you know, it's, it's, it's regulated to some degree, uh, and you know, there, there are a lot of different, you know, changes, but legally it is legal and it has been legal since 1957.

[01:32:37] All right. So I'm going to return to Korea where there's, I think a bit more of a, uh, of a dynamic history going on.

[01:33:05] **Drew Stegmaier:** Okay. So, uh, we're back from a potty break folks. And to give you guys a little bit of update, cause I like keeping things real for my audience. It is now past midnight. Uh, just past midnight for Sean and we have a lot more to talk about. We've basically covered, uh, sexual history of Korea and Japan through roughly World War II.

[01:33:31] Um, but to get us up to speed from world war II to the present, especially with a focus on Korea, that's gonna take maybe another two hours.

[01:33:43] **Shawn Yoon:** Like it's totally my fault for not having paced myself. I like, like I was not. That was, I got excited. I didn't pace myself

[01:33:52] **Drew Stegmaier:** folks. This is great. This is great. I do not blame yourself.

[01:33:57] I learned a ton. Um, so what we're going to do is there'll be a part two of this, uh, at a time that is to be determined. And is there anything you want to leave folks with as a hiatus or to tie them over? Maybe clue them into what we'll be talking about next?

[01:34:15] **Shawn Yoon:** Well, I want to first like, say like, dude, if I made any mistakes, please, correct me.

[01:34:24] **Drew Stegmaier:** Um, how can people find you to correct you? Should they tweet at you go to your website? What should they do?

[01:34:29] **Shawn Yoon:** Um, so. I like I've cut myself from social media. I, guess they could email me at, uh, at Y O O N dot S H a w n@gmail.com. But, um, yeah, what they should do is they should, uh, tweet at drew. I don't know if you have a Twitter,

[01:34:54] **Drew Stegmaier:** @StegDrew just like the show. Absolutely.

[01:34:55] **Shawn Yoon:** They should add @StegDrew and then Drew can get at me because I hate modern technology and although I use it, I use it grudgingly. And, um, I refuse to tell you my Twitter handle because God, my Twitter is just, it's a shit show. No one should have to see my Twitter effort.

[01:35:22] Um, uh, another thing I do want to say is that this was so much fun. And I, I it's, it's, it's difficult for me to express how, um, how much pain, uh, that, uh, how much pain I'm describing. Like I am describing like 600 years, 700 years worth of incredible pain to like millions. I don't know, tens of millions of people, billions of people.

[01:35:58] And if I, you know, if I, if I seemed flipped tense through any of that, like that's because of my, uh, ignorance and because of the scale of this whole thing that, you know, it's just hard to come at it with the proper attitude, because it's, you know, it was such a big topic.

[01:36:17] **Drew Stegmaier:** Yeah. I think that's well said. I mean, it reminds me of the quote from, from Stalin, which is the death of one is a tragedy.

[01:36:24] The death of a million is a statistic. And I think. That there's something fundamental about humans, where we generally don't understand compounding. We don't understand exponent. And I would lump in, we don't understand really big numbers when it comes to people, right? It's like, oh, a million people died just the computational power required to really understand that the sum of all those individual experiences will just fucking fry your brains computer.

[01:36:53] So your brain just doesn't even entertain it and think of the pain of losing your dog. Okay. Right now, imagine the pain of a million people suffering. And it's like, you can't compute that you can't, it's too much compute and it fries the motherboard. And so we do our best to just talk about things from this 10,000 foot view.

[01:37:16] And by no means is that meant to dishonor the very real events that happened to many, many people.

[01:37:22] **Shawn Yoon:** Right. And I guess I would like to end with, um, A quote from a, a sexual slave in the, uh, in the military. Uh, and she says that she had to service, uh, pens of men in a line. They would, uh, they would use her for three minutes, four minutes, five minutes at a time without pause all day for 17 hours, she would go without deprecating.

[01:37:57] And she would urinate while, uh, the soldier was on top of her. She had intercourse with about 300 people a day. That is the, I think the, the unmasked naked face of this industry, there are of course, luckier, quote, unquote, look here workers who have better working conditions. But I think, and I would argue that this is the quote that I just read from a Korean woman who was sent to Burma is the naked reality of the sex industry.

[01:38:42] **Drew Stegmaier:** listeners with. Okay. Yeah. Wow. That's heavy. Um, all right, folks, um, there will be a, again, a follow-up to this conversation, consider this part one. And, um, yeah, I think as is the theme for the show, um, we need unity, right? And one of the ways that we build unity is by acknowledging truth, however inconvenient it might be.

[01:39:13] And I think that's what we've done today, and it's not happy. It's not exciting, but that doesn't mean it didn't happen. And if we want to learn and be better, we need to reconnect with our history. Amen. Amen.

[01:39:33] **Drew Stegmaier:** If you're looking for a holistic, alternative approach to conventional therapy, get in touch with Eric at www.its-Not-Therapy.com

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Thank you.