

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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