

동북아역사 리포트

NORTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY REPORT

Pressure for Recognition of the Legacy of War and Forced Mobilization at Japan's Meiji Industrial Heritage Sites

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Given that Japan's Meiji Industrial Heritage Sites include many places such as Battleship Island (Hashima Coal Mine) where forced laborers from Korea and other places were used during the Asia-Pacific War, South Korea and China have opposed its being listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Japanese government acknowledged that a large number of Korean and other laborers were forced to work at the sites against their will, and promised that an information center would be established to remember the victims of forced labor. However, the Industrial Heritage Information Centre's exhibits that opened on June 15, 2020 in Tokyo—far removed from the vicinity of the Sites—denied the painful history of forced labor and discrimination against Koreans and others. Consequently, the July 2021 World Heritage Committee expressed "strong regrets" and requested that Japan improve the narratives of the sites related to forced labor. It is therefore crucial that close attention continues to be paid to Japan's progress towards honoring its promises at the time of the inscription and to its implementation of UNESCO's recommendations.

* 이번 호는 제5호 한글판 "약속 이행을 촉구받는 일본 메이지산업유산" (12.1)을 보완하여 번역한 것이다.

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1. Japan's Meiji Industrial Sites: Characteristics and Problems

“Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining” (hereafter the Meiji Industrial Sites, or the Sites) was approved by the 39th UNESCO World Heritage Committee unanimously as a cultural site on the World Heritage List on July 5, 2015.

In order to be inscribed as World Heritage, a candidate site ought to demonstrate “Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).” In this regard the Meiji Industrial Sites were seen to demonstrate universal value in terms of “the rapid industrialization of the country . . . through the development of the steel industry, shipbuilding and coalmining,” testifying “the first successful transfer of Western industrialization to a non-Western nation (i.e., Japan).”

Prior to reviewing interpretative perspectives of the Meiji Industrial Sites, a survey of its physical characteristics is in order. First, the geographical range of the Sites is extensive. The Sites encompass a series of 23 component sites, scattered across eight prefectures (Fukuoka, Saga, Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Kagoshima, Yamaguchi, Iwate, and Shizuoka) and eleven cities. Second, some sites have fallen into ruin or been buried underground, thus losing their original forms, such as the Hashima Coal Mine, commonly known as Gunkanjima or Battleship Island. Third, the Sites include many facilities still in operation, such as the dock and crane of the Nagasaki Shipyard, and the Miike Port. In short, the Meiji Industrial Sites are a collection of industrial sites lacking homogeneity, spread out over a wide range of land.

A more fundamental question arising from the Sites' proposition is whether or not the

whole 23 component sites warrant can be placed under the single rubric of the “Meiji Industrial Revolution,” as many of the Sites continued to develop and thrive beyond Japan’s industrial revolution, which is commonly dated from the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) to the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05). The period specified for the Sites is the 1850s to 1910. Starting in the 1850s is understandable, given that Japan had already begun to import Western technologies even before its opening to the West. The ending date of 1910 is problematic, however, in that it does not coincide with the end of the Meiji era in 1912, and that many of the Sites witnessed further development later into the Taishō (1912–26) and the imperialist Shōwa period (1926–45). Most probably, ending the timeline of the Heritage Sites in 1910 is a convenient choice that allows the omission of Japan’s history of colonialism and wartime mobilization of Koreans and others from the historical narrative.

It is true that industrial facilities like the Sūseikan Reverberatory Furnaces,¹⁾ built by the Satsuma-han in 1851 without foreign technicians, and the Cantilever Crane, imported from Britain in 1909, have maintained their integral forms from the designated period (the 1850s–1910). In terms of the criteria of integrity for UNESCO World Heritage, candidate sites are required to maintain their original physical integrity. In this context, questions remain as to what state of the candidate site represents its integrity and in what period such integrity was achieved,²⁾ as suggested by the controversy surrounding the Hashima Coal Mine.

At its height, Hashima Island with its undersea coal mine had a population density higher than that of Tokyo in the 1960s, but it has remained uninhabited ever since its abandonment in 1974. The island developed into a modern city mainly during the time of Mitsubishi’s management of it from 1914 to 1945. During this time the island was equipped with the first ferroconcrete apartments in Japan in 1916, as well as educational, entertainment, and medical facilities. The narrative of the island’s development have all focused on this period. In general, the integrity of Hashima Island’s industrial development has been sought in its mass consumer culture of the Taishō period (1912–26) and in its contribution to military supply industries like coal

1) A form of furnace to melt down metals needed to cast cannon to be used to counter the foreign ships approaching Japan towards the end of the Tokugawa period. Sūseikan is in Kagoshima.

2) Gang Dong-jin and Nam Ji-hyeon (강동진, 남지현), “Critical Review of the Inscription of the Meiji Industrial Sites in the Kyushu and Yamaguchi Region as World Heritage” (일본 큐슈-야마구치 일원 근대화 산업유산군의 세계 문화유산 등재에 대한 비판적 고찰), National Land Planning (國土計劃) 49-2 (2014), 124.

mining and shipbuilding during the imperialist Shōwa period (1926–45).



〈Photo 1〉 Overview of Battleship Island
(all photos have been taken by the author)



〈Photo 2〉 First Zone of Battleship Island



〈Photo 3〉 Second Zone of Battleship Island

The most incongruous element among the 23 component sites is the Shōkasonjuku Academy in Hagi, run by Yoshida Shōin in the last years of the Tokugawa period. The inclusion of the academy together with some coal and iron smelting facilities into the Meiji Industrial Sites has led to some objection even in Japan. The rationale for the



〈Photo 4〉 Overview of Shōkasonjuku Academy

inclusion is that “Yoshida Shōin championed the necessity of engineering education, which eventually led to the ascendancy of the ‘Five Heroes of Chōshū-han’ who contributed greatly to building the Meiji industrial nation.”³⁾ A convincing case has not been made, however, for how the so called ‘Five Heroes of Chōshū-han, including Itō Hirobumi and Inoue Kaoru, were intrinsically related to Yoshida’s engineering education.

The former Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, who strongly supported the process of the inscription of the Sites as World Heritage, has shown high respect for Yoshida Shōin, who originated from Yamaguchi Prefecture, Abe’s political home. It should be noted that in the ideology of Yoshida Shōin the Japanese extreme rightists tend to find some elements of resonance with the theories of Greater East Asian Prosperity and Japanese imperialism.

The Hagi region is famous as a birthplace of the Meiji Revolution, but it is questionable whether its industrial facilities, such as the Reverberatory Furnace, which was not updated enough to be used in casting cannon, the remains of the Shipyard and Iron Smelting Works, and the Castle Town, sufficiently demonstrate the OUV required for World Heritage status.

3) “The Shōkasonjuku Academy: Why is it Industrial Heritage? It emphasized the process of modernization through earlier attention to engineering education” (松下村塾, なぜ産業遺産? 工業教育早くに着目、近代化の過程を重視), Asahi Shimbun (朝日新聞), July 28, 2015.



〈Photo 5〉 Yoshida Shōin's Portrait and Sculpture inside



〈Photo 6〉 Hagi Reverberatory Furnace

2. Point of Debate over the Inscription between South Korea and Japan: The Issue of Forced Mobilization

At the time of assessing Japan's nomination of the Meiji Industrial Sites as World Heritage in 2015, a major area of controversy was South Korea's objection that "several of the Sites had used Koreans and other people as forced labor" during the Asia-Pacific War. Japan countered the objection by claiming that "the Sites belong to a different timeline," meaning that, since the Sites' World Heritage timeline covers only Japan's rapid industrial revolution between 1850s and 1910, their status has nothing to do with Japanese colonial rule in Korea (1910–1945) and the mobilization of forced labor during the Asia-Pacific War (1937–1945). However, as noted above, the 23 Japanese industrial component sites, with their varied characteristics, cannot be considered predominantly

related to the Meiji industrial revolution era. Rather, the coal mining industry at Hashima Island and the shipbuilding industry as major sources of military supplies were closely related to the war efforts. Even though the Kyushu region in particular was one of the core sites of mobilizing forced labor during the wartime, the Japanese government as well as the Japanese agencies involved in the inscription project of the Sites failed to mention the dark history of Korean and other forced labor to UNESCO.⁴⁾ The South Korean government has pointed out the following 8 sites (Table 1.) as problematic, because they were related to forced labor of Koreans and others during the war.

〈Table 1〉 World Heritage Sites in Japan Known for Mobilizing Forced Labor

Area	Name of Component Site (No.)
Area 6 Nagasaki	No. 3 Dry Dock (6-2)
	Giant Cantilever Crane (6-3)
	Former Pattern Shop (6-4)
	Takashima Coal Mine (6-6)
	Hashima Coal Mine (6-7)
Area 7 Miike	Miike Coal Mine and Miike Port (7-1)
Area 8 Yahata	The Imperial Steel Works, Japan (8-1)

Source: Jeong Tae-heon et al. (정태현 외), *Analytical Study of the "State of Conservation Report" of Japan's Meiji Industrial Heritage* (일본 메이지 산업유산 보존보고서 분석연구) (Cultural Heritage Administration, Republic of Korea: April 2020).

As explained above, in order to be inscribed as World Heritage, the candidate site in question ought to be recognized as having “Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)” for mankind as a whole. In case of industrial heritage, however, the criteria for its listing have yet to be clearly defined, unlike those for cultural heritage. A host of controversial points, such as validity of individual component sites, timelines of industrial sites, and criteria for still operational sites, ought to be addressed.⁵⁾ Moreover, as the candidate site is required to have universal value in terms of its contribution to the development of human civilization, it should be devoid of aspects of inflicting damage to certain country or people.⁶⁾ It was on the basis of the sites having been used for forced labor that South Korea and China have raised objections against the Meiji Industrial Sites

4) Gang Dong-jin and Nam Ji-hyeon (강동진, 남지현), “Critical Review of the Inscription of the Meiji Industrial Sites in the Kyushu and Yamaguchi Region as World Heritage,” 116.

5) Gang Dong-jin (강동진), “Trends in Listing Industrial Heritage as UNESCO World Heritage, and Analysis of Controversial Points” (산업유산의 세계유산 등재 경향과 논점 분석), National Land Planning (國土計劃) 50-2 (2015), 91.

6) Gang Dong-jin, *Ibid.*, 91.

being listed as World Heritage.

There have been some examples of World Heritage that exerted negative impacts on humanity, such as the Auschwitz Birkenau Concentration Camp in Poland, and the Nuclear Test Site of Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands, where nuclear tests were conducted a total of 67 times. The rationale behind these sites being considered World Heritage is the historical lesson they deliver to humanity that those dark histories should never be repeated again.

At the time when Korea and China objected to the inscription of the Meiji Industrial Sites as World Heritage because of their history of using forced labor, the Asahi Newspaper supported the Korean and Chinese stance citing the statement made by Kaji Hideo, a former resident of Hashima Island, that “there is no need to hide the history of Hashima Island. The historical fact of forced labor should be recognized as ‘negative heritage’ (負の遺産) to be passed down together [with the rest of the site’s history]. Being a World Heritage Site means transferring correct history to posterity.”⁷⁾

At the meeting (July 5, 2015) of the World Heritage Committee to adopt the decision to inscribe the Meiji Industrial Sites on the World Heritage List, the Japanese delegation made statement to the effect that “Japan is prepared to take measures that allow an understanding that there were a large number of Koreans and others who were brought against their will and forced to work under harsh conditions in the 1940s at some of the sites.” The Japanese delegation further stated that “Japan is prepared to incorporate appropriate measures into the interpretive strategy to remember the victims such as the establishment of an information center.”⁸⁾ The Japanese statement was added to the decision document in the form of a footnote. Accordingly, Japan was requested to submit a report outlining its promised measures to the World Heritage Center by December 1, 2017, so that the World Heritage Committee might examine the progress report at its 42nd session in 2018.

In South Korea, a newspaper reported “Japan’s first acknowledgement to the world of its imperial history of mobilizing forced labor during the war.”⁹⁾ Another newspaper also reported that “Japan acknowledges the fact that the modern industrial sites for which it

7) “Negative heritage also needs to be transferred, and understanding can be gained through earnest explanation: Remarks from someone involved in the Japan-Korea negotiations over World Heritage” (負の遺産も伝える必要・丁寧に説明し理解得て 世界遺産巡る日韓協議に関係者), Asahi Shimbun (朝日新聞), May 23, 2015.

8) “Japan’s first acknowledgement to the world of its imperial history of mobilizing forced labor during the wartime” (日帝 강제노역 동원 日, 국제무대 첫 인정), Choson ilbo (조선일보), July 6, 2015.

9) Ibid., July 6, 2015.

applied for World Heritage status had used forced laborers from Korea and elsewhere.”¹⁰⁾ However, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated in Japanese that Koreans and others were “made to work against their will” (働かされた), and maintained that they were subjected to wartime requisition under the ordinance of national requisition applied equally to Japanese nationals, rather than being subjected to “forced labor” as prohibited by the ILO,¹¹⁾ thus leaving a seed of controversy between the two countries.

In the meantime, the Japanese media underlined that South Korea, hitherto opposed to the inscription of the Meiji Industrial Sites on the World Heritage List, supported the UNESCO’s decision “in anticipation of Japan’s fulfillment of its promised measures.”¹²⁾ Both the Mainichi and Asahi newspapers, under the titles of “Meiji Industrial Revolution Sites Decided to be Registered as World Heritage through Rapprochement between Japan and Korea on Facilities Explaining Conscriptation,” and “Agreement between Japan and Korea on the Term Conscript Laborers” respectively made it clear that South Korea supported the inscription because of Japan’s promise of “appropriate measures to remember the victims.”

Therefore, it should be noted that both Korean and Japanese media underlined that the inscription of the Meiji Industrial Sites as World Heritage was possible not only because they signified successful cases of industrialization outside the West but also because they offered the historical lesson that the dark history of forced labor should not be repeated again.

3. Japan’s Measures after the Inscription as World Heritage and Problems

The State of Conservation Report submitted by Japan on November 30, 2017 states that “the interpretation of industrial workers’ stories should focus on Japanese industrial workers during the OUV period (i.e., from 1850s to 1910).” As for the interpretation of those workers outside the OUV period (i.e., during World War II), it states that wartime Japan “implemented its policy of requisition of workers under the General National

10) “The Japanese government acknowledges officially its imperial history of mobilizing Korean forced labor” (日 정부 “조선인 강제노역” 첫 공식 인정), Dong-a ilbo (동아일보), July 6, 2015.

11) “Dissatisfied voices in both Japan and Korea, as embers smolder over interpretation of World Heritage (日韓, くすぶる火種 世界遺産「ご都合解釈」 両国内に不満の声), Asahi Shimbun (朝日新聞), July 10, 2015.

12) “Meiji Industrial Revolution Sites decided to be registered as World Heritage through rapprochement between Japan and Korea on facilities explaining conscription” (世界遺産：明治産業革命, 登録決定 徴用紹介施設で日韓決着), Mainichi Shimbun (毎日新聞), July 5, 2015.

Mobilisation Law and that “there were a large number from the Korean Peninsula.” It also states that Japan plans to establish the “Industrial Heritage Information Centre as a comprehensive information center in Tokyo,” which will “dispatch information mainly on the overall characteristics” of the Meiji Industrial Sites,¹³⁾ rather than an information center “to remember the victims” of forced labor, as pledged at the time of the Sites’ inscription in 2015.

Normally, the information center to commemorate victims of forced labor is supposed to be built in the vicinity of the site in point. But the Industrial Heritage Information Centre (IHIC) in Tokyo was physically out of the context of the Meiji Industrial Sites, raising skepticism about its function as a sincere reference for the history of forced mobilization and its victims.

Currently, there are several monuments commemorating the Korean victims of forced mobilization in Japan. For example, the Memorial Monument for Korean Victims of Requisition was built at the site of the Ita Coal Pit of Mitsui Tagawa Mine. Standing at the rear side of the Coal Historical Museum of Tagawa City, Fukuoka Prefecture, its visibility is very low. Moreover, as construction of the monument was initiated by the Tagawa branch of the Republic of Korea Residents Union in Japan, it differs from the Japanese government-run information center in its nature. Nearby, another monument to commemorate those who lost their lives while working at coal mines was built by the Korean Youth Council in Fukuoka in 1999, after collecting 600 remains buried in fields. Again, built at the back of Tagawa City’s public grounds, the monument is located in an isolated place and is hard to find.



〈Photo 7〉 Memorial Monument for Korean Victims of Requisition at Tagawa City

13) Jeong Tae-heon, et al. (정태헌 외), Analysis of the “State of Conservation Report” of the Meiji Industrial Revolution Heritage: Its Contents and Problems (일본 메이지 산업혁명 유산 보존보고서 분석 연구: SOC내용과 문제점), (Cultural Heritage Administration 문화재청, Republic of Korea: March 2018).



〈Photo 8〉 Another Memorial Monument at Tagawa City

The information center promised by the Japanese to remember the victims of forced labor should be the venue of historical reflection and lessons for the sake of humanity, going beyond just commemorating them. The IHIC located in Tokyo far removed from the historical scenes of forced mobilization is a poor measure to commemorate the victims and therefore not a full and faithful implementation of the Japanese government’s pledge at the time of the inscription of the Meiji Industrial Sites as World Heritage.

Before the inscription of the Sites as World Heritage, tourism companies did mention the history of forced labor to tourists who visited Battleship Island (Hashima Island), stating that “it is true that many Koreans and Chinese worked at the Hashima Coal Mine, and many lost their lives there. We have to be aware of this aspect [of the site’s history] as well as its economic development.”¹⁴⁾ Yet, with the issue of forced labor generating controversy during and after the inscription, mention of the brutal history of forced labor at the tourist sites has become more muted.

The Industrial Heritage Information Centre (IHIC) in Tokyo was opened to the public on June 15th, 2020, and exhibits video testimonies of former residents of Hashima. All four interviewees recollect that they have no memory of discrimination against Koreans on Hashima—the recollection of their childhood when they had little understanding about institutional racism and when they had no interactions with wartime forced laborers.¹⁵⁾ The IHIC also makes it clear that all Korean claims related to the period of

14) “Relief for Japan-Korea cooperation over Industrial Heritage; a person involved asks for sincere consideration of the aspect of forced labor” (産業遺産, 日韓協力に安堵 関係者「強制労働の側面も真摯に」), Asahi Shimbun (朝日新聞), June 23, 2020.

15) Nikolai Johnsen, “Katō Kōko’s Meiji Industrial Revolution: Forgetting Forced Labor to Celebrate Japan’s World Heritage Sites—Part 2,” *The Asia—Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, vol. 19 issue 24 no. 5 (Dec. 15, 2021), 7–8.

Japanese colonial rule (1910-45), including compensation for forced labor, have been settled by exhibiting the full text of the “Agreement on the Settlement of Problems Concerning Property and Related Claims and Economic Cooperation between the Republic of Korea and Japan” in 1965.¹⁶⁾ Immediately, the South Korean government summoned the Japanese ambassador and made a protest.

It should be kept in mind that the Meiji Industrial Sites include some sites of ‘dark history’ of forced labor and discrimination, and have been inscribed as UNESCO World Heritage on the condition of establishing an information center for respecting the dignity and memories of victims who were forced laborers there.

4. ‘Strong Regret’ from the 44th World Heritage Committee and Japan’s Response

The 44th session of the World Heritage Committee held in July 2021, after reviewing the follow-up measures implemented by Japan on the Meiji Industrial Sites, expressed “strong regret that Japan has not yet fully implemented the relevant decisions” of the Committee, and requested that Japan incorporate the “full history” of the Sites related to the wartime mobilization of Korean laborers and others as well as “measures to remember the victims” of forced labor into the interpretative narratives of the IHIC.¹⁷⁾ The adoption of this decision was much influenced by the joint report of UNESCO/ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), which conducted an on-site examination of the narratives of the IHIC. According to the report, the information on the conscripted workers from other countries emphasizes that they “were considered to be Japanese nationals and were treated as such,” and the oral testimonies all related to Hashima Island indicate that “there were no instances of such people being forced to work there.” Therefore, the July 2021 UNESCO/ICOMOS mission concluded that “the interpretative measures to allow an understanding of those brought against their will and forced to work are currently insufficient.”¹⁸⁾

In response to the Committee’s request, at a July 13, 2021 news conference, Chief Cabinet Secretary Katō Katsunobu said, “We have always accepted in a very serious manner the resolutions and recommendations issued by the World Heritage Committee

16) “Testimonies of no discrimination against questioned workers are exhibited; Korea protests, but the government starts to open the facility to the public” (徴用工差別ない 証言展示 韓国は抗議 政府が施設公開開始), Asahi Shimbun (朝日新聞), June 16, 2020.

17) WHC/21/44.COM/7B.Add.2, p. 7.

18) WHC/21/44.COM/7B.Add.2, p. 6.

and have implemented in a sincere manner the promised measures.”

In the meantime, Katō Kōko, Managing Director of the IHIC, published her opinions in response to the UNESCO resolutions and the ICOMOS expert report on the website of the National Congress of Industrial Heritage. First, according to her investigation of the testimonies of former residents of Hashima Island, the laborers from the Korean peninsula were conscripted not as wartime prisoners but as Japanese nationals under a labor conscription policy, and Koreans were treated equally and overcame harsh working conditions together with their Japanese colleagues in order to fulfill their role as industrial workers for the sake of wartime Japan. Second, the IHIC did not differentiate between nationalities of the victims of industrial workers in introducing information about them, and planned to further collect newspaper articles, memoirs, and accident reports about them for the purpose of exhibitions there.

At the time of inscription of the Meiji Industrial Sites on the World Heritage List in 2015, the Japanese government acknowledged that “there were a large number of Koreans and others who were brought against their will and forced to work under harsh conditions in the 1940s at the some of the Sites,” and pledged that “Japan is prepared to incorporate appropriate measures into the interpretative strategy to remember the victims, such as the establishment of an information center.”, Katō’s opinions represent a serious divergence from the recognition and commitment made by Japan at the time of the inscription.

In reaction, Tonomura Masaru, professor at the University of Tokyo, criticized the exhibits of the IHIC highlighting development through modernization as at odds with general common sense, and argued that they should not close the door to the reports and testimonies that reveal the stories of Koreans forced to labor under extreme conditions.¹⁹⁾

Meanwhile, in an editorial of July 27, the Asahi Newspaper demanded that “the pledges regarding the Industrial Revolution Heritage should be kept to improve the exhibits.” Urging the Japanese government to revise them considering that the international committee’s “strong regret” affects Japan’s credibility on the world stage. The editorial reminded readers that the Japanese delegation’s statement at the time of the inscription meeting was a public commitment to the world to incorporate into the

19) “Third Resolution on Battleship Island: The World Heritage Committee adopts ‘regret’” (対応先送り, 3度目決議 軍艦島, 世界遺産委「遺憾」採択), Asahi Shimbun (朝日新聞), July 24, 2021.

Sites' narratives not only their place in Japan's history of economic development but also their dark side, so as to present their full history. It also demanded that the IHIC be reformed in such a way as to exhibit materials remembering the victims and to extend the sources of information to embrace the diverse opinions of experts. The editorial concluded that since "any form of heritage includes both bright and dark sides of history, it is important to recognize both sides in order to count as the shared property with the world. The Japanese government ought to take the UNESCO resolutions seriously and fulfill its promises to them."²⁰⁾

5. Concluding Remarks Urging Japan to Implement Its Pledges

In its application for inscription of the Meiji Industrial Sites on the World Heritage List, Japan presented the Sites as the locus of Japan's rapid industrial revolution through "the first successful transfer of Western industrialization to a non-Western nation." However, apart from the Sites' embodiment of OUV, what emerged as a thorny issue during the evaluation process by the World Heritage Committee was the fact that several of the 23 component sites used forced labor of Koreans and others during wartime, as pointed out by the South Korean delegation. To resolve the issue, the World Heritage Committee recommended that Japan develop "an interpretative strategy that allows an understanding of the full history of each site." And Japan acknowledged the historical fact of a large number of Korean and other laborers being forced to work at the sites against their will, and promised that an information center would be established as an interpretative strategy to remember the victims of forced labor. It was under such conditions agreed by Japan, South Korea, and the World Heritage Committee that the Meiji Industrial Sites were approved unanimously to be listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Nonetheless, Japan's 2017 report to UNESCO showed that Japan did not implement the conditions and pledges agreed on at the time of the inscription in 2015, and the interpretations of the IHIC exhibits opened in Tokyo on June 15, 2020—far removed from the vicinity of the Sites—denied the painful history of forced labor and discrimination against Koreans and others. Consequently, the July 2021 World Heritage

20) "The pledges regarding the Industrial Revolution Heritage should be kept to improve the exhibits" ((社説) 産業革命遺産 約束守り, 展示改めよ), Asahi Shimbun (朝日新聞), July 27, 2021.

Committee expressed “strong regret” and requested that Japan improve the narratives of the sites related to forced labor and submit by December 1, 2022 an updated state of conservation report to the World Heritage Centre. Hence, it is crucial to observe the extent to which Japan honors its promises at the time of the inscription and to monitor its implementation of UNESCO’s recommendations.

It is widely known that Japan is currently pushing for inscription of the Mitsubishi’s Sado 佐渡 gold mines in Niigata Prefecture on the 2023 UNESCO World Heritage List. The Sado gold and silver mines, as the nation’s major producer of gold and silver since the Edo period (1603–1868), had been an important source of revenue for the Tokugawa Shogunate which had exercised direct control over it. Under the Meiji government the mines were nationalized until sold to a consortium led by Mitsubishi in 1896, and eventually transferred to the Mitsubishi Mining Company in 1918. Even though Japan limited the Sado mines’ World Heritage period to that of the warring states (1467–1615) and subsequent Edo period, they will be the subject of controversial historical narratives, since the mines are known to have used forcibly recruited laborers from Korea during the Asia-Pacific War. It is hoped that Japan’s implementation of its commitment to the “full history” of the Meiji Industrial Sites and the “interpretative strategy” to remember the victims related to the Sites will serve as an important precedent in its future effort to add Japan’s industrial legacies such as the Sado mines to the World Heritage List.

In terms of state violence and the violation of human rights, the dark history of the Meiji Industrial Heritage Sites, associated with the ordeal and sacrifice of forcefully mobilized Korean laborers, goes beyond the historical issue between Korea and Japan to include the issues concerned with the Chinese laborers and the Allied PoWs forced to work at the Sites. For example, a veteran association for commemorating the American soldiers in defense of Bataan and Corregidor (ADBCMS) sent a letter on February 25, 2021 to the IHIC, demanding that the exhibits include information about the forced labor of Allied PoWs during the Pacific War.²¹⁾ Korea needs to forge an international collaboration in its response to the World Heritage issues, going beyond the framework of Korea-Japan relations.

21) “Japanese NGO and American Veteran Association demand Meiji Industrial Heritage exhibit forced labor” (日 NGO·美재향군인단체 “메이지산업유산 강제노동 전시해야”), Yonhap News Agency (연합뉴스), June 27, 2021.

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『동북아역사리포트』 지난 호는 동북아역사재단 홈페이지에서 열람할 수 있습니다.

- (창간호) 보존과 철거의 갈림길: 일제 인천육군조병창 유적의 현대사
- (제2호) 시진핑 시기 험한이 고조된 원인은 무엇일까
- (제3호) 남중국해 분쟁의 역사와 현황
- (제4호) 중국 역사 교과서에 나타난 역사 공정의 변화 -신간 고등학교 세계사 교과서 속 한국과 동북아-
- (제5호) 약속 이행을 촉구받는 일본 메이지산업유산: 침략전쟁과 강제동원의 그림자
- (제6호) 중국이 주장하는 '문화원조'의 배경과 문제점
- (제7호) 미쓰비시(三菱) 사도(佐渡)광산: 완전한 역사(Full History)와 보편적 인권 의식을 공유하기 위한 현장
- (제8호) 아프가니스탄과 중국의 '일대일로(一帶一路)'
- (제9호) '종번(宗藩)' 해석과 중국 대외관계 인식
- (제10호) 서양 고지도로 확인한 우리땅 독도와 동해 표기
- (제11호) 일본의 사도광산 등재에 따른 대응 방안
- (제12호) (영문판)미쓰비시(三菱) 사도(佐渡)광산: 완전한 역사(Full History)와 보편적 인권 의식을 공유하기 위한 현장
- (제13호) 일본 언론에 공개된 '독도 사료'에 대한 비판적 검토
- (제14호) 2022년 검정통과 일본고등학교 사회과 교과서 분석
- (제15호) 경찰 자료로 보는 램지어의 태평양 전쟁의 성 계약비판
- (제16호) 중국 학계의 발해사 연구의 동인(動因)과 쟁점
- (제17호) 중국인에게 한국전쟁은 어떻게 기억되어 왔는가
- (제18호) 1947년 미 군정장관, 독도 출장을 허가하다
- (제19호) 역사문제와 한일관계 -일본은 사죄하고 반성했는가-
- (제20호) 2022년 일본 참의원 선거와 한일관계 전망
- (제21호) 샌프란시스코 강화조약과 미결의 과제
- (제22호) 광복 77주년, 한일관계의 회고와 전망
- (제23호) 한국-중국 수교에 가려진 한국-중화민국 단교 30년
- (제24호) 관동대지진 조선인 학살사건을 기억하자
- (제25호) 동북공정 20년, 현황과 과제
- (제26호) 중국에서 사라지는 우리 고대사
- (제27호) 한국과 베트남 관계 30년을 되돌아본다