

Part I *Gunkanjima's Distorted History*

In July 2015, the former coal mining facility of Gunkanjima (Battleship Island), located southwest of the Port of Nagasaki, was inscribed as UNESCO World Heritage Cultural Property. Gunkanjima's underwater coal mines produced the best quality coal, rarely found anywhere else, since the early Meiji Period and has contributed greatly to Japan's industrial modernization. The coal mines were closed in 1974, but related facilities remain nearly intact, which enables us to appreciate the great endeavors of our predecessors. The facilities are truly a heritage of which the Japanese people should be proud.

However, when we were engaged in having Gunkanjima facilities inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, Korea fiercely opposed our efforts, raising the past and obstructing our efforts with every possible means.

Part I will describe the extent to which Korea has grotesquely distorted the history of Gunkanjima.

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

Gunkanjima used to be the Manhattan of Japan

Gunkanjima's official name is "Hashima" and its address is Hashima Village, Takashima Town, Nagasaki City (formerly Hashima Village, Takashima Town, Nishisonogi County, Nagasaki Prefecture). The island is located 18.5 kilometers off Nagasaki Port and came to be called "Gunkanjima" because the shape of the island looks like that of the battleship *Tosa*.

In 1810, a coal mine was discovered in Hashima and coal mining started in 1870. In 1890, Mitsubishi bought the island from Nabeshima Magorokuro and for the next eighty years, a great volume of coal was produced.

Hashima was originally a reef, stretching nearly 320 meters from south to north and 120 meters from east to west. The reef was reclaimed mainly by using waste from the coal mines and the island eventually stretched nearly 480 meters from south to north and 160 meters from east to west.

The population, too, increased drastically and was over 2,000 at the end of the Meiji Period. To cope with the expanded population, the construction of high-rise apartments of reinforced concrete began in 1915.

The following year, in 1916, seven-storied building No. 30 was completed. In 1918, five buildings, No. 16 to No. 20, four nine-storied and one six-storied buildings, were completed.

In order to accommodate as many people as possible in a small area of land, high-rise buildings were constructed. So, at that time, with these high rises, the island looked like a Japanese Manhattan, exceeding Tokyo's Ginza in grandeur.

Later, living facilities continued to expand and the peak population after the War reached 5,300. Shopping facilities were also available—almost everything from food to utensils were readily available within the island. In addition, there was a movie theater, mahjonn parlors and other places of amusement, and all items people needed for every-day living was available; not available were crematories and graves. The standard of living on the island surely exceeded that of the mainland.

Korea blocked inscription of Gunkanjima to the List

Hashima's coal mines were closed in 1974 and the island became un-inhabited. All residential facilities in addition to the coal mining facilities are currently as they were at that time. The coal mining lifestyle such as that of Hashima's is rarely elsewhere in the world.

Thus, people coalesced to have Hashima inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List and in August 2003, the Society to Have Hashima Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List was certified as a nonprofit organization (NPO).

Later, Hashima's coal mining facilities were officially nominated as a candidate for World Cultural Heritage status, thanks to efforts of the Society and local people.

However, regarding the inscription of Gunkanjima to the UNESCO World Heritage List, Korea opposed the plan from the very start and stubbornly blocked our efforts. As I will explain later, in Korea, the history of the period under Japanese rule has been completely altered following the War. The end result is that the Korean people are entirely convinced that Japan ruled Korea as a colony in the cruelest manner, unprecedented in world history. They firmly believe that Japanese officials "forcibly abducted" Koreans and were sent to Hashima's hell-like coalmines. Therefore, a Meiji-era relic of the Japanese industrial revolution (hereinafter, a "heritage of the industrial revolution") should not be inscribed on the World Cultural Heritage List.

In order to prevent inscription, a Korean civic group produced materials which had nothing to do with Gunkanjima and distributed them to members of the UNESCO Selection Committee as part of a systematic scheme to foil Japanese efforts.



Gunkanjima (Hashima) at present.

One of these was a photo that allegedly demonstrated abuse of Korean workers at Gunkanjima. An expert examined the photo and found that it was a photo from the *Asahikawa Newspaper*, dated September 9, 1926. The photo was part of an article about an incident in which a Japanese worker at a road construction site in Hokkaido (the northernmost part of Japan) was overworked, not even being spared a drop of water. The photo had nothing whatsoever to do with workers from the Korean Peninsula.

To prevent the inscription of a “heritage of the industrial revolution,” the Korean Foreign Ministry organized a so-called truth-examining committee, published several brochures of propaganda, and widely chastised Japan, even going as far as saying that “many women were deceived and abducted” in relation to the comfort women issue, which had nothing to do with World Cultural Heritage.

In the brochures, to our surprise, there was criticism of Shokason-juku School in Hagi, Yamaguchi Prefecture, one of the components of the heritage of the industrial revolution. It stated that “Yoshida Shoin’s Choshu (presently Yamaguchi Prefecture) retainer led Japanese imperialism, targeting the Korean Peninsula.” They even made commercials and showed them in their public transportation system, including buses, and spread a campaign against inscription all across Korea. Thus, resorting to vile tactics, Korea attempted to disrupt our efforts.

Thus, to reduce friction, Japan persuaded Korea into agreeing to a mutually supported effort for two inscriptions. And following Korean promises of cooperation, Japan supported the inscription of the Baekje District to the List to the extent that it could.

Nevertheless, when the Baekje District was successfully inscribed, Korea broke their promise. Korea pointed out alleged faults, claiming that “it is not clearly stated that workers from the Korean Peninsula were forced laborers in an inhuman environment,” and opposed, at the last minute, to the inscription of Japan’s heritage of the industrial revolution. Thus, dispute after dispute occurred over alleged “forced labor” during the inscription deliberation, involving the members of the World Cultural Heritage Committee, before they reached a final decision.

The root of evil is the weak response by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

As this book clearly demonstrates, neither forced abduction nor mistreatment of mobilized Korean workers occurred. However, Japan’s Foreign Ministry acknowledged “forced labor” to the Committee on World Cultural Heritage at the time of inscription, feeling constrained by Korean intentions and

readily accepted their assertion. By any interpretation, he admitted that Japan engaged in “forced abduction of mobilized workers.” On top of that, Japan committed itself to set up an information center to show the true nature of mobilized Koreans who worked in Hashima Island.

The then-Foreign Minister, Kishida Fumio, explained, “[This] means that they were recruited under the National Mobilization Act and does not mean they were ‘forcibly abducted.’” However, such an explanation will hardly stand in the international community. As a matter of course, the Koreans in the United Nations declared that Japan admitted to “forced mobilization”. Japan’s position became worse and worse.

We are simply dumb-struck by the Japanese Foreign Ministry’s peace-at-any-price thinking. If they have the determination and the sense of mission to protect the honor of our homeland, they should at least try to make it clear that “there was no forced abduction” through the information center that was slated to be set-up.

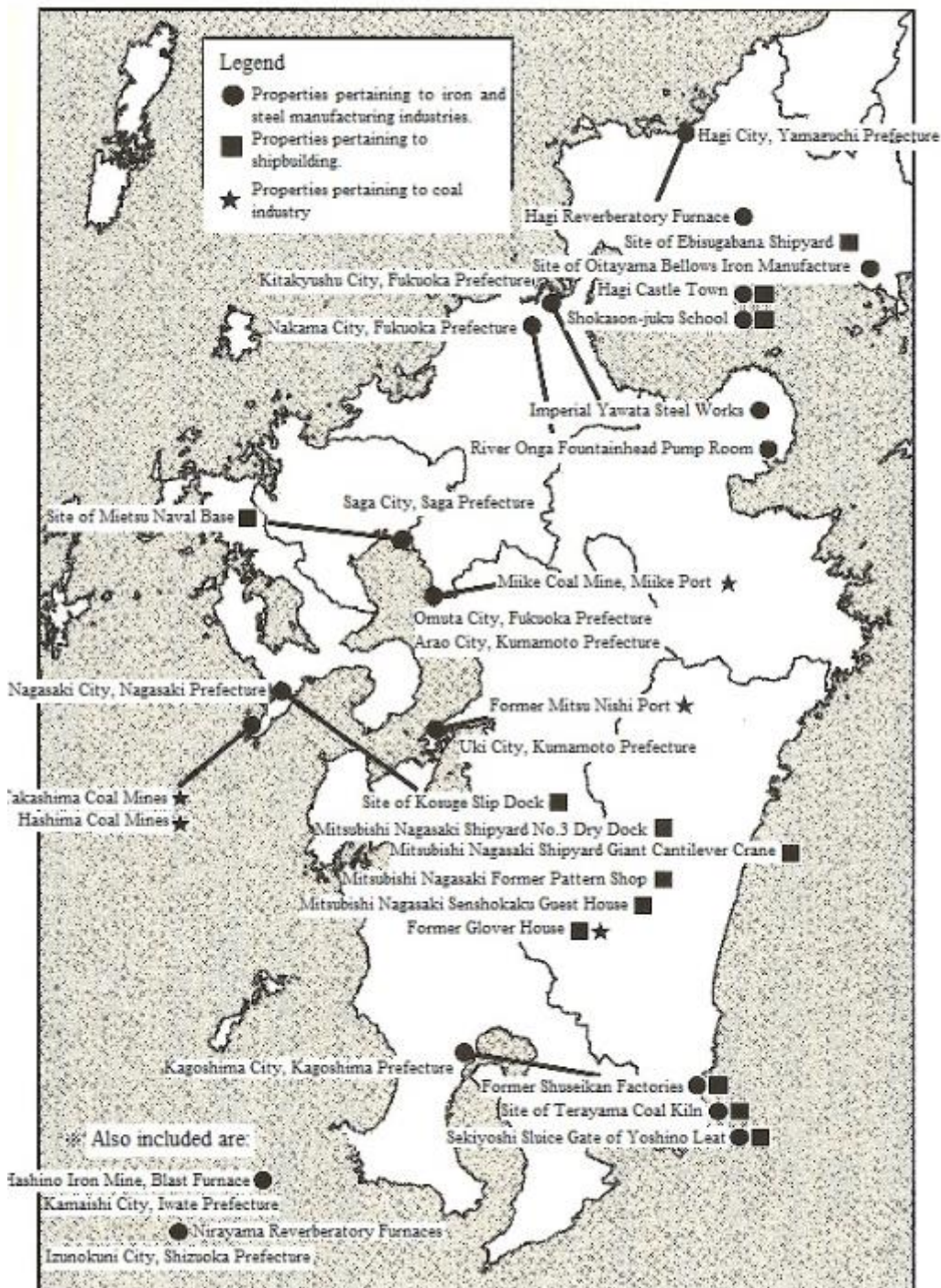
Gunkanjima is a heritage for all colored people

The facilities and buildings in Hashima were inscribed as components of a “Heritage of the Industrial Revolution” on the UNESCO World Heritage List in July 2015. The efforts of numerous people over 16 long years eventually bore fruit.

This “Heritage of the Industrial Revolution” consists of 23 properties in eleven cities in eight prefectures, from Iwate Prefecture in the north to Kagoshima Prefecture in the south, and it was inscribed on the List using the serial nomination method.¹ These industrial properties show the chronologically progression by which Japan quickly achieved remarkable development in heavy industries, including iron and steel manufacturing, shipbuilding, and coal mining, which supported manufacturing, in a mere half century, from the end of the Edo Period into the Meiji Period.

Since the Meiji Period and thereafter, coal was the most vital source of energy that propelled the industrial revolution in Japan. Coal produced at Hashima Coal Mines in particular was strong coking coal, which has the highest heat output, compared to pitch coal and rich high-fluidity material coal, which is rarely found elsewhere. Thanks to coal from Hashima, Nippon Seitetsu (Japan Iron Manufacturing, currently Shinnittetsu Sumikin) Yawata Iron Manufacturing Factory became very prosperous.

¹ Serial nomination refers to a group of properties, which, individually, are not valuable enough to constitute a World Heritage, but as a group, they become worthy of being called a World Heritage.



Component properties of the Heritage of the Industrial Revolution

In mining and transporting coal, the most advanced machinery and equipment of the time were constantly being introduced. Hashima Coal Mines produced a total of about 15.7 million tons of coal,

from the early Meiji Period until 1974, when the mines were closed, thereby unmeasurably contributing to the modernization of Japanese industries.

Within an overall global perspective, the “Properties of the Industrial Revolution”, including Hashima Mines, played extremely significant roles as the “propellant” in the fight against White colonial rule by non-white people and in establishing today’s world without racial discrimination. In that sense, it is no exaggeration to say that the properties of the industrial revolution belong to all colored people everywhere.

Chapter 2: Distorted history in the film *Gunkanjima (Battleship Island)* Having no evidence, they made a movie

Thus, the “Heritage of the Industrial Revolution” was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, after numerous twists and turns, thanks to the tireless efforts of those concerned. However, Korea is not so forgiving as to quickly drop this episode.

The Korean Government repeatedly demanded that the Japanese Foreign Ministry confess to Japan’s role in forced labor and inhuman treatment of mobilized workers. Simultaneously, Park Jin-un, Consulate-General of Korea, requested that the Mayor of Nagasaki City, who is responsible for Hashima, to lobby the Government, regarding the promise made. Park stated, “Although the Japanese Government promised to set up an information center to state the facts concerning forced labor upon the decision of inscription on the World Heritage Cultural Property, no progress has been made concerning the establishment of this center.”

However, no evidence of “forced abduction” was found with research by the Japanese government and what is more, it is hardly acceptable that an information center be created as Korea demands, construction of which will imply that Japan admits to this falsehood. This is totally reasonable. However, the situation made Korea so angry that they made a horrible film, *Gunkanjima*, completely distorting the facts, with the intention of declaring that, “Having no evidence, we will make a movie that supports our claim.”

The film costed about 22 billion won (nearly 2.2 billion yen) the most popular actor in Korea, Song Joong Ki, had the leading role. Within two weeks after the film premiered, 6 million saw the film. On the first day, the film was shown on 2,168 screens, 85% of all 2,575 screens in Korea, establishing an unprecedented record.

Now, let’s examine the film and see what is depicted in the film.

The opening scene is reminiscent of the Holocaust

First, mobilized workers and comfort women are packed into the bottom of a boat operating between Shimonoseki, Japan, and Pusan, Korea, under the surveillance of Japanese officials and brought to Japan. Arriving at Shimonoseki, Japanese Army soldiers pack them into windowless freight trains. Then, they are sent to Gunkanjima by boat. On arrival at Gunkanjima, Japanese soldiers come on board the boat and force Koreans ashore by clubbing them. As soon as they land, they undergo a

physical checkup and their personal belongings are confiscated.

Entering a building, callous announcements come over P.A. system, “your cost of living, meals and other expenses involved in your work are deducted from your monthly pay, and if there is a shortage of money, it is to be deducted from the next month’s pay.” The scenes are reminiscent of those in films of the Nazi Jewish Holocaust. From the start, the audience is given the impression that “going to Gunkanjima” was the same as the Holocaust.

Little girls were turned into comfort women

In this film, a Korean jazz band is taken as a group and in the band are a father and his daughter. The father is the leader of the band and played by one of the most popular actors in Korea, Hwang Jung-min, while his elementary school-aged daughter is played by a popular child actress, Kim Soo-An.

As soon as they arrive at Gunkanjima, the daughter is separated from her father by Japanese soldiers and is made to undergo an exam for venereal disease and to serve as a comfort woman. The scene in which she desperately cries for help, being carried away by soldiers, is horrible beyond description.

Korean Parental and filial affection is a moving theme and this scene alone is enough to deeply imprint an abhorrence and hatred against Japanese people in hearts of the audience.

Abused mobilized Korean workers

Also in the film, mobilized Korean workers are given meager meals laced with cockroaches and their living facilities are extremely poor. If they step onto the tatami floor, foul water spreads out from it.

Inside the coal mines, mobilized Korean workers are met with racism and they are treated like slaves. They sneak into narrow and dangerous galleries wearing nothing but a “loincloth” and dig using a pickax. If they stop working for a moment, they are clubbed. When water erupts and they try to escape, they are clubbed again. Some are killed in accidents. If gas explodes in a section where Koreans are working, the company orders the section shut down, leaving Korean workers inside, lest the explosion spreads to other mines.

Koreans who can no longer stand their ordeal and attempt to escape are shot to death by watch tower guards. If they try to escape by sea, company men chase after them by boat and catch them using a fishing net, as if they were fish. Hashima, depicted in the film, is nothing but a hell.

A comfort woman is brutally killed by being pushed down a hill of sharp 15-centimeter nails

There are brutal scenes throughout the film. The most hideous is a scene in which they kill a comfort woman by rolling her over sharp nails. A comfort woman working at a comfort station in Hashima tells her Korean customer an old story that “one day a comfort woman refused to serve the Japanese military and she was murdered on the very day.” In a flashback, two Japanese soldiers hold the Korean comfort woman by the hands and feet and roll her down over a door covered with sharp 15-centimeter nails. The comfort woman shrieks and dies, covered all over with blood.

This scene is an exact enactment of a flat-out fantasy in a report submitted to the U.N. Committee by UN Rapporteur Ms. Coomaraswamy, who was appointed “Special Rapporteur on violence against women” by the United Nations Human Rights Committee (hereinafter “Coomaraswamy Report.”) (Please refer to page xx for details of the Coomaraswamy Report.)

The company plans to annihilate the Koreans, so they fight back and escape

An atomic bomb is dropped over Hiroshima and Japan’s defeat becomes all but inevitable. The Japanese chief of Hashima mines, fearing being labeled a “war criminal” for having mistreated Koreans, plots to kill all Koreans in Hashima to conceal the “evidence” and reveals his plan to a Korean leader who is his subordinate. The Korean leader is, in fact, a “traitor” who cooperated with the chief and stole money from the Korean workers’ pay. Eavesdropping on the two is an agent of the Independence Army of the Great Korean Republic (refer to page xx), disguised as a mobilized worker, played by Song Joong Ki. He confronts the traitorous Korean and executes him. He then leads the mobilized Korean workers and they manage to deprive the Japanese soldiers of their guns. Even Korean comfort women take up arms and exchange fire against the Japanese soldiers. Finally, the Japanese chief is engulfed in flames and Song Joong Ki beheads the chief with his sword, declaring, “It is all over now!”

All Koreans successfully escape aboard a boat and an atomic bomb explodes over Nagasaki when they are out on open water. Looking up at a giant mushroom cloud, someone whispers, “There are some Koreans over there...” Of course, no sympathy is extended to the tens of thousands of Japanese killed under the horrible mushroom cloud. Rather, as a finale, there is a sense of satisfaction that Japan was punished by Heaven through the dropping of an atomic bomb.

A fabrication spreads to the rest of the world as historical fact

The director of this film, Ryoo Seung-wan, said during a program on MBC TV, a Korean TV station, “I have interviewed people. Through many testimonies, we have materials which are most likely to be facts.... Descriptions, such as ‘in underground coal mines, one thousand meters deep down, Koreans are made to work and live a life with their human rights being trampled,’ are all based on historical facts.” Regarding the film’s setting, he also said, “It is based on thorough chronological investigation.” In fact, at the beginning of this film, the caption reads: “This film was produced after we carefully examined the materials of “the committee to investigate victims of forced mobilization during the period of anti-Japanese struggles” and to support victims of forced mobilization and others, as well as articles of the time and interviews we conducted.”

The film’s distributor, Korean CJ Entertainment, promoted the film using the huge moving electronic billboard at Times Square in New York City, and advertising it as “a film faithfully enacted based on historical facts” for one week, advertised as such to the whole world.

The distributor held a premiere the film in Paris, where the headquarters of UNESCO is located, on July 28, 2017. According to Korean *Yonhap News*, thirty people from the Korean Government attended the film’s premiere, including the Korean Ambassadors to the UNESCO and OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). So did Ambassadors from Turkey and Kuwait, member countries of the Committee of World Heritage Cultural Properties--all were appreciative of the film. The distributor described the premiere, “Regarding the fact that Japan does not comply with the UNESCO recommendation asking Japan to deal with how to remember the alleged forced mobilization of Koreans in Gunkanjima, we wanted to attract the international community’s attention to the issue.”

From August 2017 onward, this film has been shown at more than forty locations in the United States and Canada and is also slated to be shown in Southeast Asian countries, including Malaysia and Singapore. Now, the film, openly labelling Japan as a “beast”, is spreading lies all over the world.