

Part II Gunkanjima Was Not an Island of Hell

The alleged circumstances of Korean workers in the movie *Gunkanjima* was played to the hilt. The testimonies of Koreans in published materials such as *Listen to Gunkanjima* and *Chikuho Gunkanjima* assert that, under extremely poor living conditions, Koreans were forced to engage in dangerous and hard labor that defies description and suffered from continuous Japanese racism and lynching. How true, though, are these Koreans assertions?

Part II will clearly and concretely demonstrate life in Hashima (Gunkanjima) at that time, based on testimonies of former Hashima residents, based on the findings of experts and on information this author obtained during an on-the-scene investigation conducted in November 2017.

Chapter 6: There was no abuse of Koreans

The establishment of the “Society of Hashima Islanders for True History”

When those who know Hashima as it was before and during World War II saw the trailer of the film *Gunkanjima*, they were totally flabbergasted to learn how far removed the film was from reality.

Thinking, “If this film is disseminated worldwide as true history, the honor and pride not only of us former Hashima islanders, but also of all the Japanese people, will be shredded to pieces,” former Hashima islanders could no longer remain silent.

With Matsumoto Sakae, aged eighty-eight at the time, as leader, former residents of Hashima gathered together and established the “Society of Hashima Islanders for True History” (hereinafter, the “Society of Hashima Islanders”) on January 23, 2017 and began disseminating information to correct any distorted and fabricated history of the island.

“In Hashima, a.k.a. Gunkanjima, no inhuman atrocities were committed, certainly nothing that equaled the Nazi Holocaust.”

The Society of Hashima Islanders sent a letter of protest, stating the above, to a German newspaper, *The South German Paper*, at the end of May 2017. The German newspaper wrote about Hashima in an article published on July 6, 2015:¹

- 1) **During World War II, Japanese workers were moved to safe places while Chinese and Korean workers took their place.**
- 2) **More than 1,000 of them died.**
- 3) **The bodies were thrown into the sea or into deserted mines.**

These assertions have no ground whatsoever. If a body had been thrown into the sea and people had found it ashore, it would have caused as much fuss as a case of murder.

However, if we leave this as is, hoping that nobody would believe such an absurd story, such an absurdity would eventually permeate worldwide as fact. *The South German Paper* has not yet complied with a demand to correct their article. Still, it is most important that we continuously and

¹ Source from *War of History—anti-Japanese Network*, *The Sankei Newspaper*, dated June 7, 2017.

strenuously protest incorrect information to prevent “fake information” from spreading worldwide as fact.

I urge mindful Japanese people, as one, to support the activities of the Society of Hashima Islanders.

“Mom, I miss you so much”—graffiti was a set-up

Graffiti like “Mom, I miss you so much,” which appear in the book *Gunkanjima—shameful UNESCO World Heritage* and which the Korean media also espouse, do not exist in Hashima. The place where graffiti were discovered is a former dormitory for mobilized Korean workers at Bushu Coal Mines in Chikufo, and they were fabricated.

How the graffiti came into being was explained in detail in the *Nishi-Nihon Newspaper* of January 3, 2000:²

(Headline) “Tragic Symbol of Forced Abduction of Koreans,” “Wailing Graffiti were Set-up,” “Engraved during Filming a movie,” and “Former Staff Testifies.”

(Article): It was made clear that the graffiti in Hangul found at Chikuho Mine Field in Fukuoka Prefecture, which were known as “wailing poems of forcibly abducted Korean workers,” were, in fact, written by staff of the film crew during filming of a movie after the War. ...[Omitted] Graffiti stating “Mom, I miss you so much/ I’m starving/ I want to go home” were engraved on the wall of a dormitory for Korean workers at Bushu Coal Mines (Kawasaki Town, Fukuoka Prefecture). According to an investigation by *The Nishi-Nihon Newspaper*, Japan Federation of Korean Literary Men and Artists, which is an organization under the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (in Tokyo), made a film entitled *The Traitor of the Year 1965* in 1965 as part of activities against the conclusion of the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea. To emphasize supposed traces of forced abduction, four Korean film crew members went to Chikuho and shot scenes there. The graffiti were the creation of a female recording staff member who engraved the words on the wall using a stick after the four of them discussed what to write on the spot.

The former member of the film crew who agreed to be interviewed talked about what happened then and how she felt about what she had done.

² *Chikuho seen through walking all over there—the Record of Korean coal miners*, written by Kim Gwang-lie (Asuka Shobo).

---Why did you write the graffiti?

Former staff: In the first place, there are few visual references about forced abductions. Besides, the dormitory for Koreans was deserted and there was nothing left worth filming. Then, the director said, “Wouldn’t it be better to have something that expresses the feeling of those who were taken here?” And the rest of us said, “That’s a good idea.” ... [Omitted]

---Didn’t you feel a little underhanded about creating *impromptu* graffiti?

Former staff: No, not at all. I did so out of a professional obligation to make a good film.

---What made you decide to tell the truth now?

Former staff: Two years ago, I saw the graffiti for the first time. I spoke with an acquaintance of mine, and I was very shocked to learn that this graffiti is almost everywhere, in books and magazines. Though the graffiti expresses the feeling of those who were abducted, I don’t think it right for this set-up graffiti to be regarded as a piece of fact. ... [Omitted]

Thus, what proved to be set-up decades ago in Japan is nonetheless still generally believed to be fact in Korea. Children’s books unflinchingly write it as fact and the Korean TV station, MBC, broadcasts it as fact to Korean viewers at home.

Children were not made to engage in hard labor

In the book *Gunkanjima—shameful UNESCO World Heritage*, even a 12 year old boy is abducted and abused every day in Hashima coal mines. Is this story true?

As a matter of fact, there was a law called the Factory Law in effect before World War II, which prohibited persons under the age of sixteen from working in a gallery of a coal mine. According to the book *The Heritage of Gunkanjima*, co-written by Goto Keinosuke and Sakamoto Michinori (published by Nagasaki Newspaper Co.), in August 1939, women aged twenty-five or older were allowed to work in galleries and in April 1940, boys aged under sixteen years were permitted to work in galleries, with conditions of “within twice a week and eight hours of work per week.”

However, as the author heard it from former islanders, there were, in fact, no young boys who worked

in the galleries, and if there were, it most likely was an exceptional occasion. Even if a young boy had worked there, he would have been protected by the strict rule of “within twice a week and eight working hours a week.” Therefore, the story that “he worked for over twelve hours every day and was not allowed to go up to the surface unless he accomplished his work quota,” which appears in a children’s book, was clearly a fabrication.

Also, Professor Miwa Munehiro of Kyushu University, whom I previously mentioned, after a close examination of coalmining-related materials, made it clear that most mobilized Korean workers were sixteen years old or older, with the exception of a few Koreans who were aged fifteen, based on the traditional way of counting one’s age which includes the year of one’s birth as one year.

Common sense tells that it would be unrealistic to abduct children from Korea and make them work in galleries. They would only become burdensome there, diminishing work efficiency while being a hazard to others.

Korean workers were exempt from dangerous work

How about the accusation that “Koreans were made to work at the foremost and most dangerous coal face?” This author visited Gunkanjima Digital Museum in Nagasaki City, as part of an inspection of Hashima (Gunkanjima) at the end of November 2017. Here, those who lived in Hashima during the time now serve as museum guides. When I asked one of them, “Did they make Koreans from the Korean Peninsula work at dangerous places?” he answered in the following manner:

“No, that is not true at all. We cannot make inexperienced workers engage in dangerous work. Once the inexperienced incur an accident, it may then lead to serious accidents such as a cave-in and gas explosions. Dangerous work was done by skilled and experienced Japanese workers.”

“Once an accident occurs, no one can survive safely. Within the galleries, Japanese and Koreans were one community, sharing the fate of life or death.”

At that time, Japanese and Koreans worked in the same coal face. In the galleries, there was an orderly line of work from mining coal and filling the empty coal bed, to transporting coal. Unless each worker cooperated and worked carefully, work efficiency would be low, and worse still, there would be the danger of a cave-in. In particular, at the foremost and dangerous coal face, it was necessary for experienced and skilled workers to do the important work and experienced and skilled Japanese

workers did the job. Once stepping into the gallery, it made no difference if there was a Japanese or a Korean. The miner community shared the same fate and engaged in the work as one.

In the book *Listen to Gunkanjima*, a Chinese worker claims that “When gas leaked in the gallery, the Japanese chief immediately tried to shut up the entrance to the gallery, totally disregarding life or death of the Chinese workers inside the gallery.” In the film *Gunkanjima*, a gas explosion takes place and they try to shut up the entrance of the gallery, leaving Koreans inside. The film’s scriptwriter may have gotten the idea of the scene from the book *Listen to Gunkanjima*.

However, there was no way that the Chinese, who were even less experienced than the inexperienced Koreans, would work by themselves. In the book, a Chinese worker claimed that, “After Japanese bore a hole in coal bed and blasted it, I was made to keep digging.” This book clearly shows though that the Japanese and Chinese worked together and the Japanese performed dangerous labor.

No labor was performed with a pickax

What of the Korean story of “lying on the stomach or on the side, a worker wearing only a loincloth dug coal with a pickax in the narrow space merely sixty centimeters high”?

In fact, labor with a pickax was performed during the Meiji Period. At Hashima (Gunkanjima), since the Taisho Period (1911 – 1926), after the Meiji Period, mechanization was well under way. The true state of labor during this time is explained in detail in the book *Heritage of Gunkanjima*, which I previously mentioned. I will quote the relevant parts:

From the Taisho Period to the time prior to the outbreak of World War II, a remarkable technical innovation in coal mining and industrial rationalization took place. First, the mining was drastically changed from the conventional method of leaving pillars in coal beds to that of building long walls (in 1923). In the pillar method, miners continued to dig coal through the coal bed, leaving coal pillars, while with the new method of building long walls, workers keep digging, simultaneously evacuating coal beds nearly forty meters wide (later expanded to seventy to ninety meters wide), and then filling up the rest of the space with rock debris left behind after coal is taken out. By adopting the method of building the main gallery in the rocks below the coal bed, called “under the plate gallery method,” it became much easier to mechanize mining operations and to maintain the gallery in good condition. The method was also preferable in terms of preventing natural and accidental fires in the gallery. Moreover, the method was advantageous in minimizing damage caused by disasters by making the

originally hit area airtight.

Next, a coal pick, the introduction of a new mining machine powered by high-pressured air, put an end to the era of pickaxes. High-pressured air is safer than gas power. Electricity and high-pressured air became the major motive powers in the coal mining industry and were used until coal mines were finally closed. In addition, carrying coal and rock debris was also highly mechanized, using endless-binding chain conveyors and then belt conveyors (since 1936). Transfer using mechanized conveyors was an epical innovation in history of transportation.

Also, the true circumstance of Hashima Coal Mines was reported on the spot with the article “Come See the Amazing Scientific Essence,” in the *Nagasaki Nichi-nichi Newspaper*, dated February 28, 1941.³

After touring the long gallery, full of curiosity, we reached the spot where coal is being dug. When it comes to digging coal, we think of a pickax. However, the time now is far ahead of the era of pickaxes. An electric mining machine called “pick” moves on fast, digging through the coal bed. ...[Omitted] Deafening sound of dynamos—this is the sound of motors eliminating underground water. In a cell six hundred meters down below, it is perfectly comfortable to breathe, without the usual smell of gas, because ideal fanning machines keep sending down fresh air from the ground surface. Using such scientific powers to the full, you can stay perfectly safe, free from danger in the gallery deep down. Under such ideal conditions, voluntary workers of laymen who suddenly come down to the gallery gladly engage in the work. ... [Omitted] It gives us the proof that this place is not a hell at all, as people allegedly claim. Happy-faced workers want people to have the right idea about what a coal mine is really like.

Also, *Listen to Gunkanjima* mentions that “machines do everything in Hashima.” Now you see how ridiculous and untrue the Korean assertions are, that mobilized workers mine coal in coal beds sixty centimeters high, lying sideways and wearing nothing but a loincloth. Therefore, it is perfectly clear that without knowing anything about Hashima Coal Mines at the time, Koreans made up “Japanese atrocities,” purely out of their imagination.

³ Source from *Hanada*, November 2017 issue, “Were mobilized workers unhappy?” 1) Gunkanjima,” by Zheng Dae-kyun.

For that matter, *Korean MBC Broadcasting* and the book *Gunkanjima—Shameful UNESCO World Heritage* reported that galleries were located one thousand meters underground and scorching hells with temperatures reaching 45 degrees Celsius. According to what I heard directly from former Hashima islanders, during the war, the galleries were located a little over seven hundred meters below the surface and the temperature was at most 35 degrees Celsius. And of course, workers mining coal, were not lying sideways and wore nothing but loincloths, according to their testimonies.

Working hours were the same among Japanese and Korean workers

A story that “Korean workers were made to engage in hard labor for twelve to sixteen hours a day” appears in *Listen to Gunkanjima*. However, though it may appear to be hard labor by present day standards of labor, during a time when basic labor laws were not yet standardized, it was common practice to work for ten to twelve hours a day, especially during war, when it was necessary to produce enough coal in order to win the War. Consequently, miners’ work hours were around fifteen hours a day.

Chairman Kachi Hideo of the Society of Hashima Islanders writes in his book *The Record of My Gunkanjima* (published by Nagasaki Bunken-sha), “in 1943, the War became more and more fierce and people worked for twelve to fifteen hours a day to increase coal production. ... [Omitted] Since my father left home for work very early in the morning and came home late at night, my family rarely ate together at home.”

Japanese and Koreans did their best for victory in the War. Of course, there was no difference in working hours between Japanese and Koreans.

No physical violence was committed against Koreans by Japanese

The Japanese are a sadistic people, unparalleled in the world. They constantly inflicted brutal violence upon Koreans who were forcibly abducted by Japan.

Present, this is a commonly shared notion in Korea of the Japanese. In many publications domestically produced in Korea, Japan’s atrocity is described as fact.

On the other hand, in the book *Listen to Gunkanjima*, published in Japan, it is written that “it is estimated that out of the twenty Koreans from the Korean Peninsula who died in Hashima, almost all of them died due to lynching, abuse and violence inflicted by Japanese workers and supervisors, which

is certainly a correct estimate.”

However, it is unbelievable that our Japanese ancestors had such a sadistic trait. I, the author, worked for a trading company, in charge of overseas trading, for thirty years and I have experienced foreign cultures first hand. I firmly believe that no other people are as gentle and kind as the Japanese. We Japanese are honest, don't lie, consider brutality as something unclean, respect *WA* (peace and harmony) and give as much as possible consideration to other people's feelings—these Japanese traits have been passed on, generation after generation, since the ancient Jomon Period and stamped deeply into the Japanese gene. The Japanese are gentle in every aspect, opposite of those who indulge in atrocities.

Former Hashima islanders testify, full of anger, against accusations that “Koreans were abused in Gunkanjima”:

“I lived in Hashima for years and there was absolutely no abuse whatsoever.”⁴

“When a Japanese and a Korean had a fight, the Japanese was called out and strongly admonished by the company.”⁵

“Certainly, there was physical punishment. But the punishment was meant for ‘idle workers’ and equally inflicted upon Japanese and Koreans alike. There was no discrimination in that.”⁶

“All there is to it are stories of Korean workers being abused. I feel really angry at the fact that articles painted with deceptions, fabrications and exaggerations are all over the place.”⁷

“When I read a book about Hashima, the book said that Hashima is the same as Nazi Germany's Auschwitz Concentration Camp, and I was really upset. We must uncover the lie in the book and disseminate the truth domestically and internationally.”⁸

⁴ *The Sankei Newspaper*, dated December 4, 2017, “To the beautiful and strong country” by Sakurai Yoshiko

⁵ *Listen to Gunkanjima*, page 174

⁶ *Seiron Magazine*, September 2017 issue, “Save world heritage Gunkanjima from fabrications in the Korean film,” by Sugita Mio

⁷ *The Sankei Newspaper*, dated February 8, 2017, “War of History, walk about in Gunkanjima, angry islanders, ‘uncover the lie,’ ‘different from Auschwitz.’”

⁸ *The Sankei Newspaper*, dated February 8, 2017, “War of History, walk about in Gunkanjima, angry

“They say that in Korea, Hashima is called ‘Prison Island’ and ‘Island of Hell’. But we have never lived in such a place. It is written that felons and those sentenced to lifetime imprisonment were sent to Gunkanjima. We absolutely had nothing to do with them.”⁹

Also, in *Listen to Gunkanjima*, there is a claim of police brutality. One of the former islanders pointedly denies this:

“I say it a lie because police don’t interfere with matters that occur within the galleries. Never. Matters that occur in the galleries are taken care of by the Safety and Security Supervising Section and the police have no business there whatsoever.”¹⁰

There is also an interesting description in *Chikuho/Gunkanjima*: “At Hashima Coal Mines, labor administration employees for outside workers were all Koreans and they were especially strict to their Korean colleagues. Their management skill determined how many Korean workers were to be sent into the coal mine. So, they urged and forced Koreans to enter the coal mine, sometimes hitting them.” If Korean workers were in fact struck by someone, it was likely Koreans that hit them. [Emphasis by the author.]

In the book *Life Stories of A Million People*, compiled by the *Conditions of A Million People’s Lives* committee (Toho Publishers), a story by Be Re-son, who used to work at Kawaminami Shipyard, which was located at Nishimatsuura County, Saga Prefecture, is included. Since it is helpful to understand the situation at the time, I will quote a part of it:

“In my group, there was a Korean named Lee, then aged 32. ... [Omitted] The on-site supervisor was frequently violent to him. The supervisor was also Korean. ... [Omitted] As it is true of all factories in Japan, when they use Korean employees, they also use Korean supervisors. Thus, the factory people made Koreans hate each other. That is colonial control in the truest sense. ‘You are one of us, aren’t you? Why, then do you hit me so?’ Thus, hatred is aggravated all the more. If it were a Japanese supervisor, things would not be so bad.”

islanders, ‘uncover the lie,’ ‘different from Auschwitz.’”

⁹ *The Sankei Newspaper*, dated February 8, 2017, “War of History, walk about in Gunkanjima, angry islanders, ‘uncover the lie,’ ‘different from Auschwitz.’”

¹⁰ *The Sankei Newspaper*, dated December 24, 2017, counterargument: “‘War of History,’ Showing a movie of testimonies of former Gunkanjima islanders, ‘Gunkanjima is not an island of hell.’”

As this book was compiled with the purpose of condemning Japan's "colonial control," the phrase "colonial control in the truest sense" comes up. As a matter of fact, in employing people from the Korean Peninsula, who don't understand the Japanese language, and have trouble communicating, it is a proper practice to leave Korean workers to Korean supervisors. The same was done in Hashima. So, if there ever was any abuse against Korean workers, it must have taken place among the Koreans. In the film *Gunkanjima*, a mobilized outlaw boss gets angry at insolent an Korean laborer and has a big fight with him. In a rare moment, an apparently real scene is depicted.

Instruction policy of the Central Cooperative Society — "physical punishment is very proof of a leader's inefficiency"

In the book *Collection of Materials Related to Korean Residents in Japan (Volume V)*, written and compiled by Park Kyon-sik, is included a book entitled *Indispensable Book on Training of Immigrant Laborers' Ways of Living*, made by the "Central Cooperative Society,"¹¹ which was an organ of the Welfare and Interior Ministries. In the book are instructions and guidelines concerning workers from the Korean Peninsula and the book starts with the following instructions:

- 1. It is wrong to contrast "Japanese" and "Koreans" and to use insulting appellations in referring to Koreans. Try to use respectful appellations such as "people living in mainland," "Korean people" or "brothers from the Peninsula."**
- 2. Even when you become angry at them, put yourself a step higher and refrain from abusing them in public, hitting or scolding them. Instead, you must be patient and instruct them kindly and repeatedly, showing them how to do something yourself. Inflicting physical punishment upon them means you lack ability as a leader.**
- 3. Try to nourish a sense of trustworthiness so that they can be confident of their safety, economically, physically and mentally, so long as they stay with us and work for us.**
- 4. As leader, it is necessary for you to write letters on their welfare, how much money he saves, how his physical condition is, etc. so that his parents and relatives at home in Korea are reassured about his life in Japan.**

As stated above, it is pointed out that Japanese must be careful about their language and that inflicting

¹¹ Central Cooperative Society: There were supportive and mutually cooperative organs for Korean residents in Japan at the administrative and private sector levels across the country. They were united and reorganized as "local cooperative society" in 1939 and later the executive members of the society established "Central Cooperative Society" and became an outer organ of Welfare and Interior Ministries.

physical punishment is the proof of a leader's inefficiency. This material clearly shows that, far from abusing Koreans, Japan cared about workers from the Korean Peninsula to the extent that it could.

Rate of mortality was the same among Japanese and Korean workers

In the book *Listen to Gunkanjima*, there is the claim that “Koreans have a higher rate of mortality than Japanese. This is because Koreans were made to engage in dangerous work,” based on the figures obtained from “cremation and burial permits.” However, this author confirmed these figures, referring to the book *History of Coal Mines, Chronicle of Coal Mining in Nagasaki Prefecture*, compiled by Maekawa Masao (Stored at the National Diet Library) (hereinafter, *Chronicle of Coal Mining*) and obtained the following figures. The number of deaths and victims caused by accidents in Hashima Coal Mines from 1935 to 1945 are as follows:

March 1935: Gas explosion 18 Japanese died, and 9 people from the Korean Peninsula died.

October 1936: Death caused by cave-in 1 Japanese

May 1937: Accidental death 1 Japanese (touching the cage)

November 1937: Death caused by cave-in 1 Japanese

June 1938: Accident 1 Japanese died, hit by wooden wreckages while breaking gallery wood

June 1942: Accident 1 Japanese died by falling

July 1944: Gushing gas 5 workers died (no information pertaining to their origin)

A person testifies in *Listen to Gunkanjima*, “Due to cave-in accidents, roughly four or five workers died per month. The security and safety of coal mines at that time was far from the coal mines of today.” However, according to the statistics in this book, there were only twelve cases of cave-in between 1935 and 1945. According to *the Chronicle of Coal Mining*, only two miners died due to cave-in during those ten years. As I mentioned before, at Takashima Coal Mines, the latest technology was introduced and the utmost consideration was given when it comes to the safety of workers.

According to *Listen to Gunkanjima*, two Korean workers died due to an “accident due to a severed rope” in June 1943, which cannot be confirmed by the *Chronicle of Coal Mining*. On the other hand, *Listen to Gunkanjima* states that in an accident in 1935, two Korean workers died, while *the Chronicle of Coal Mining* states that nine Korean workers died. Anyway, following *the Chronicle of Coal Mining*, most of the victims of accidents were Japanese. (Regarding the accident of July 1944, according to testimony, the five victims were all Japanese, .)

In addition, when Professor Miwa Munehiro of Kyushu University examined the material made by

the Society to Control Coal (stored at Ibaraki Prefectural Historical Museum), he found out that there was hardly any difference in mortality among Japanese and Korean workers.¹²

The true circumstance of accidental deaths at Hashima Coal Mines was described as above. Ms. Sakurai Yoshiko mentioned the following testimony of a former Hashima resident in an article titled “To the beautiful and strong country” in the *Sankei Newspaper*, dated December 4, 2017.

“If I were to die, I would never have my (Korean) men killed. That’s the tradition here. We have very humanistic feelings toward others, quite characteristically of Hashima.”

The Korean assertion, that “Gunkanjima was an island of hell, to the extent that once entering it, no one leaves alive,” is an utterly groundless and a fabrication.

Ashes of deceased workers from the Korean Peninsula were cordially treated

In *Chikuho/Gunkanjima*, there is this description: “when a miner was killed in an accident and the cremation was over, we were directed by a man in charge of labor who accompanied us to watch the cremation to scoop the ashes with a shovel and throw them into a dead mine.”

It was probably that ashes were put into a small pot and the remaining ashes were thrown away using something like a shovel.

In fact, this is common practice in Kyushu. When this author’s father-in-law died and was cremated at Saku City, Nagano Prefecture (located in the center of Honshu), we collected his ashes to the last bit using a brush and cordially put them into a pot. Quite contrary, when my own father died in Kumamoto Prefecture, Kyushu, his ashes were forcibly put into a small pot and then, by using something like a fire stick, ashes were crushed to pieces. The minute I thought, “How awful!”, the man in charge of the crematory ceremony put the remaining ashes into a waste basket. I cried out, “What on earth are you going to do with that?” The man calmly answered, “Well, there is a common dumping yard for leftover ashes.” I was totally appalled.

Probably, at Hashima, just as they did at Kumamoto, remaining ashes were disposed of at a designated place. It is most likely that in *Chikuho/Gunkanjima*, a common procedure is exaggerated, as if ashes

¹² *Rekishi-tsu*, April 2017 issue, “Korea—Numerous lies of the National Memorial Museum of Forced Mobilization under Japanese Occupation” by Miwa Munehiro

were completely discarded.

However, considering the mentality of the Korean people, who abhor cremation and bury the deceased in a most reverential manner, they are likely thinking, “Do you mean to kill the deceased over again?” I cannot help but think it perfectly natural for Koreans to become angry at the thought of throwing away leftover ashes.

Even so, the fact is that ashes were treated cordially following Japanese tradition and we Japanese have nothing to be ashamed of.

For that matter, ashes of those from the Korean Peninsula were cordially brought back to their Korean home. A former mobilized worker, Mr. Choe Chan-sop, after he saw the film, told a reporter from the *Korean Daily News* that “what the film *Gunkanjima* demonstrates is far from facts and too exaggerated.” Mr. Choe also stated, “Many workers died at Hashima, but when they died, Japanese people cordially mourned the deceased and sent back the ashes to Korea. Regarding this matter, Japanese did a really good job, I should say.”