Gunkanjima (Battleship Island): A World Heritage Site Soiled by Korea

--Another distortion of history, akin to the “comfort women”

By Matsuki Kunitoshi

Introduction

In March 2018, I visited Korea for the media and I was totally flabbergasted to witness the implementation of extraordinary “anti-Japanese education”. In Independence Hall located at Cheonan in Chungcheong Province, georamas depicted women being pushed aboard a truck, destined to become sex slaves. A three-dimension image showed a Japanese soldier mercilessly shooting to death Korean sisters who were comfort women. At the “National Memorial Museum of Forced Mobilization under Japanese Occupation” in Pusan, a video showed a Korean girl being raped by a Japanese soldier. These horrible scenes are shown to Korean children, imbuing their young minds with hatred and fear toward Japan.

At a square in front of Yongsan Station, a train station in Seoul, a pitiful statue of a “mobilized laborer”, after “harsh forced labor”, stands, nothing but skin and bones. In front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul and the Japanese Consulate in Pusan, comfort women statues stand, as if glaring at Japan. Turn on the television and you will hear a news that “another former comfort woman passed away without receiving due apology.”

Why are the Koreans so maddeningly determined to condemn Japan?

In fact, Korea has no understanding of what is known as “washing away the past.” Grudges once held are handed down from generation to generation. A grudge never dissolves until the descendants of the enemy meet the same fate. Therefore, the Korean people, who firmly believe that “Japan ruled Korea as a colony in the cruelest manner that the world has ever seen,” must rule Japan as a colony and abuse the Japanese people and have their ancestors’ revenge on the Japanese people.

However, it is impossible at present time to directly inflict revenge. Instead, it seems that the Koreans are trying to achieve their “revenge” by spreading anti-Japanese propaganda all over the world, degrading Japan’s international status and defaming the Japanese people. At the very least, such psychology unmistakably exists in the deepest part of the
Korean mind.

So long as the anti-Japanese propaganda on the part of Koreans is their “revenge” on Japan, there will be no end to apologies and compensation, however sincerely Japan offers them. Their “grudge” will be passed onto consecutive generations until Korea sees to it that the Japanese people become the target of insults and hate among the peoples of the world and fall into decay amidst disgrace.

A film titled Gunkanjima (Battleship Island) was first shown in Korea in August 2017, a totally fictional film with the clear intent of vilifying Japan.

At the beginning of the film, “mobilized workers” and “comfort women” brought over from the Korean Peninsula are packed into windowless freight trains by Japanese soldiers. From the very start, the film aims to impress upon the audience’s mind that Japan committed atrocities against Koreans equivalent to the Jewish Holocaust.

In the film, a little girl undergoes a venereal disease check as a comfort woman. Mobilized Korean workers are abused in a manner beyond words. There is also a scene in which a comfort woman is brutally murdered by a Japanese soldier. At the end of the film, Korean mobilized workers and comfort women take guns and defeat Japanese soldiers. They escape from Gunkanjima by boat. And the following narration appears on the screen:

In 2015, Gunkanjima was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. As of now, the Japanese Government has not followed the UNESCO recommendation that the Japanese Government clarify historical fact concerning various facilities, including those involved in forced mobilization, by December 2017.

Thus, the film clearly tries to tell the audience that the film is true and that conveys significance even today.

The film was shown not only in Korea but also in the United States and Canada and is slated to be shown in Southeast Asia. By highlighting the Japanese people’s atrocity to the entire world, the film aims to damage the honor of the Japanese people for all eternity. If we are careless, we will end up being labelled as “a barbarous country that committed another holocaust.” We must take every possible means to counter these lies as soon as possible.
In Nagasaki, people who used to live in Gunkanjima (the official name of the island is “Hashima”) at that time are so upset about the fact that the film depicts a totally distorted history, tremendously damaging the honor of not only former Hashima residents but also all Japanese people. The former islanders formed the “Society of Hashima Islanders for True History,” and began working to let the entire world see the true Hashima.

This book, based on testimonies and primary sources, examines various scenes from the film Gunkanjima, together with documents and papers the film’s producer referred to in making the film, and clarifies how history was distorted, one piece at a time.

The Koreans distributed this film using the catchphrase “a film made based on fact.” If their basis turns out to be nothing more than sheer fabrication, questions will be raised by people all over the world regarding Korea’s anti-Japanese accusations, including the issue of “forced abduction of the comfort women.” The way will be paved, then, to recover the honor of the Japanese people that has been degraded.

In the latter half of the book, the process of how anti-Japanese sentiment escalated this far is analyzed and at the same time it is made clear that the term “forced abduction” is a “phantom” created through fabrication and a distortion of history.

Once it is understood that “atrocities” and “forced abduction” allegedly committed on the island of Gunkanjima are lies, the instinct for revenge ensconced in the minds of the Korean people will gradually dissolve and disappear. It will surely become possible for Japan and Korea to establish a trustful relationship. If this book serves to achieve that purpose, however slightly, then I will be more than pleased.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Part I  *Gunkanjima’s Distorted History*

Chapter 1: Inscription of Gunkanjima to the UNESCO World Heritage List

- Gunkanjima used to be the Manhattan of Japan
- Korea obstructed inscription of Gunkanjima to the List
- The weak response by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the root of evil
- Gunkanjima is a heritage for all colored people

Chapter 2: Distortion of history in the film *Gunkanjima (Battleship Island)*

- Having no evidence, they made the film
- The opening scene is reminiscent of the Holocaust
- Little girls were turned into comfort women
- Abused mobilized Korean workers
- A comfort woman brutally killed by being pushed down a hill of sharp-tipped 15-centimeter nails
- The company plans to annihilate the Koreans, so they shoot back and escape
- A fabricated story spread to the rest of the world as historical fact

Chapter 3: *Gunkanjima Is an Island of Hell*—a book for children

*Gunkanjima—shameful UNESCO World Heritage
Hell Island Gunkanjima*

Chapter 4: The Korean mass media, using *Gunkanjima*, prompts people to have anti-Japanese opinions

- *EBC* used a faked photo
- *MBC*’s feature on *Gunkanjima*
- An interview by *Yonhap News*

Chapter 5: Assertions that “Gunkanjima is hell” coming from Japan

- The book *Listen to Gunkanjima*
- Photo documentation—Chikuho, Gunkanjima, Forced Abduction of Koreans and
later years
Nagasaki Peace Museum in memory of Oka Masaharu

Part II  Gunkanjima Was Not an Island of Hell

Chapter 6: There was no abuse of Koreans

The establishment of the “Society of Hashima Islanders for True History”
“Mom, I miss you so much”—graffiti was setup
Children were not made to engage in hard labor
Korean miners were exempt from dangerous work
No labor was performed with a pickax
Working hours were the same among Japanese and Korean workers
No physical violence was committed against Koreans by Japanese
Instruction policy of the Central Cooperative Society –“physical punishment is very proof of a leader’s inefficiency”
Rate of mortality was the same among Japanese and Korean workers
Ashes of deceased workers from the Korean Peninsula were cordially treated

Chapter 7: The truth about “the escape from Gunkanjima”

All sorts of people lived in Gunkanjima
Were there any cases of escape attempts by mobilized workers?
There was no system to guard against escapes
Gunkanjima was totally free from guns

Chapter 8: Japanese and Korean children went to school together

Japanese and Koreans ate the same food
There was no differentiation regarding housing
There was no differentiation regarding wages
There were quarters for gay Koreans
A doctor who was much appreciated by the Chinese
Japanese and Koreans alike waved farewell, yearning for each other
The film Gunkanjima is a culmination of racial hate

Part III  Lunatic Korean Anti-Japanese Sentiment

Chapter 9: Korean history distorted after World War II
Historical fabrication by Syngman Rhee
Concealing a massacre of their own people
Park Chung-hee concealed the fact that he refused to pay pensions to mobilized workers
Korea needs a “history that should be”
A spirit of revenge against Japan sown by a fabrication of history
“A carefree apology” set ablaze the Korean people’s anger

Chapter 10: Anti-Japanese facilities that instigate hatred toward Japan
Korean Independence Hall
Seodaemun Prison Historical Museum
[Column one: About “Seodaemun Prison”]
The War and Women’s Human Rights Museum
National Memorial Museum of Forced Mobilization under Japan’s Occupation
Names of Japanese companies regarded as war criminals by Korea
Historical Museum of the Republic of Korea
A place to remember

Chapter 11: Statues of a comfort woman and of a mobilized worker
A statue of a “curse” in front of the Japanese Consulate
Ubiquitous comfort woman statues in Korea
Comfort woman statues and monuments are being built overseas, one after another
Newly begun installation of mobilized worker statues
People act in a grotesque, self-important manner

Chapter 12: Korean judiciary intent on hurting Japanese companies
The Supreme Court ruled that individual claims are valid
One after another, Japanese companies are ordered to pay compensation
President Moon Jae-in proposes collaborated investigation into the issue of mobilized workers by North and South Korea
A state governed by emotion, preferring emotion over law
Should the plaintiff win, Japanese companies’ assets will be “seized.”

Part IV  Phantom of Forced Abduction

Chapter 13: Mobilized workers were not “forcibly abducted”
A new fictional phrase “forced abduction of Koreans”
During Japan’s rule, Korean people were favorably treated
The Japanese Government restricted influx of laborers from the Korean Peninsula
Recruiting of workers was legally conducted
“There were no legal constraints, making it possible to directly recruit Korean workers in the Korean Peninsula.”
“Official good offices” were not binding
An original source of the fiction that “women were abducted and taken aboard a truck”
“Mobilization” was the people’s obligation

Chapter 14: A note of a Korean mobilized worker
Food and living left nothing to be desired
Korean mobilized workers were friendly with Japanese
A pleasant workplace surrounded female factory workers
Went sightseeing on a holiday
If workers became physically weak, special leave was allowed
Boarding homes were happy and noisy with drinking and gambling
Finally, on their way home, bidding farewell to their Japanese friends

Chapter 15: Koreans came over to Japan of their own accord
A great number of Koreans came looking for jobs
Testimonies of those who yearned for Japan
Sixty percent of wartime immigrants in Japan were not mobilized workers
Seventy-five percent of Korean residents in Japan from the Korean Peninsula at the end of the War had come to Japan voluntarily.
A great number of people entered Japan illegally from the Korean Peninsula
Koreans testified that there was no discrimination
[Column two: It took a lot of effort to stop Koreans from coming over to Japan]

Chapter 16: Korean workers earned a lot of money
Monthly salary of ¥300 for labor at a coal mine
Families back home in Korea became yangban (wealthy class) due to money regularly sent by Korean workers in Japan
Hearty condolence money for those who died at work
As long as they remained in Japan, it was possible to earn bountifully at bunkhouses
[Column three: Workers continued to earn money after expiration of their contract]
Chapter 17: The fiction of the “forced abduction of comfort women”
Why was there no record of a single case of resistance or disobedience?
The story of “forced abduction of comfort women” was thus created
Manipulation of information on the part of the Asahi Newspaper
Anti-Japanese Japanese lawyer who ran about persuading former comfort women
The “forced abduction of comfort women” was Yoshida Seiji’s fabrication
Japan became a “sex-slave state” after the Kono Statement
“Coomaraswamy Report” was full of malice towards Japan
The “Kono Statement” was “Kono Collusion”
“Abductors” were Korean pimps
The total number of comfort women, including Koreans, was around five thousand
Comfort women were not sex slaves
The violation of women’s human rights now under way should be condemned foremost

Chapter 18: The issue of compensation has been resolved
The agreement “Concerning the Settlement of Problems in Regard of Property and Claims between Japan and Korea and Economic Cooperation” finally settled the matter
Japanese assets abandoned following the Agreement amounted to ¥ 16 trillion
[Column four: The Syngman Rhee Line]
Compensation was paid inclusively to Korea, including compensation for North Korea
It is feared that the conflict between Japan and Korea may lead to unwanted results on both sides
Let’s remember the time when Japan and Korea fought together
[Column five: Merely two hundred forty-five Koreans out of those who had been mobilized from the Korean Peninsula during the War remained in Japan after the returning-home program was completed]

Conclusion

Reference and Bibliography