INTRODUCTION

Repatriation, Decolonization, and the Transformations of Postwar Japan

In the sixteen months following the end of World War II in Asia, from September 1945 to December 1946, the Allied military forces repatriated over 5 million Japanese nationals to Japan. During the same period, the Allies also facilitated the deportation from Japan of over a million former colonial subjects—Koreans, Taiwanese, Chinese, and Southeast Asians—to their countries of origin. The Allies viewed these transfers as an unwelcome but unavoidable part of their primary goals: the demobilization of Japan’s military forces and the demilitarization of Japan. The transfers were also a part of the dismantling of Japan’s fifty-year imperial project. The unmaking of empires everywhere is a complex process, and the human remnants of Japan’s empire—those who were moved and those who were left behind—served as sites of negotiation for the process of disengagement from empire and for the creation of new national identities.

Japan acquired its overseas colonies piecemeal, mostly as the spoils of victory in war: Taiwan in 1895, after the Sino-Japanese War; Korea in 1910, five years after the Russo-Japanese War; the South Seas mandate under the League of Nations and special rights in China after World War I; the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932; and parts of China and Southeast Asia between 1937 and 1945, during Japan’s war in Asia. Following these territorial gains, millions of Japanese participated in the imperial project, subduing, managing, and settling these colonial
acquisitions. They went overseas in dribs and drabs, as conscripted soldiers, colonial administrators, and entrepreneurs. By the end of the war, their numbers were significant: as of August 1945, 3.2 million Japanese civilians and 3.7 million soldiers—6.9 million people, nearly 9 percent of the total population of 72 million—were outside of the Japanese home islands.\(^1\) The requirements of war and empire also meant that people from the colonies move to Japan as well. At war’s end, an estimated 2 million Koreans, 200,000 people from the Ryukyu archipelago, 56,000 Chinese, and 35,000 Taiwanese were in Japan; another 1.5 million Koreans had migrated, or were forced to move to Manchuria, and tens of thousands of others were in China, Taiwan, and Karafuto (now Sakhalin).\(^2\) With its porous internal borders, efficient transportation system, proactive migration policies, and forced labor schemes, Japan’s empire facilitated a degree of ethnic mixing in East Asia not seen before or since.

Immediately after defeating Japan, the Allies began to move people in ways that reversed, at high speed, the migrations of the colonial period. Their first priority was to accept the surrender of all 3.7 million Japanese troops abroad, disarm them, and send them home as part of the demobilization of the Imperial Army and Navy. Unlike in Europe, where the Allies prepared for inevitable postwar refugees by establishing the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in 1943, few plans had been made for Japanese civilians abroad; however, the spontaneous civilian migrations of August 1945 forced the Allied militaries and the Japanese government to respond.\(^3\) Soon, the trappings of an organized population transfer—repatriation camps, quarantine procedures, identification papers, and a bureaucracy—took shape. Of the 6.7 million who eventually returned to Japan, 5 million arrived by the end of 1946. The flow of people went both ways: by February 1946, nearly

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2. Kōseishō engokyoku, Hikiage to engo 30-nen no ayumi, 151.
4. For the Allied response to refugees in Europe, see Grossmann, Jews, Germans, and Allies, 133.
1 million Koreans, 40,000 Chinese, and 18,000 Taiwanese had been sent away. All had to cross an ocean to reach their destinations.

Although defeat and expediency triggered the population transfer, larger historical forces shaped it as well. These include the impulse to match each person with his or her “appropriate” national territory, a trend that dislocated millions of people, by force or by choice, in the decades during and after the war. It was also the beginning of the end of the remaining colonial empires throughout the world. In 1945, while politicians in the United States and Great Britain bickered about the future of the British empire, and the British, the French, and the Dutch made efforts to regain their colonies in Southeast Asia, Japan’s empire was terminated with little discussion. These worldwide trends, in combination with the particularities of empire and war in East Asia, went on to influence the region in unpredictable ways. The postwar settlement, more than the war itself, shaped East Asia in the latter half of the twentieth century.

The story of repatriation and deportation provides the means for exploring three overlapping reconfigurations of postwar Japan, the first of which came with defeat: the redrawing of the map of Asia and Japan’s place in it. In wartime conferences at Cairo, Yalta, and Potsdam, representatives from the United States, the Republic of China, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union planned for the defeat of Japan and sketched out a map for the postwar surrender and Allied occupation of the territory under Japanese control. Some of the arbitrary lines they drew, such as the line dividing the Korean peninsula at the 38th parallel, approximated national boundaries today. The division of Indochina (now Vietnam) at the 16th parallel, with the northern portion falling under Republican Chinese jurisdiction and the southern portion falling under Great Britain’s South East Asia Command, prefigured the 1954 division of Vietnam at the 17th parallel. The new map reduced Japanese sovereignty from its vast imperial reach to the four home islands, removing the colonies and also regions that had been recognized diplomatically as parts of the Japanese state. Okinawa, a prefecture of Japan since 1879, was severed from Japan and placed under American

control, where it remained until 1972. Karafuto (now Sakhalin), a part of Japan since 1905, and the Chishima archipelago (now the Kuril Islands), a part of Japan since 1875, were turned over to the Soviet Union. Japan emerged from the war trimmed of its outlying territories.

The new map of Asia snapped into place on August 15, 1945, and made into foreigners Japanese abroad and colonials within Japan, requiring either their transfer or redefinition. With the colonial spaces of the Korean peninsula, Taiwan, northeast China, and elsewhere transformed into nascent national ones, the project of matching each person to his or her national space began. American military sources explain that a combination of strategic and humanitarian concerns motivated the Allies to repatriate Japanese civilians. The Allies wanted to prevent former colonial rulers from exercising power in post-colonial Asia and to avert the potential slaughter of Japanese nationals at the hands of people against whom they had waged a brutal war. The rationale behind the rush to rid Japan of colonial subjects is less clear, and judging from contemporary American and Japanese sources, was based on expediency and racism. Moreover, groups of people who lacked a powerful sponsor, such as several thousand Korean forced laborers in Karafuto, were abandoned to their fate when the island became the Soviet territory of Sakhalin. The end result of the Allied population transfer was an East Asian region more ethnically homogeneous than it had been during the time of the Japanese empire. The first chapter of this study traces the relatively slow history of the migrations throughout the Japanese empire in contrast to the abrupt arrival of the Allied forces, and the ramifications of the overnight transformation of people from colonial participants into objects of an Allied population transfer.

The clean and swift lines drawn by the Allies on maps and around national groups had a dramatic impact on the Ryukyu archipelago. Okinawa had occupied an ambiguous zone between Japan and its colonies: the state and intellectuals claimed Okinawa as “Japanese,” but Okinawans suffered economic and social discrimination—they were even

7. Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Reports of General MacArthur, 149.
9. Ōnuma, Saharin kinin.
grouped with other colonial subjects in some situations. During the 1940s, American anthropologists and military planners began to see the Okinawans as an “ethnologically distinct” group, a process that eased the detachment of Okinawa from Japan. At the end of the war, Okinawans outside of the Ryukyu archipelago and Japanese from the home islands in the Ryukyus were cycled through the processes of repatriation and deportation in ways that closely resembled the population transfers to and from the colonies. The concluding chapter of this book analyzes the case of repatriation and deportation in the Ryukyus as an illustration of American ideas on the need to define ethnic groups and then match them to their appropriate territory, and as an example of the unmaking of the Meiji imperial order.

A second reconfiguration of postwar Japan was the uneven and incomplete process of absorbing and re-categorizing the fragments of empire within Japan. The geographic construction of the metropole (nai-chi, 内地; literally, “inner territory”), in tension with the colonies (gaichi, 外地; literally, “outer territories”), collapsed overnight. People who had been defined by this construct—the people of the metropole and the people of the colonies, including colonial Japanese—had to be redefined for a new non-imperial society. The reshaping of the colonial Japanese and colonial subjects in Japan into something that made sense or was perhaps useful in post-imperial Japan was a complicated and multifaceted task, carried out in a number of realms across the postwar period.

The Allied redrawing of the map of Asia, in combination with the political and economic dominance of the United States after World War II, led to the third transformation of postwar Asia: the recasting of Japan from its position at the nexus of a multiethnic empire in East Asia into a new position as a monoethnic nation on the far edge of the American sphere of influence. This was both a geographic and social reorientation. The new map of Asia had cut away the colonies as well as the geographical and psychological links to Asia, in the southeast (Okinawa) and the northeast (Karafuto and the Chishima islands). With the American military occupying Okinawa and South Korea, and the Soviet military occupying North Korea, northeast China, and the northeastern

islands, the Allied military presence acted as a shield between Japan and the rest of Asia. From October 1945, the Allied Occupation authorities took control of all of Japan’s diplomatic relations and restricted contacts with the outside world. The influx of tens of thousands of Allied Occupation personnel created new links to the United States. With its ties to the Asian continent cut, and the wind blowing from a new direction, Japan came about to face eastward, and took up its new mooring as part of the Pacific Rim.

Detached from the Asian continent, Japan’s people needed to be reinvented as well. The discourse on the uniqueness of the Japanese people dates back to the eighteenth century, if not before. During the colonial period, propagandists in Japan did their best to make racial sense of Japan in East Asia, using slogans such as “Japan and Korea as One” and “Harmony Between the Five Races” in Manchuria that implied both racial similarity and difference and insisted on Japan’s right to “lead” the Asian races. After the war, this rhetoric of harmonious racial pan-Asianism was shed like a snakeskin, leaving only the underlying structures of racial prejudice in place. As Oguma Eiji explains, the image of Japan as a peace-loving, homogeneous state instead of the prewar militaristic multinational empire appeared immediately after the war.12 “Japanese uniqueness” did not need the Americans to nurture it, but, as Yukiko Koshiro has shown, the Americans were able to use the notion of the racially and culturally unique Japanese people, who were in Asia but not of it, in their creation of junior Americans (“like a boy of twelve” in the words of General MacArthur) who could be conditioned and mobilized in a supporting role for the cold war.13 The result was a resurgence of the idea of the Japanese people as culturally and racially unique in a nation with timeless and natural borders, in sharp contrast to its recent history as an expansive imperial power in a multiethnic setting.

The postwar population transfer both accelerated and vexed these new renderings of Japan and its people. By sorting and deporting people based on their ethnicity, Allied-sponsored repatriation and deportation contributed to the homogenization of Japan, making more true Japan’s

perceived uniformity. More importantly, this act of sorting contributed to the notion that one could determine, unequivocally, whether a person was Japanese or not. This placed national hybrids—children of mixed parentage or Japanese women married to foreign men (and therefore no longer Japanese citizens)—in a terrible bind. Indeed, the stranding of such hybrids, an inevitable product of colonialism, was one of the main casualties of the transition from empire to nation. The failure to repatriate and deport everyone who was “supposed” to have been moved, with thousands of Japanese left behind in China and hundreds of thousands of Koreans remaining in Japan, complicated efforts to see Japan as homogeneous and isolated from Asia. The trickle of returnees throughout the postwar decades and the large resident Korean population forced ideologues to redouble their efforts to emphasize Japan’s cultural isolation and homogeneity.

Colonial returnees complicated the issue of Japaneseanness, which was supposed to be an all-or-nothing category: people of Japanese blood who spoke the Japanese language and behaved, socially and culturally, in a recognizably Japanese manner. Repatriates, Okinawans, and in a few cases, former colonials, were barely Japanese or partly Japanese, categories that did not fit easily into the new configuration. People who represented these categories challenged the either/or characterization of “Japanese,” forcing a different structure, one of concentric circles demarcating degrees of Japaneseanness. This is not to imply a postwar affinity between the different peoples relegated to the edges of Japaneseanness. As in the colonies, their position on the outer edges on the Japaneseanness scale caused friction, with the now-repatriated colonial Japanese making distinctions between themselves and former colonial subjects. With few economic choices in the immediate postwar period, however, many repatriates ended up at black market stalls, cheek and jowl with other colonial migrants. This placed them in literal proximity to the former colonial subjects, on the edge of Japanese society.

The re-renderings of Japan and its people had a profound impact on returnees, especially those who tried to depict themselves as “internationalists” and wrote optimistically about their hopes to serve as liaisons between Japan and Asia in an effort to build new relationships and

to help Japan recover from the war. With diplomacy, trade, and travel between Japan and Asia proscribed by the Occupation, those hopes came to naught. In postwar Japan, experience in Asia was obsolete—unless it was deemed valuable by the Allied Occupation forces. In her recollection of her life as a young adult in Manchuria shortly after the war, Japanese colonist Kazuko Kuramoto told of her resolution to learn Chinese as a means of becoming a true citizen of Dalian. When she visited a Japanese professor of the Chinese language, he counseled her to give up on Chinese and learn English, and indeed, Kuramoto’s English skills were of more use to her than any China-related knowledge when she sought work with the Americans back in Occupied Japan. The second chapter examines the official and social creation of two new categories, the “repatriate” (bikiagesha, 引揚者), and “third country nationals” (dai-sangokujin, 第三国人), a euphemism for former colonials.

Gender played a role in the shaping of the bikiagesha. Civilian Japanese women in postwar Manchuria were exposed to tremendous violence, and even for those who escaped assault, the suspicion of sexual contamination remained. One oral history informant talked of damage to her marriage prospects because she had been a child in Manchuria. Male civilian repatriates, particularly those who had respectable professions in the colonies, originally escaped much of the stigmatization that women endured at the end of the war. But the 1949 return of the “red repatriates,” men who had been detained by the Soviet Union and indoctrinated with socialist ideology, suffused the word bikiagesha with a new set of suspicions. The third chapter examines the historical circumstances that contributed to the creation of these two sets of distinctive repatriates.

Returnees drew fire during the cold war within Japan and throughout Asia. The Japanese government, firmly under the U.S. security umbrella, did not at first establish diplomatic ties with the People’s Republic of China (PRC), and was unwilling or unable to negotiate for the return of tens of thousands of its citizens remaining on the continent. Three

non-governmental organizations—the Japanese Red Cross, the Japan-China Friendship Association, and the Peace Liaison Society—stepped in to fill the void, but the newly established government of the PRC was willing to use any issue in an effort to win diplomatic recognition and used the release of Japanese citizens as a bargaining tool.\textsuperscript{18} Between 1953, when repatriation from the PRC began, and 1958, when diplomatic strains put an end to the possibility of repatriation, roughly 30,000 Japanese civilians returned to Japan from China. As in 1949, the encounter between returnees and their homeland was layered with meanings they had no way to anticipate. Many people in Japan, tutored in anticommunism, associated returnees from socialist countries—and sometimes, by extension, all repatriates—with communism.

From the moment of their return, repatriates offered some counterinterpretations of who they were and what their experiences had meant. They tended to use the same expressions in describing their ordeal, creating a language of the repatriation experience. These included sentiments such as “with only the clothes on my back” (\textit{ki no mi ki no mama}, 着の身着のまま), “without a red cent” (\textit{hadaika ikkan}, 裸一貫; literally, “completely naked”), and “but for the grace of God” (\textit{kami hitoe}, 紙一重; literally, “only a sheet of paper” that separated one from another person’s fate). While returnees tried to distance themselves from the negative stereotypes of repatriates, they tended to sympathize with each other. Early returnees, such as those from Korea, helped later ones from Manchuria. They published self-help guides and formed civic organizations. The largest organization, led by people repatriated from the Korean peninsula, put its efforts into the issue of compensation for assets former colonists were forced to leave behind at the end of the war.\textsuperscript{19} These efforts came to fruition in two waves of government compensation packages, a symbolic award in 1957 and a more substantial award in 1967.\textsuperscript{20}

The colonial project and its abrupt end produced two sets of Japanese children profoundly changed by their immediate postwar experi-

\textsuperscript{18} Seraphim, \textit{War Memory and Social Politics in Japan}; Radtke, “Negotiations between the PRC and Japan.”

\textsuperscript{19} Sun, “The Reverse Impact of Colonialism.”

\textsuperscript{20} Campbell, “Compensation for Repatriates”; Orr, \textit{The Victim as Hero}. 
ences: those who were repatriated from the colonies as children and those who were not—that is, children who were left behind in China during the repatriation process. People who had returned from the colonies as children or teenagers were particularly affected, by having their childhood experiences in the colonies invalidated and their authenticity as Japanese called into question by their peers. Although many of these experiences were undoubtedly painful, this alienation contributed to the making of some of Japan’s most insightful critics. The novelist Abe Kōbō, the nonfiction writer Sawachi Hisae, the jazz musician Akiyoshi Toshiko, and the conductor Ozawa Seiji are but four of Japan’s most famous colonial Japanese, with Ozawa sometimes claiming that Chinese, not Japanese, is his mother tongue. Colonial Japanese children were old enough to have internalized passionate feelings of patriotism during the war years, only to experience a profound sense of betrayal of those ideals, compounded by a sense that their government had abandoned them at the end of the war. Some had believed the rhetoric that Japan was working to free Asia from the grip of white colonialism, but when they returned to Japan, its occupation by the United States military exposed the contradictions in the colonial project. They survived the violent end of empire, but, rejected in some cases by their classmates as insufficiently Japanese, chafed within its borders in a kind of reverse exile. Another factor influencing this generation is their time in history. Most were of the “Shōwa single-digit” generation (born between 1926 and 1934), a group known for its role in shaping postwar Japanese memory. Repatriated children later wrote of their spiritual alienation from “ordinary” Japanese people and their sense that they remained on the edge of Japaneseanness. This generation produced critiques of postwar Japan, in works of social criticism, film, and literature. Repatriate popular culture and repatriates in popular culture are discussed in the fourth chapter.

People repatriated as children sometimes pondered the lives of their doppelgängers who had faced a more challenging fate: surviving as the

orphans of belligerents and colonial settlers left behind on enemy soil. These Japanese children left behind in China—of whom an estimated 3,000 survived—had a range of experience: some were raised by Chinese families to be used as servants or future wives, but others were cherished the same as the family’s biological offspring. Some remembered that they were Japanese or came to suspect it; many had been teased in childhood as “little Japs” or persecuted during the Cultural Revolution as foreign spies. But others learned of their ethnic origins only as their adoptive parents began to die off in the 1970s and 1980s, either through deathbed revelations or encounters with family paperwork. With the resumption of diplomatic ties between Japan and the PRC in 1972, people of Japanese descent began to return for the first time since 1958. Born of Japanese parents but otherwise Chinese, they faced serious linguistic, cultural, and social challenges returning “home” to Japan as adults. The issue of “orphans left behind in China” (Chūgoku zanryū koji, 中国残留孤儿) did not gather momentum until a critical mass of people began to return in the early 1980s, but their arrival in Japan served to remind the general public of something the repatriates had known all along: that wartime ties and unfinished business still existed between Japan and China. The Japanese who returned from Manchuria as children dwelled on their sense of intellectual and spiritual alienation, but the “orphans” lived that alienation, in the PRC and eventually back in Japan, in much more profound ways. With the return of the “orphans” in the 1980s, addressed in the fifth chapter, repatriates once again provided fuel for the fire in the discussion of who really counted as Japanese.

Historians Andrew Gordon, John Dower, and others have noted the lack of scholarly attention to postwar repatriation. Andrew Gordon writes that “while [repatriation] was a relatively swift and smooth process, to absorb such a vast number of people was a complex undertaking which left a legacy that has not yet been fully studied or understood. Repatriates, both civilian and military, often felt out of place back “home,” regarded with a mixture of pity for their poverty and scorn for their role in pursuing what now appeared to have been a hopeless war.”24 John Dower notes that, “The fate of these [colonial] Japanese is

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a neglected chapter among the countless epic tragedies of World War II.” Since the 1990s, scholars have explored different aspects of repatriation including repatriate housing, the patterns of repatriate employment after the war, and memories of returnees, particularly agricultural settlers.

A combination of historical and historiographical factors contributed to the obfuscation of the story of postwar repatriation and deportation. In the postwar period, and in interpretations of that period, decolonization has been drowned out by more pressing forces: Japan’s catastrophic defeat, Allied occupations, civil wars in China and Korea, and East Asia’s role as a frontline in the cold war. The breakup of Japan’s imperial formation and subsequent turn away from empire are also compelling transitions, but have tended to be buried under these more dramatic plotlines. Moreover, unlike other empires, the Japanese empire was taken apart by the Allies, not through negotiations between the metropolitan state and its former colonies. This process of “third party decolonization” profoundly influenced the uneven, incomplete, and vexed dissolution of Japan’s empire in Asia.

The competing forces of collective remembrance in Japan worked to occlude the story as well. In the immediate postwar period, stories of victimization, including those of atomic and conventional bombing, and the abuse of ordinary citizens by a militaristic state, were put to a


variety of uses in negotiating the transition from war to postwar.\textsuperscript{27} As Franziska Seraphim has shown, civic groups across the political spectrum in Japan vigorously tended their versions of war memory, a process that led, in part, to the association of war memory with special interest groups.\textsuperscript{28} At least until the 1960s, however, there was an unconscious sealing of the national borders around these stories: only narratives of Japanese suffering that took place on the home islands of Japan qualified as legitimate national remembrances of suffering in World War II. The sufferings and losses of colonial Japanese remained trapped outside, stopped at water’s edge, and were not adopted as part of the national story of suffering. As argued further in the Conclusion, the process of separating and buffering the homeland from the history of the colonies made useless, in terms of national victimization, the otherwise compelling stories of Japanese suffering.

The figure of the repatriate accrued and shed meanings across the postwar period, and the meaning of the word changed depending on who used it. For that reason, to define \textit{hikiagesha}, once and for all, would be folly. It is nevertheless revealing to look at some attempts to define the word. The broadest definition of a repatriate is any of the 6 million people who passed through and completed paperwork at a regional repatriation center on the way back to Japan after World War II. People who were documented in this way entered into the records of the bureaucracy most deeply involved with repatriation, the Ministry of Health and Welfare. One problem with this definition is that it fails to make a clear distinction between civilians and military personnel. Overseas civilians became repatriates; military men demobilized from overseas became demobilized soldiers (\textit{fukuninhei}) and eventually “veterans” (\textit{beteran}). But in part to distinguish themselves from military men who were demobilized domestically, soldiers returning from overseas often referred to themselves colloquially as repatriates. A majority of the most notorious repatriates, the Siberian detainees, had been military men and therefore technically not repatriates at all. Returnees from the United States and Europe—that is, places other than the former Japanese empire—

\textsuperscript{27} “What Do You Tell the Dead When You Lose?” in Dower, \textit{Embracing Defeat}, 485–521.
\textsuperscript{28} Seraphim, \textit{War Memory and Social Politics in Japan}. 
were processed at regional repatriation centers but occupied different administrative categories and did not qualify for repatriate compensation or recognition. Nevertheless, some of these returnees from the West, and not the colonies, insisted that they, too, were *hikiagesha*.

A 1957 law that served as the basis for small benefits payments to returnees provided a legal definition of a repatriate: a person whose livelihood had been in the colonies for more than six months preceding defeat.29 Whereas the 1957 definition clarified some aspects of who, for the purposes of compensation, counted as a repatriate, it clouded others by making room for unrepatriated repatriates: people who were bona fide residents of the colonies but who happened to be in Japan at the end of the war, and therefore did not experience the often searing trip back to Japan. By the time of the second compensation package in 1967, the definition, reflecting a shift in political understandings, had changed.30 The 1957 definition implied that a repatriate was a poor person in need of welfare. The 1967 definition removed the income ceiling for compensation and included language about a commitment to empire, indicating that a repatriate was now a returnee of any income bracket and who deserved some official recognition for his service and his losses. Later laws included other caveats, reflecting the success of lobbying efforts and changing political understandings. These legal definitions, discussed further in the fifth chapter, were generated in the official realm for the purposes of state compensation. Complex and dynamic understandings of the repatriate also developed in the realms of literature, film, memoirs, and commemorative efforts.

Repatriates were defined in the crucible of imperialism, colonialism, and decolonization. Imperialism is the set of ideas of political, economic, and cultural domination of another territory, ideas that are generated primarily in the metropole, in Japan’s case, the home islands or *naichi*. Colonialism is the implementation of those ideas in the colonial setting, in Japan’s case, *gaichi*. Resistance to the word “de-imperialization” means


30. Hikiagesha tō ni taisuru tokubetsu kōfūkin no shikyū ni kansuru hōritsu (Repatriate special subsidy allowance law). Law no. 104, 55th Diet Session (Special), August 1, 1967.
that “decolonization” refers to the post-colonial and post-imperial processes in both the former colonies and the metropole. Japan’s empire was composed of many different forms of colonies: formal, informal, treaty ports, mandates, wartime acquisitions administered by the military, and the anomalous Manchukuo.31 The difference in these colonial forms mattered a great deal in the administrative and economic realms, but was less significant with defeat when Japanese nationals stopped being participants in their particular colonial formation and became Japanese abroad.

Although this history of the end of empire in East Asia is interested in every person who passed through a regional repatriation center, the people repatriated from Manchuria are of particular importance. The majority of repatriates came from Korea, Taiwan, China south of the Great Wall, and elsewhere, but the widespread social image of the repatriate is based on the women, men, and children who were in Manchuria after the war. The Japanese in Manchuria were a source of fascination—celebratory and disapproving—for people in the homeland even before 1945, and the lurid (and often censored) stories surrounding the year they spent in Manchuria after the war before repatriation served only to add to the image of a group as a possible threat to people at home. Allied military personnel, including American officers who unexpectedly found themselves responsible for large Japanese civilian populations, played an important role in the process, but the goal of this study is to present this story as it was understood by actors in East Asia. The question of how American military and civil authorities made sense of their role in this population transfer remains to be explored further.

Understandings of hygiene in Japan’s colonial spaces influenced domestic perceptions of Japanese colonial returnees. In her remarkable book about how Chinese elites negotiated modernity through various

31. For different kinds of colonies, see Beasley, Japanese Imperialism 1894-1945; Myers and Peattie, eds., The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945; and Duus, Myers, and Peattie, eds., The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895–1937 and The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945. A large body of scholarship now exists on different aspects of Manchuria. When referring to that geographical region, now the three northeastern provinces of the PRC, I use “Manchuria”; when referring to the Japanese-sponsored state that existed in the region from 1932 to 1945, I use “Manchukuo,” the English-language name used by the Japanese architects of the state when writing in English about it.
understandings of hygiene, Ruth Rogaski shows how Meiji medical experts tried to import the “full kit” of modern hygienic practices—including public health and medical institutions, sanitary police, and laboratories—to control germs in their efforts to modernize the nation. Lessons learned in making domestic society hygienic were then applied in the colonies. In Taiwan, Japanese authorities under the leadership of Gotō Shinpei sought to make all of Taiwan a hygienic space, which reduced the need to police boundaries between Japanese and Taiwanese communities. In Korea, authorities sought to raise the level of hygiene by training doctors and modernizing public health and medicine, but Japanese civilians still complained about the unhygienic nature of the Korean people. Rogaski also shows that in China, or at least in the city of Tianjin, Japanese authorities concerned themselves with the health of Chinese people mainly when they perceived that their substandard hygiene might represent a threat to the Japanese population. Especially after 1937, Japanese authorities sought to control the sources of contagious diseases such as cholera by inspecting Chinese homes at gunpoint, quarantining victims of the diseases, and burning infected corpses. Japanese authorities viewed prostitutes in China as potential carriers of venereal disease and therefore a threat to Japanese people, and they placed prostitutes of all nationalities including Japanese under their “sanitary sex” system. But as Rogaski concludes, maintaining places sufficiently hygienic for Japanese people in the informal empire in China had more to do with policing the boundaries between Japanese and Chinese communities than attempting to transform all of China into a hygienic space. For these reasons, returnees from Taiwan and to a certain extent Korea were understood to have come from hygienic spaces and therefore were less of a threat to conditions in Japan. Early returnees from the intact Japanese concessions in China had less time to be exposed to unhygienic China as well. As explored further in the third chapter, the 1946 returnees from Manchuria had spent a year in China after the authorities were no longer able to police the boundaries between Japanese communities and others, and had therefore been ex-

32. Rogaski, Hygienic Modernity, 136–64.
33. Ibid., 258–59.
34. Ibid., 260–84.
posed to unhygienic conditions, further contributing to the ambivalent reception of the Manchurian Japanese.

Population transfers occurred throughout the world in the twentieth century, and repatriation and deportation in Japan resonated with at least two other movements of people. The end of French rule in colonial Algeria triggered the flight of nearly a million European Algerians in 1962. The pieds noirs, as they were known, faced difficulties in integrating into a home to which many of them had never been. Placing pieds noirs and hikiagesha side by side—as repatriate critic Honda Yasuharu did in a 1979 article—suggests that colonial returnees in many places play roles as buffers in the transition from imperial to post-imperial formations. Japanese repatriation began just months after the beginning of the expulsions of an estimated 12 million ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe and elsewhere immediately following the end of the war. A comparison to the German case shows similarities in the postwar fate of Axis belligerents, particularly for those who ended up in Soviet hands, but reveals striking differences in how people in postwar West Germany and Japan made use of these episodes in their national histories. The comparative aspects of Japanese repatriation are addressed further in the Conclusion.

Historians have characterized interwar Japan as a nation mobilized for “total war.” John Dower answers, in many ways, the question of what happened after defeat to a people mobilized for total war. As Louise Young has shown, Japan was also a nation mobilized for “total empire,” with communities throughout Japan feverish in their support of expansionism. The history of Japan’s total empire raises an analogous question of what happened to a people mobilized for empire after the failure of the colonial project. In the immediate postwar period, the 3 million hikiagesha repatriated from the colonies underwent a process

36. Ibid., 8.
38. Naimark, Fires of Hatred; Bramwell, ed., Refugees in the Age of Total War.
39. Barnhart, Japan Prepares for Total War.
40. Dower, Embracing Defeat.
41. Young, Japan’s Total Empire.
of stigmatization that allowed metropolitan Japanese to distance themselves from the failed colonial project and ultimately contributed to the obscuring of Japan’s imperial history by saddling the responsibility of it onto the colonial returnees. Once the image of the *hikiagesha* had been created, it then served as a convenient domestic “other” and as a vessel for a variety of postwar anxieties, including the contamination of the nation’s women by foreigners, possible communist indoctrination in Siberian detainees, and potential social disruption by mavericks in general. In addition to coming to grips with their lost colonial homes and trying to survive in devastated postwar Japan, repatriates also had to negotiate with the stereotype of being someone pitiable, but also possibly contaminated, poorly socialized, or troublesome. By the 1980s, with the last wave of colonial returnees, Japanese society no longer had a need to distance itself from colonial failure, and the *Chūgoku zanryū koji*, instead of being cycled through the extant category of *hikiagesha*, were put to other, non-imperial uses. War and defeat have been defining factors in many aspects of “postwar” Japan. In less visible ways, so have the empire and the loss of the colonies. This book explores how that loss was incorporated into postwar Japan, that is, what happened when empire came home.