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Dark Tourism and Dissonant Memories in Korea and Japan: The potentials of dark tourism as a tool to visualise marginalised narratives of colonialism

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**Dark Tourism and Dissonant
Memories in Korea and Japan: The
potentials of dark tourism as a tool to
visualise marginalised narratives of
colonialism**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2024

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Abstract

Dissonant collective memories of colonialism underlie enduring conflicts between South Korea and Japan. Memory and identity politics, aimed at nurturing national pride, have perpetuated misrepresentations of their shared colonial past, sidelining narratives of victims misaligned with the official discourse. This research explores the potential of dark tourism for illuminating marginalised memories of war and colonialism. Dark tourism can be defined as a methodology of travel that engages with both “bright” and “dark” collective memories, offering insights into contemporary society and its complex contradictions. This study examines how sites of colonial memory can be adapted for educational dark tourism by site managers, external actors, and individual visitors, and how such tourism can impact the collective memory and social identities of Koreans, Japanese, and other individuals who engage with it. Data was collected through tourism participation and observation in Korea and Japan, focusing on four case study sites. Semi-structured research interviews were conducted with 17 stakeholders, and a street survey targeting 250 Koreans was conducted. Findings show that despite governmental memory politics obstructing impartial narratives at official sites, many Koreans, Japanese, and others express interest in confronting colonial memories while traveling. Particularly, younger Koreans, less influenced by ethnic nationalism, and Japanese individuals with a genuine interest in Korean tourism, find educational value in dark tourism related to colonial memory, and are less likely to perceive it as a threat to their national identities. The data analysis suggests that an increase in dark tourism at sites of colonial memory in Korea and Japan could contribute to fostering mutual understanding of dissonant and sensitive collective colonial memories. The findings underscore how the roles of both Korean and Japanese NGOs and other non-governmental groups are pivotal in highlighting colonial memory excluded from official narratives at pertinent heritage sites in both countries.

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Notes on Romanisation, Translation, and Toponyms

I employ the official Revised Romanisation of Korean system due to its extensive recognition and widespread usage. Although the McCune–Reischauer romanisation system holds common currency within academic contexts, the focus of this study revolves around the exploration and discourse pertaining to well-known tourist sites. Consequently, it was deemed advantageous to adopt romanisations that resonate with a broader audience (i.e. Gyeongbokgung, rather than Kyōngbokkung). For the names of prominent Korean historical figures, the most widely used romanisations are applied (i.e. Rhee Syngman, rather than Yi Seungman). Hepburn romanisation is utilised for Japanese names and words. Korean and Japanese family names precede the given names as per local custom, with the exception of authors using the opposite order for publications in English. In such cases, authors' names are romanised in accordance with their publication preferences. The romanisation of interview participants' names is based on the representation in their business cards when available.

The bibliography includes book and journal title translations sourced from English abstracts of publications, whenever such abstracts are accessible. All other translations within are my own, unless otherwise stated.

In this text, the term “Korea” is employed to denote both the Korean nation prior to its post-colonial division and specifically to refer to South Korea (Republic of Korea), contingent upon the context. “Korean national memory” pertains to the national memory of South Korea within the confines of this text. It is crucial to acknowledge that this national memory often diverges from the official memory of North Korea (the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea), which falls beyond the scope of this study. However, vernacular Korean memories discussed encompasses those of Korean residents in Japan who recognise the DPRK government as their national authority.

I apply the term “Euro-American countries” in lieu of “The West,” due to the latter’s associations with colonialism and eurocentrism. I use “Euro-American countries” to refer to countries that share common cultural, historical, and political traits rooted in European

traditions, regardless of the countries' geographic locations.

Note that “Chōsen Daigakkō” refers to the Chongryon affiliated Korea University in Tokyo. Its Japanese name is utilised to avoid confusion with the unrelated Korea University in Seoul and Chosun University in Gwangju.

To make the text more accessible to audiences less familiar with East Asian history, contemporary toponyms are employed throughout discussions of historical events.

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Research Questions

This exploratory study examines the challenges and potentials of dark tourism as a method to highlight marginalised memories of war and colonialism in South Korea (hereafter, Korea) and Japan. It seeks to explore 1) how the facilitation of dark tourism in the two countries may enhance the recognition and accessibility of vernacular collective memories of war and colonialism, and 2) to what extent Korean, Japanese, and other international tourists are willing and interested in engaging with contested colonial memory at heritage sites and museums in the two countries.

The study adopts a combination of collective memory and social identity theory as the conceptual framework. This framework is also informed by studies in dark tourism and heritage. A mixed-method approach, encompassing both qualitative and quantitative methods, has been applied. This includes ethnographic case studies and observations, semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, and tourist surveys in the form of questionnaires.

A mixed methods approach is utilised, primarily focusing on qualitative data through ethnographic case studies, observations, and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders. Additionally, quantitative data was collected by survey in the form of questionnaires to fill gaps in the predominant qualitative data.

The main research question that the study seeks to answer is as follows:

- In what ways could recognition and official and unofficial facilitation of dark tourism in Korea and Japan related to contested colonial history potentially impact dissonant collective memories and social identities in Korea and Japan?

In order to answer the main research question, I applied the following sub-questions:

- What factors complicate the facilitation of dark tourism related to contested colonial memory in Korea and Japan, and in what ways and to what extent can dissonant memories co-exist at sites of memory related to war and colonialism in the two countries? In other words, how and to what extent can marginalised memories of colonialism be introduced to domestic and international tourists

through dark tourism?

- How susceptible are visitor groups to sites of colonial memory in Korea and Japan, with potential for dark tourism, to memories in conflict with the official narratives of their respective ingroups and outgroups? This research aims to explore the views and potential identity threats faced by Koreans and Japanese regarding dissonant victim and perpetrator narratives of war and colonialism in the two countries.
- To what extent could the facilitation of dark tourism attract Koreans and Japanese tourists to visit sites of colonial memory in each other's countries?

Research rationale and context of proposed research

Korea-Japan relations continuously deteriorated over the last decade, until recently improving under the Korean presidency of Yoon Suk Yeol. Memory politics surrounding the countries' colonial past have been a central factor contributing to these fluctuations. The recent improvements in relations can be attributed to Yoon Suk Yeol's approach of prioritising economic cooperation with Japan, even at the expense of ignoring the voices of victims, such as former forced labourers and "comfort women". A significant portion of the Korean public continues to seek justice for the victims of imperial Japan and opposes the conservative government's agreements with Japan. It is likely that such agreements will face challenges under the next progressive Korean government.

Japan's past economic success and strong soft power, as well as its enormous popularity as a tourist destination, are important factors that have facilitated the promotion of Japan's official narratives relevant to contested memories of war and colonialism, which in effect have marginalised Korea's voice on the international arena. One of the ways Japan disseminates revised colonial history, denying the memories of countless victims, is to facilitate World Heritage inscriptions of sites with wartime history of Korean and other foreign forced labour. The sites are promoted for tourism, and their World Heritage status may appear to legitimise the ignorance or denial of forced labour history in official narratives constructed to celebrate Japan's modern history.

In recent years, however, international focus on Korea and its economic and technologic developments as well as rapidly expanding soft power have increased, which have also led to increased tourism inbound to Korea. Both Korea and Japan are rich in historical and cultural heritage attractions, but a complex web of reasons lie behind the lack of colonial narratives at many of these sites. Where narratives of colonialism can be found on the tourist track, they are usually aligned with official memory which often omits what by some are considered negative or shameful history. In both countries there exist a myriad of dissonant vernacular memories that may or may not correlate with these officially recognised national narratives. Vernacular memories of colonialism in Korea and Japan are to a certain extent recorded and examined by academics and other stakeholders, but there are few platforms where they can reach general international

audiences and enhance public memory of the colonial period. Many Koreans and Japanese are affected by collective traumas rooted in international and domestic history disputes, and wider reach and acknowledgement of their transgenerational vernacular collective memories may contribute to the healing of such trauma. In both countries historical trauma carries and maintains mutual resentment for “the Other” which cannot be ignored in reconciliation efforts.

One of the platforms through which Korean and Japanese dissonant memories may be domestically and internationally disseminated and acknowledged is tourism. Traditional tourism development strategies often prioritise positive and unproblematic narratives, seeking to appeal to a broad audience. However, the emerging market for dark tourism challenges these conventional notions worldwide. While the origins of dark tourism are rooted in the traditional practice of pilgrimage to sites of battles and martyrdom, its contemporary scope extends beyond such activities and is usually combined with leisure tourism in contemporary settings.¹ Dark tourism may be defined as a method to obtain insights into contemporary society and its complex contradictions by traveling to sites of memory to engage with and compare historical narratives of progress and of human suffering.² Dark tourism, in its broader sense, is not solely for a minority of tourists seeking “dark” experiences; rather, it reflects a growing trend of seeking understanding and insight into the troubled and tragic aspects of travel destinations’ pasts.

Paradoxically, the darkness associated with dark tourism can shed light on memories that governments may not acknowledge, serving as a powerful and legitimate means of reinforcing narratives disputed by politicians and other influential elites. These functions of dark tourism create opportunities to generate interest and foster understanding of the dissonant colonial narratives and highlight memories marginalised by stakeholders with various political and commercial agendas. Highlighting marginalised narratives is important not only for the decolonisation of history, but also because sufferers of collective trauma are denied restoration and a sense of justification as the result of

¹ A.V. Seaton, “Guided by the dark: From thanatopsis to Thanatourism,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 2 (4), 1996.

² This definition of dark tourism reflects that of Ide Akira. See for example Ide Akira, *Dāku tsūrizumu kakuchō- Kindai no sai-kōchiku* [Dark tourism expansion: Reconstruction of modern history], (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 2018), 15-16.

external suppression of their collective and personal memories. Even so, existing research and literature on the effects of dark tourism on dissonant collective memories of Japanese colonialism is currently extremely scarce.

This exploratory study sheds light on an understudied area of Korean and Japanese studies, and acts as a platform for future research on how contested memories are narrated to visitors of related heritage sites in the two countries. The study aims to contribute to a better understanding of how collective memories, politics of memory, and identity influence modern interpretations of Japanese colonialism in Korea and Japan. It seeks to highlight the underlying agendas that either reinforce or suppress collective memories, which play a significant role in the ongoing “history problem”. It also provides marginalised voices and memory activists in both Korea and Japan with insight potentially useful for empowerment through increased focus on dark tourism to heritage sites in the two countries.

The growing academic literature on dark tourism is mostly Eurocentric, and this study’s focus on sites in Korea and Japan as well as on Korean and Japanese visitors to these sites contributes to the much-needed regional diversification of this field. Moreover, this study provides insights into how tourists from diverse backgrounds can engage with and better grasp complex histories of colonialism and its ongoing impact on memory and identity politics. It highlights the challenges and opportunities in presenting colonial history to both descendants of colonisers and the historically colonised in a geopolitical environment where colonial memory is central to diplomatic relations and national identity, while fundamental aspects of the history remain contested. Furthermore, the study examines how regionally contested and traumatic memory can be conveyed to third-party tourists, who often have limited knowledge of the history and its contested nature, in contrast to visitors to popular European dark tourism sites, which often center around well-known European historical events that have been widely taught on a global scale.

While it would be idealistic to claim that this research will directly contribute to reconciliation between Korea and Japan, it does suggest ways in which dark tourism can be utilised to foster a broader understanding of dissonant colonial memories in both

countries. Such understanding may help alleviate collective traumas and underscore the importance of transitional justice. Achieving true reconciliation depends on mutual understanding and transitional justice, which require acknowledging diverse perspectives on colonial history.

Chapter 1 Literature Review

This study examines dissonant narratives of war and colonialism at sites of memory in Korea and Japan, exploring how dark tourism facilitation can highlight marginalised narratives and influence tourist demographics. A conceptual framework based on memory and identity studies is applied to clarify the nature and interpretation of these narratives by related social groups. To illustrate how dissonant narratives can reinforce or threaten social identities by exacerbating or harmonising traumas rooted in collective memories, the literature review first delves into the origins, definitions, and theoretical frameworks of collective memory, memory politics, social identity, identity politics, and identity threats arising from collective trauma. It briefly touches upon social identities in Korea and Japan and their relevance to reconciliation. Detailed analysis of area-specific collective memories and social identities is presented in subsequent chapters. The latter part of the review examines academic literature on dark tourism and its interpretation in Korea and Japan.

1.1 Collective Memory and Memory Politics

Collective memory theory is typically traced to Maurice Halbwachs, and his 1925 landmark publishing of “Social Frameworks of Memory”.¹ Central to Halbwachs’ theory was the belief that individuals acquire, localise and recall their memories through their membership of social groups, and thus individual memories cannot exist absolutely separated from collective memories.² Halbwachs’ assertion that individuals cannot possess entirely private memories has faced criticism, notably from influential philosopher Paul Ricoeur. Ricoeur, while acknowledging the existence of both individual and collective memories, argued against the notion that these concepts are in opposition. Instead, he contended that they are interconnected and reciprocal, forming a complex

¹ See for example Jefferey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, “Social Memory Studies: From “Collective Memory” to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices”. *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998), 106.

² Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 37.

relationship.³

Halbwachs' original theory also lacks focus on the transferable nature of collective memories over generations.⁴ Social anthropologist Connerton emphasises that while individual memories are localised in frameworks provided by groups, commemorative ceremonies and inherited bodily practices are crucial factors for collective remembering. However, transferable collective memories are not necessarily true and complete representations of past events. Connerton, using memories of war as an example, argues that when memories of members of different social groups participating in the same event (war) are passed down to their children, the memories might be so different they "can scarcely be said to refer to the 'same' event".⁵

Collective memory theory is inherently intertwined with politics. As per Halbwachs' theory, this connection can be succinctly summarised: "collective memory is always mediated through complex mechanisms of conscious manipulation by elites and unconscious absorption by members of society".⁶ More recent scholarship, exemplified by the companion volumes *Regimes of Memory* and *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory* edited by Hodgkin and Radstone, indicates that collective memories are constructed and influenced by a vast variety of factors, and we cannot dispute that our interpretations of past events are at least partially moulded by public memory informed by official narratives.⁷ By scrutinising the mechanisms of collective memory production, we can discern systems of power at play, identifying how certain aspects of history are elevated while others are marginalised.⁸ This political dimension of collective memory theory, known as the "politics of memory", has become a central theme in the expanding

³ Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, paperback edition 2006 originally published in 2000), 93-132.

⁴ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*. Translated from *Les cadres sociaux de La memoire* (1952) and from *La topographie legendaire des evangiles en terresainte: Etude de memoire collective* (1941) (London & Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

⁵ Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 20.

⁶ Peter Verovšek, "Collective memory, politics, and the influence of the past: the politics of memory as a research paradigm," *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 4 ,3 (2016), 531.

⁷ Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin, eds, *Regimes of Memory* (London and NY: Routledge, 2003); *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory* (London and NY: Routledge 2003).

⁸ Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin, "Regimes of Memory: an introduction", *Regimes of Memory*, (London and NY: Routledge, 2003), 2.

literature on memory studies.⁹

Since the 1980s, scholars of memory have characterised the time we live in as “social amnesia”, the concept that increased politicisation of memory has cut us modern subjects off from the pasts that created us.¹⁰ Peter Burke relates social amnesia to the memory of politics with the explanatory question; “who wants whom to remember what, and why?”.¹¹ In order to analyse and understand social amnesia in relation to memory politics, not only definitions of remembering, but also definitions of forgetting are needed. Connerton has distinguished the following seven types of forgetting: repressive erasure; prescriptive forgetting; forgetting that is constitutive in the formation of a new identity; structural amnesia; forgetting as annulment; forgetting as planned obsolescence; forgetting as humiliated silence.¹² These categories are also helpful for understanding collective trauma and identity threats, discussed below.

Other factors that can mediate collective memories include physical sites, and many scholars apply the term “*lieu de mémoire* (site of memory)” to refer to such places. This French term was coined by Pierre Nora in his seven volumes of “*Les Lieux de Mémoire*” (1984-1992), in which the “*lieu*” can be a physical site, but also crystallisations of memory in other forms such as songs, heroic figures, recipes, literature and much more.¹³ Using a hypothetical tourism site in accordance with Nora’s interpretations as an example; both the physical site of tourism and the existing narratives at the site are crystallisations of memories that become part of the visitors’ collective memories.

Critiques have called for refined definitions and distinctions of collective memory, as Halbwachs and Nora’s theories encompass both aggregated memories of individuals of a group, as well as the social frameworks that shape and define memories in a collective.¹⁴

⁹ Alon Confino, “Collective memory and cultural history: Problems of method,” *The American Historical Review* 102, 5 (1997), 1393.

¹⁰ Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz, *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 1-4.

¹¹ Peter Burke, *History as Social Memory, Memory: History, Culture and the Mind*, edited by Thomas Butler (New York: B. Blackwell, 1989), 108.

¹² Paul Connerton, “Seven Types of Forgetting,” *Memory Studies*, 1, 2008, 59-71.

¹³ See for example Dacia Viejo-Rose, “Cultural heritage and memory: untangling the ties that bind,” *Culture & History Digital Journal* 2 (2015), 5.

¹⁴ Olick and Robbins, “Social Memory Studies”.

Olick suggested the term “social memory” to be a more appropriate term for what can be described as “a wide variety of mnemonic processes, practices, and outcomes, neurological, cognitive, personal, aggregated, and collective”.¹⁵ While any memory rememberable by more than one individual is a collective memory, “social memory” has been applied to memory scholarship to denote a common category of collective memories in which social bonds connecting a group of co-rememberers is a central and essential factor.¹⁶ For the purpose of elevating understanding of the multitude of conflicting collective memories in Korea and Japan it is most crucial to differentiate between memory frameworks constructed by the state, and those created by non-governmental individuals and social groups.

This study’s framework utilises the concepts of official, collective vernacular, and public memories to analyse and distinguish between collective memories of different origins. Depending on the author and academic discipline, some cognitive terms originating from memory studies may be used interchangeably or with inconsistent meanings, necessitating attention to individual conceptual definitions. Historian and memory scholar Carol Gluck analysed the remembrance of “comfort women” and emphasised the importance of acknowledging multiple types of collective memories.¹⁷ She made the essential distinction between “official” and “vernacular” collective memories.¹⁸ In Gluck’s definition, official memories encompass everything managed by the government, including official monuments and heritage sites, official commemoration, and national history textbooks. This theory defines vernacular collective memories as encompassing all non-governmental mass media as well as activities related to what Gluck calls memory activists; groups and organisations of any political persuasion who lobbies for recognition of specific narratives for any purpose, for example by producing books and movies and creating private museums.

Because heritage sites and their narratives are usually maintained and/or authorised by

¹⁵ Ibid 346.

¹⁶ Edward S. Casey, “Public Memory in Place and Time,” *Framing Public Memory*, Edited by Kendall R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2004), 24.

¹⁷ Carol Gluck, “Operations of Memory: ‘Comfort Woman’ and the World,” *Ruptured Histories: War, Memory and the Post-Cold war in Asia*, edited by Sheila Miyoshi Jager and Rana Mitter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

¹⁸ Ibid, 52-7.

the state, they are often regarded as purely “official”, aligned with Gluck’s classification of such sites as official memory.¹⁹ However, official and vernacular collective memories may coexist within heritage if influence from local communities is possible, evident for example in case studies of the Okinawa Peace Park and Miike Coal Mine.²⁰ This necessitates the definition of a third form of collective memory affectable by a combination of local collective (vernacular) and government-guided (official) collective memories.

The concept of “public memory” is sometimes used interchangeably with “collective memory”,²¹ but, amongst others, philosopher Edward S. Casey and rhetoricians Matthew Houdek and Kendall R. Phillips applies the term as a distinct category of collective memory.²² According to Casey, public memory can only exist in public places of commemoration of a common topic that allows for public discussion, as opposed to vernacular collective memories which can also exist in private group settings.²³ Public memory most often encompasses a blend of both official and vernacular memories, albeit with varying degrees of influence.²⁴ For example, public memory at the Lincoln Memorial may be heavily influenced by official memory, while public memory in funeral eulogies or at roadside memorials of traffic-related deaths may be purely vernacular.²⁵ Furthermore, official memory is difficult to alter, but public memory takes shape as a highly visible public reassessment of official history related to for example failed wars or national myths.²⁶ The public memory scholarship discussed reveals that while the framing of narratives at places of memory such as memorials and museums are often based on the

¹⁹ Edward Boyle, “Borders of memory: affirmation and contestation over Japan’s heritage,” *Japan Forum*, 31: 3, 293-312.

²⁰ Atsuko Hashimoto and David J. Telfer, “Contested geopolitical messages for tourists at the Okinawa Peace Park and memorials,” *Japan Forum*, 31, 3 (2019), 378-407; Yusuke Matsuura, “World heritage and the local politics of memory: the Miike coal mine and fu no isan”. *Japan Forum* 31, 3 (2019) 313-335.

²¹ Apart from Gluck, see for example Jane Greer and Laurie Grobman 2016. “Introduction – Complicating Conversations: Public Memory Production and Composition & Rhetoric”. In *Pedagogies of Public Memory: Teaching Writing and Rhetoric at Museums, Archives, and Memorials*. Edited by Jane Greer and Laurie Grobman (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 3-5.

²² Matthew Houdek and Kendall R. Phillips, “Public Memory”, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication* (2017). Retrieved 14 Jan. 2021, from <https://oxfordre.com/communication/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228613-e-181>.

²³ Casey, “Public Memory”, 32-36.

²⁴ Houdek and Phillips, “Public Memory”.

²⁵ Casey, “Public Memory”.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 24-32; Houdek and Phillips, “Public Memory”.

political agendas of elite stakeholders, the public nature of such places allows for vernacular contestation that may result in the continuous transformation of public memories.

Sites of dark tourism, defined and explored in subchapters below, facilitates encounters of the official and vernacular and accurately matches Casey's definition of public memory. However, various collective memories at sites popular for dark tourism are often dissonant. The following sections illustrate how the co-existence of conflicting collective memories may be potentially both a cause and a cure for the collective traumas of opposing social groups. To better understand the complex relations between collective memories and collective traumas, it is crucial to first examine the concept of social identities.

1.2 Social Identity and Identity Politics

Social identity theory was developed by Tajfel and Turner on the foundational notion that psychological motivations lead group members to endorse or disavow existing group memberships.²⁷ Groups one "belongs to" or identify with are called ingroups, contra outgroups referred to as "the Other". The ability and process of categorising oneself in relation to social groups has been coined as "self-categorisation" by Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell.²⁸ Based on Tajfel and Turner's studies, Hogg and Abrams explain social identity theory as the understanding an individual has of their membership in specific social groups, combined with emotional attachment and recognition of the importance of that group affiliation. This pertains to cases where a social group consists of two or more individuals who collectively share a common sense of social identity or

²⁷ Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, "An integrative theory of intergroup conflict," *The social psychology of intergroup relations*, Worchel, S., Austin, L. W. (Eds.), (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1979), 33-48; Henri Tajfel, *Human groups and social categories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Tajfel and Turner, "The social identity theory of inter-group behavior," Worchel, S., Austin, L. W. (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall, 1986), 7-24; See also Leonie Huddy, "From Social to Political Identity: A Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory", *Political Psychology* 22, 1 (2001), 127-156.

²⁸ John C. Turner, Michael A. Hogg, Penelope J. Oakes, Stephen D. Reicher and Margaret S. Wetherell, *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

perceive themselves as belonging to the same social category.²⁹ The social group could be anything from a small core family to a transcontinental group sharing a root culture.

Social identity is, as mentioned, intrinsically linked to collective memory. Tajfel and Turner argued that individuals strive to construct and maintain a positive social identity, in which process ingroup evaluations of the ingroup and outgroups are continuously adjusted in order for the ingroup to perceive itself as somehow superior in comparison to the outgroup.³⁰ In other words, it was argued that social identity unilaterally influences the selection, preservation and reconstruction of collective memories and moulds them purposefully to support a strong positive social identity. However, subsequent studies have revealed a more nuanced and reciprocal relationship, where collective memories also contribute to the formation of social identity.³¹ Through activities like locally based historical plays, contemporary local identity plays a role in moulding existing collective memory, illustrating how the intertwined processes of memory and identity continuously inform and shape each other.³²

An important aspect of social identity theory is identity politics. Hogg and Abrams assert that social identity theory rests upon the assumption that “society comprises social categories which stand in power and status relations to one another”.³³ This assumption is central also to the politics of identity. The term “identity politics” emerged from marginalised groups in the 1960s and 70s and denotes how “[e]ach group identifie[s] with its own individual cause”.³⁴ However, while identity politics may give power to marginalised groups, it is also a powerful tool for elites and politicians to justify policies and control the masses. A quintessential example of such identity politics is what Benedict Anderson called “imagined communities”—communities socially constructed

²⁹ Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (London: Routledge, 1988), 7.

³⁰ Tajfel and Turner, “The social identity theory”.

³¹ Jean Louis Collange Tavani, Julie Rateau, Patrick Rouquette, Michel-Louis Sanitioso and Bo Rasyid, “Tell me what you remember and I will know who you are: The link between collective memory and social categorization,” *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 20, 1 (2017), 91–108.

³² Anne Kathrine Larsen, “Staged History in Local Settings: The Popular Norwegian *Spel* Tradition”, *Outlines – Critical Practice Studies* (2) 2010, 83-96.

³³ Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 13.

³⁴ Howard J. Wiarda, *Political Culture, Political Science, and Identity Politics: An Uneasy Alliance* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014).

to invoke nationalism and national identity, for the purpose of controlling its group members.³⁵ By making people understand themselves in certain purposeful ways, “identical” to some but different to others, political entrepreneurs can organise and justify collective actions.³⁶ Identity politics and memory politics are firmly connected, and an effective way of moulding collective identity is to influence collective memories that supports a particular aspect of a group’s identity. In fact, the construction, reproduction, and contestation of national identities is central in much of the existing literature on memory politics.³⁷

Politics of identity are also applied to cultural heritage including tourist sites. David Lowenthal, credited as the father of heritage studies, discussed many ways national narratives of the past are moulded through the alteration of artifacts and heritage sites in his landmark book “The Past Is a Foreign Country”.³⁸ Lowenthal connects national identity and collective memory to heritage as he argues that “[w]e reshape our heritage to make it attractive in modern terms; [...] history is always altered in our private interests or on behalf of our community or country”.³⁹ Jan Assmann, acknowledging the intrinsic connection between collective memory and social or cultural identity, proposed the term “cultural memory” to encompass both concepts.⁴⁰ “Through its cultural heritage a society becomes visible to itself and to others. Which past becomes evident in that heritage and which values emerge in its identificatory appropriation tells us much about the constitution and tendencies of a society”.⁴¹ Accordingly, by examining cultural heritage including tangible heritage sites through the lens of collective memory and social identity, underlying political agendas and obscured metahistory can be unearthed.

Karina Korostelina applies social identity theory with a focus on politics of national identity to distinguish the following four functions of heritage during identity-based

³⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 2006, originally published 1983).

³⁶ Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity’”, *Theory and Society* 29, 1, (2000), 4-5.

³⁷ Duncan Bell, “Introduction”, *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship Between Past and Present*, edited by Duncan Bell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 3.

³⁸ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1985).

³⁹ *Ibid*: 348.

⁴⁰ Jan Assmann, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity”, translated by John Czaplicka, *New German Critique* 65 (1995) 125-133.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 133.

conflicts: enhancing (confirmation of identity); legitimisation (supporting or challenging existing power structures and intergroup relations); normative (restoration of justice and empowerment); and healing (maintaining a balance between remembering and forgetting).⁴² One of her case studies revolves around Korea-Japanese relations and the heritage status of industrial sites where Koreans were forced to work under Japanese colonial rule. Korostelina argues that from a Japanese perspective with focus on the Meiji industrial revolution, the sites have an enhancing function, and at the same time a legitimising function as they validate Japan's claim that its wartime forceful mobilisation of Korean labour was legal. On the other hand, by omitting dominant narratives of forced labour, the sites' potential normative and healing functions are denied from a Korean perspective. To obtain a substantial understanding of heritage narratives and their functions in relation to identity conflicts, we must first understand the concept of collective trauma and how collective traumas threaten and transform social identities.

1.3 Collective Trauma and Identity Threats

The first theory exploring the social dimensions of trauma was developed by sociologist Kai Erikson in the 1970s. He conducted an in-depth case study on trauma affecting the community of a West Virginia mountain hollow after a catastrophic flood, and described a "collective trauma" that affected members of the community for longer than the individual traumas caused by the tragic flood itself.⁴³ Erikson argues that trauma can be caused by a single shocking event as well as from continuing patterns of abuse, and that regardless of the duration of the original event, trauma can become an "enduring state of mind".⁴⁴ His initial definition of "collective trauma" described it as a "blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the

⁴² Karina Korostelina, "Understanding Values of Cultural Heritage within the Framework of Social Identity Conflicts", *Values in Heritage Management: Emerging Approaches and Research Directions*, edited by Erica Avrami, Susan Macdonald, Randall Mason and David Myers, 2019. Available at <https://heritagemanagement.netlify.app/part-two/6/> (accessed 30 March 2020); See also Korostelina, "The normative function of national historical narratives: South Korean perceptions of relations with Japan," *National Identities*, 21:2 (2019), 171-189.

⁴³ Kai Theodor Erikson, *Everything in Its Path* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976).

⁴⁴ Kai Theodor Erikson, "Notes on Trauma and Community", *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, edited by Cathy Caruth, (Baltimore; London: The John Hopkins University Press 1995), 185.

prevailing sense of communality.”⁴⁵ However, while further developing this theory Erikson found that collective trauma may also cause revised collective world views which paradoxically becomes a new basis for communality.⁴⁶ In other words, collective trauma breaks down existing social bonds while at the same time creating new bonds based on shared experience and mutual understanding. Erikson describes this as the centripetal and centrifugal tendencies of collective trauma.⁴⁷

Expanding upon Erikson’s collective trauma theory and the subsequent advancements in trauma scholarship, Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Smelser, and Sztompka introduced the concept of “Cultural Trauma Theory”.⁴⁸ They criticise Erikson’s view that collective trauma is a natural result of a group experiencing pain, and argue that “[f]or traumas to emerge at the level of the collectivity, social crises must become cultural crises.”⁴⁹ In other words, if a specific type of social crisis is normalised in any culture, it may not result in cognitive dissonance and collective trauma, because the social shock is lessened by rationalisation of said crisis. Alexander et al observed that collective/cultural trauma is constructed as the result of a direct threat to social identity and its stability, which construction can be based on representations of both actual and “imagined” traumatic events. Such representations usually reflect neither complete truths nor totally imagined events. In socio-political psychologist Hirschberger’s words; “[...]the collective representation of history does not necessarily reflect the historical truth, but rather is a combination of historical facts with shared myths and beliefs that are essential in forming and maintaining group identity.”⁵⁰ For example, constructed national identities often incorporates national narratives of historical injustice which in turn becomes “imagined” traumatic events that strengthen social identity through the centripetal effect described by Erikson.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Erikson, *Everything in Its Path*, 154.

⁴⁶ Erikson, “Notes on Trauma”.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 186.

⁴⁸ Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Neil J. Smelser, Piotr Sztompka and Bernhard Giesen, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press 2004).

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 10.

⁵⁰ Gilad Hirschberger, “Collective Trauma and the Social Construction of Meaning,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 9 (2018), 8.

⁵¹ Alexander et al, *Cultural Trauma*, 1-30.

Both victim and perpetrator groups, including their descendants, may develop collective trauma after the event of a major social conflict. Eyerman analysed African Americans' collective memories of slavery and found collective traumas of historical slavery still existing in the present.⁵² He found that the collective memory of slavery is transgenerational as it has been an integral part of African American identity for generations, kept alive by the representation of African American history and identity in society and media. Giesen analysed collective memories of the Holocaust from the perpetrators' perspective and observed how such memories may induce collective trauma for anyone in the perpetrator ingroup, also when they have no individual experience of the traumatic event.⁵³ "If a community has to recognize that its members, instead of being heroes, have been perpetrators who violated the cultural premises of their own identity, the reference to the past is indeed traumatic".⁵⁴ The notion that collective trauma is passed over through generations, similarly to collective memories, is widely accepted in sociological academia, and has also been empirically demonstrated by Yehuda, Halligan and Bierer who conducted extensive analyses on the cortisol levels of second-generation Holocaust survivors.⁵⁵ Terms such as "transgenerational trauma" and "historical trauma" are sometimes used to emphasise this transgenerational quality of collective trauma.⁵⁶

In the examples above, transgenerational collective trauma affects African American identity by recalling power imbalances between perceived outgroups and ingroups, while descendants of Nazi perpetrators may experience trauma upon realising the crimes of predecessors belonging to their perceived ingroup. In both cases, the perceived value of the ingroup can be experienced as challenged, causing potential social identity threats. In these examples, distinctions of victims and perpetrators are clear, and related historical narratives are at least broadly agreed upon between victims and perpetrators. However,

⁵² Ron Eyerman, *The Past in the Present: Culture and the Transmission of Memory*, *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (Jun, 2004), 159-16.

⁵³ Bernhard Giesen, "The Trauma of Perpetrators: The Holocaust as the Traumatic Reference of German National Identity," *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2004), 112-154.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 114.

⁵⁵ Rachel Yehuda, Sarah L. Halligan and Linda M. Bierer. "Cortisol levels in adult offspring of Holocaust survivors: relation to PTSD symptom severity in the parent and child." in *Psychoneuroendocrinology* 27 (2002) 171–180.

⁵⁶ Hirschberger, "Collective Trauma".

many social groups lack universal perceptions and definitions which further complicates and diversifies related collective traumas and identity threats. Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears and Doosje distinguished four different types of social identity threats and argue that an individual's response to such threats are dependent on the degree to which the individual feels committed to the group under threat.⁵⁷ The four types of identity threats identified are: "1 'Categorization threat' (being categorised against ones will). 2 'Distinctiveness threat' (group distinctiveness is prevented or undermined). 3 'Threats to the value of social identity' (the group's value is undermined). 4 'Acceptance threat' (one's position within the group is undermined)".⁵⁸

1.4 Social identities and Collective Traumas in Korea and Japan

In Korea, national ethnic identity became the most important social categorisation when it took shape during the colonial period in response to Japanese imperialism.⁵⁹ Gi-Wook Shin has observed that the post-colonial identity politics orchestrated by Korean dictators harnessed and amplified the enduring colonial legacy of a robust national identity, with the purpose of legitimising authoritarian rule.⁶⁰ Ethnic nationalism was propagated as essential to defeat communism, strategically positioned as Korea's post-colonial nemesis.

The Korean concept of *han* encompasses transgenerational collective trauma in the form of memories and predominantly negative emotions that represent the core of Korean national identity, and is claimed by many Koreans to date back five thousand years to the ancient Korean kingdom of Gojoseon.⁶¹ Rather than being an ancient component of Korean identity, others define it as the resulting emotions of loss of the ego and traditional Korean national identity, from trauma such as Japanese occupation and family separations

⁵⁷ Nyla R. Branscombe, Naomi Ellemers, Russel Spears and Bertjan Doosje. "The context and content of social identity threat." In *Social identity: Context, commitment, content*, edited by Nyla Ellemers, Russel Spears and Bertjan Doosje (Oxford: Blackwell Science, 1999) 35–58.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 36.

⁵⁹ Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Stanford University Press, 2006).

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 100-2.

⁶¹ Jung-Soon Shim, "The Shaman and the Epic Theatre: The Nature of Han in the Korean Theatre," *New Theatre Quarterly* 20, 3 (2004), 216.

following the division of the Korean peninsula after the Korean War.⁶² *Han* is an untranslatable and ambiguous concept whose origin and significance is disputed, and critical Koreanists argue that *han* is a social construct whose modern interpretation only dates back to the Japanese colonial occupation of Korea.⁶³ It's definitions are argued to have been informed by the discourse on the Beauty of Sadness (*biae-mi/hiai-mi*) propagated by the influential Japanese art critic Yanagi Muneyoshi in colonial Korea.⁶⁴ While understandings of the origin and scope of *han* may be diverse within the Korean public, there is unanimity that the term encompasses the idea of a transgenerational collective trauma central to Korean national identity.

The above paragraph may seem to suggest a singular strong Korean social identity, but political and economic changes on the Korean peninsula over the last century has been too extensive and rapid for a clear South Korean national identity to emerge, and dissonance in traumatic collective memories such as those regarding the extent of Korean collaboration with imperial Japan obstructs national consensus on Korean identity.⁶⁵ Shame and self-blame are factors considered to be attributes of *han* and Korean social identity which contributes to maintaining dissonance in Korean collective memories of colonialism.⁶⁶ In fact, the majority of Koreans name Japanese occupation as the single most dishonourable and shameful event in Korea's history.⁶⁷

A major issue lacking consensus is how to define and to what extent condemn ingroup perpetrators, namely the so called "pro-Japanese Korean collaborators" under colonial rule, as well as their descendants. For example, when the Centre for Historical Truth (previously known in English as the Institute for Research in Collaborationist Activities),

⁶² Michael D. Shin, "A Brief History of Han". The Korea Society lecture, 2019. Video recording online: <https://www.koreasociety.org/education/item/1288-a-brief-history-of-han>

⁶³ Sandra So Hee Chi Kim, "Korean Han and the Postcolonial Afterlives of 'The Beauty of Sorrow,'" *Korean Studies*, vol. 41 (2017), 253-279.

⁶⁴ Park Kyu-tae, "Yanagi Muneyoshi's *biae-mi* mono: Mono-no-awareewa han ui mihak seoseol [Yanagi Muneyoshi's 'Mono' and Beauty of Sadness: A Study on the Aesthetics of Mono-no-aware and Han]", *Ilbon sasang* (39) 2020, 67-93.

⁶⁵ Don Baker, "Memory Wars and Prospects for Reconciliation in South Korea." *Routledge Handbook of Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia*. Edited by Kim MiKyoung (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 111-127.

⁶⁶ Barry Schwartz and MiKyoung Kim, "Honor, dignity, and collective memory: Judging the past in Korea and the United States," *Culture in Mind: Toward a Sociology of Culture and Cognition*, Edited by Karen A. Cerulo, (New York and London: Routledge 2002), 209-226.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 212-13.

a Korean civic organization, published three detailed volumes of a biographical encyclopaedia of pro-Japanese collaborators (*Chinil inmyeong sajeon*) in 2009, project members were met with violence and right-wing critics accused them of deliberately creating social division in support of DPRK communist agendas.⁶⁸

The acknowledgment of ingroup perpetrators is complicated by “victimhood nationalism”, a concept coined by historian and memory scholar Lim Jie-Hyun.⁶⁹ The infusion of transgenerational collective trauma into the core of national identity represents a manifestation of victimhood nationalism. Lim Jie-Hyun asserts that “[v]ictimhood nationalism has the sacralization of memories as its epistemological mainstay, particularly when sacralised memories effectively block the sceptical and critical gaze of outsiders upon ‘our own unique past’”.⁷⁰ Victimhood nationalism is a transnational phenomenon because it cannot exist without the Other, a foreign perpetrator. When sacralised memories of the victimhood ingroup is criticised by the Other, victimhood nationalism of the ingroup is strengthened as the ingroup perceives itself revictimized, as the case of Korean victimhood nationalism and Japanese criticism demonstrates. However, victimhood nationalism is also common in historical aggressors such as Germany and Japan, where the notion of collective victimhood may de-contextualise and conceal the past of perpetrators turned victim. Lim Jie Hyun emphasises Japan’s typical claim of being the only victim of atomic bombings as a cornerstone of Japanese victimhood nationalism, and indicates that the claim affords Japan a prominent status within a perceived international hierarchy of victims.⁷¹ Victimhood nationalism further establishes hierarchies even within victimized ingroups, as the remembrance of one-dimensional innocent, moral, and vulnerable victims reinforces the categorisations of self and Other into dichotomous “victim” and “perpetrator” classifications.⁷²

⁶⁸ Jeong-Chul Kim, “On forgiveness and reconciliation: Korean ‘collaborators’ of Japanese colonialism”. *Routledge Handbook of Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia*. Edited by Kim MiKyoung (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 167-9.

⁶⁹ Lim Jie-Hyun, “Victimhood Nationalism in Contested Memories: National Mourning and Global Accountability,” *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories*, edited by Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad (Basingstoke and NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 138-62.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 140.

⁷¹ *Ibid*; Lim Jie-Hyun, *Global Easts: Remembering, imagining, mobilizing* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2022), eBook Chapter 3.

⁷² Sarah E. Jankowitz, *The Order of Victimhood: Violence, Hierarchy and Building Peace in Northern*

Japan does not have any terms or notions equivalent to Korean *han*, but existing literature has explored how Japanese transgenerational collective memories and trauma related to the Asian Pacific War pose direct threats to Japanese identity. Narratives of Japanese citizens as victims of imperial militarism and atomic bombings were dominant until the 1990s, but as Korea and China grew more powerful and their narratives gained widened international attention, many Japanese saw the need “to reconstruct their new identity as a former aggressor”.⁷³ At the same time, conflicting narratives of Japanese war responsibility became prominent in politics and mainstream news media, which disputed whether Japan should face a dark past and extend apologies to re-discovered victims such as former “comfort women” or focus on rejecting accusations and restoring lost dignity.⁷⁴ Sociologist Akiko Hashimoto analysed Japanese war narratives in a wide range of settings and argues that Japanese collective war memories can be divided into *hero*, *victim*, and *perpetrator* narratives.⁷⁵ The dissonance of these narratives produces trauma through divided public discourse that challenges Japanese identity, because the sense that “something dreadful” happened in the past is shared but the moral frames through which this past is interpreted and rationalised are divided.⁷⁶

Collective traumas contribute to the moulding of collective memories of war and colonialism in Korea and Japan and exacerbate the dissonance between national memories of the two countries. The dissonance in difficult memories encompassing national victims and perpetrators complicates prospects of reconciliation. Reconciliation itself poses significant identity threats because it requires “the removal of the negation of the other as a central component of one’s own identity”.⁷⁷ Building on a vast range of interdisciplinary scholarship, sociologist Hiro Saito concludes that “reconciliation

Ireland (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 136-41.

⁷³ Kazuya Fukuoka, “Memory and others: Japan’s mnemonic turn in the 1990s”. *Routledge Handbook of Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia*. Edited by Kim MiKyoung (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 72.

⁷⁴ Shunichi Takekawa, “Reconciliation prospects and divided war memories in Japan: An analysis”. *Routledge Handbook of Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia*. Edited by Kim MiKyoung (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 90-91.

⁷⁵ Akiko Hashimoto, *The Long Defeat: Cultural Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Japan*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 1, 86, 112-14.

⁷⁷ Herbert C. Kelma, “Reconciliation as Identity Change: A Social-Psychological Perspective,” *From Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation*. Edited by Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov (Oxford University Press, 2004), 119-120.

requires former enemies to dialogically reconstitute their previous beliefs, attitudes, and identities to make them compatible with each other,” and develop mutual trust and maintain peace.⁷⁸ However, Japan still exists as “the absolute perpetrator” in the core of many Koreans’ identities, while the majority of post-war generation Japanese identify imperial Japan as both victim and perpetrator, creating an ambiguous “dual identity”.⁷⁹ Japanese identity has required several reconstructions over the last century, but negative perceptions of an “inferior” Korea are still firmly rooted in official Japanese identity narratives.⁸⁰ Japanese memory politics attempting neutralisation of perpetrator trauma includes a prominent narrative of pre-colonial Korea as a backwards country that lacked power needed for independence and development, reflecting the official justifications of imperial Japan when it colonised Korea in the beginning of the 20th century. From this perspective, present day Koreans are seen as “ungrateful” and continuously “backwards” as they stay incapable of recognising various alleged positive outcomes of Japanese colonial rule.⁸¹ In accordance with Kelman’s theory, reconciliation between Korea and Japan is impossible if negative perceptions of “the Other” continue to inform the core of Korean and Japanese national identities. In what ways, then, can mutual acceptance of Korean and Japanese conflicting collective memories be facilitated? This study explores the possibility of strategically facilitated dark tourism as a potential avenue towards contributing to this goal.

1.5 Dark Tourism and Dissonant Heritage

Places associated with death, disaster or suffering have attracted tourists for centuries, but this phenomenon has only recently received the attention of media and academics.⁸² The term “dark tourism” was established by Lennon and Foley as an overall term

⁷⁸ Hiro Saito, “East Asia and cosmopolitan memory,” *Routledge Handbook of Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia*. Edited by Kim MiKyoung, Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 395-397.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Taku Tamaki, *Deconstructing Japan’s Image of South Korea: Identity in Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Richard Sharpley, “Shedding light on Dark Tourism: An Introduction,” *The Darker Side of Travel: the theory and practice of dark tourism*, edited by Richard Sharpley and Philip R. Stone (Bristol: Channel View Publications, 2009), 22.

encompassing the visitation to any site which has either been the locations of death and disaster or sites of interpretation of such events, for remembrance, education, or entertainment.⁸³ “Disaster” in this definition is widely regarded to include human-made disasters and atrocities.⁸⁴ The also widely used “thanatourism” was proposed as an alternate term to “dark tourism” by A. V. Seaton, but its definition is narrower as it only refers to travel “motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death”.⁸⁵ Dark tourism is per Lennon and Foley’s definition a very broad term, and “thanatourism,” although widely used, does not encompass all types of sites that will be explored in the following study. A myriad of other labels and overlapping taxonomies have been proposed,⁸⁶ but the term “dark tourism” is most widely preferred and used both by scholars and general audiences.⁸⁷

Clark proposed the term “trauma tourism,” arguing that “trauma” in reference to political atrocity “acknowledg[es] both the damage to individual bodies and psyches, and to the social body and psyche”.⁸⁸ While this term and definition align with the framework of this study, it remains relatively obscure and limited in scope. Furthermore, it does not encompass the requirements of bystander tourists who also seek educational and/or therapeutic experiences during their journeys. In fact, these are common goals for bystander visitors to sites of dark tourism. Yankovska and Hannam’s case study of dark tourism to Chernobyl indicated that while some who engage in dark tourism are indifferent or even excited about narratives of death and destruction, the majority desire an educational experience, and guides of dark tourism commonly strive to present historical truths and erase misconceptions.⁸⁹ Another case study focussed on tourists in

⁸³ J. John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, “Editorial: Heart of Darkness.” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 2, 4 (1996), 195.

⁸⁴ Jonathan Skinner, *Writing the Dark Side of Travel* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012).

⁸⁵ A. V. Seaton, “Guided by the dark: From thanatopsis to thanatourism.” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 2, 4 (1996), 240.

⁸⁶ See Gregory John Ashworth and Rami K. Isaac, “Have we illuminated the dark? Shifting perspectives on ‘dark’ tourism”. *Tourism Recreation Research* 40, 3 (2015), 318.

⁸⁷ Annaclaudia Martini and Dorina Maria Buda, “Dark tourism and affect: framing places of death and disaster.” *Current Issues in Tourism* 23, 6 (2020), 681; Duncan Light, “Progress in dark tourism and thanatourism research: An uneasy relationship with heritage tourism.” *Tourism Management* 61 (2017), 275-301.

⁸⁸ Laurie Beth Clark, “Coming to terms with trauma tourism,” *Performance Paradigm* 5, 2 (2009) 176; Clark, “Ethical spaces: Ethics and propriety in trauma tourism,” *Death tourism: Disaster sites as recreational landscape*, edited by B. Sion (London: Seagull, 2014), 9-35.

⁸⁹ Ganna Yankovska and Kevin Hannam, “Dark and toxic tourism in the Chernobyl exclusion zone”.

Cambodia participating in charity and volunteer programmes and the effects of their visits to dark tourism sites such as Choeung Ek (“the killing fields”) and the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum.⁹⁰ The study found that dark tourism helped the tourists renew commitment and hope for their volunteering projects.⁹¹

Ide Akira, the most prominent dark tourism scholar in East-Asia, describes dark tourism as a methodology that involves exploring and contrasting historical narratives of progress and human suffering at sites of memory through travel and observation, illuminating the complex interplay through which these factors have contributed to the shaping of contemporary society and its contradictions.⁹² Following Ide’s delineation, instances of travel to historical sites of human suffering that have not contributed to the configuration of contemporary society, such as a newly discovered ancient site of murder, do not fall within the realm of dark tourism. Furthermore, Ide’s dark tourism necessitates an educational aspect, because without deeply engaging with historical memories one may not contemplate their effects. Consequently, as per Ide’s construct, the mere observation of symbols depicting death and suffering at a site of memory, devoid of an earnest effort to comprehend historical causes and ramifications, does not qualify as dark tourism. Such cursory engagement precludes a meaningful exploration of the intricate connections between the past and the present.⁹³

The term “dark tourist,” referring to tourists visiting sites of dark tourism has been popularised by popular media, for example through the controversial 2018 Netflix documentary series *Dark Tourist*. The term “dark tourism” can as discussed be applied to a great number of various sites visited by tourists regardless of the extent to which the official narratives of the sites acknowledge any related traumatic memories. The opposite is true of the term “dark tourist,” as it can only be applied to tourists who acknowledge

Current Issues in Tourism 17, 10 (2014) 18-19.

⁹⁰ Maria Koletch, “Hope in the dark: geographies of volunteer and dark tourism in Cambodia”. *Cultural Geographies* 21(4): 681-694.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 690-1.

⁹² Ide Akira, *Dāku tsūrizumu kakuchō - Kindai no sai-kōchiku* [Dark tourism expansion: Reconstruction of modern history], (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 2018), 15-16.

⁹³ *Ibid*; Ide Akira, *Higeki no sekai isan – Dāku tsūrizumu kara mita sekai* [World Heritage of tragedy: The world seen through dark tourism], (Tokyo: Bunshun shinsho, 2021); Ide, *Dāku tsūrizumu: Kanishimi no kioku wo meguru tabi* [Dark Tourism: Travel in the context of tragic memories], (Tokyo: Gentosha, 2018).

an extent of historical disaster related to the site they are visiting. For example, a dark tourist may want to see the British Crown Jewels to contemplate on the bloody history of colonial conquest, but only if such an intention is known can the term “dark tourist” be applicable. Sharpley and Friedrich argues that the term “dark tourist” is often misleading because those who engage in dark tourism typically travel for a variety of reasons, and “to pejoratively generalise visitors to such places as ‘dark tourists’ is to ignore their typically positive motives and their personal and meaningful experiences and [often] to dishonour those commemorated”.⁹⁴

Dark tourism is influenced by tourism politics in much the same way as memory and identity is influenced by memory and identity politics. Lennon and Foley emphasised that “the politics, economics, sociologies and technologies of the contemporary world are as much important factors in the events upon which [...] dark tourism is focussed as they are central to the selection and interpretation of sites and events which become tourist products”.⁹⁵ There are wide gaps in the still immature discipline of dark tourism studies, but interdisciplinary frameworks can be borrowed and adjusted to recognise and analyse dark tourism politics. Tunbridge and Ashworth, informed by David Lowenthal, borrows from memory and identity studies to construct their concept of “dissonant heritage”, which is highly applicable when analysing dark tourism and its politics.⁹⁶ Tunbridge and Ashworth perceive heritage as contemporary products shaped from selective attempts of documenting the past, and their framework equates the resulting inconsistencies of “heritage production” with the psychic tensions of cognitive dissonance.⁹⁷ Dissonance in and between victim and perpetrator narratives at heritage sites of difficult memory and the management of related human trauma are raised as profoundly significant categories in which various forms of concealed politics behind the interpretation and presentation of

⁹⁴ Richard Sharpley and Mona Friedrich, “Genocide tourism in Rwanda: Contesting the concept of the ‘dark tourist’”, *Dark tourism: Practice and interpretation*, edited by Glenn Hooper and John J. Lennon, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 144.

⁹⁵ J. John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, *Dark Tourism: The attraction of death and disaster* (London: Continuum, 2000).

⁹⁶ John E. Tunbridge and Gregory John Ashworth, *Dissonant heritage: The management of the past as a resource in conflict* (Chichester: Wiley, 1996).

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 20.

dark tourism sites can be identified.⁹⁸

Heritage dissonance may call for suppression or emphasis of certain collective memories, depending on one's perspective and motivations. Philip Stone, seeking a generalised definition applicable to any type of visitor, argues that dark tourism is "a modern mediating institution" that links the living and dead and allows "the Self to construct contemporary ontological meanings of mortality".⁹⁹ Seen through Stone's lens, it can be argued that dissonance in heritage obstructs visitors' abilities to process and accept the mortality-related information, which in turn may create ontological insecurity.¹⁰⁰ Stone's perspective may be helpful for dark tourism managers focusing on bystanders and some victim groups, but the opposite must be true for dissonant dark tourism sites seeking to allow victim as well as perpetrator groups to face traumas of conflicting collective memories.

Clark, consistent with her "trauma tourism" terminology, asserts that "the needs of 'trauma tourists' at places of memory are often assigned hierarchies according to their proximity of each group to the trauma" in the order 1) direct victims, 2) family of victims, 3) members sharing the social identity of victims 4) those sharing the ideology of the victims, and lastly 5) bystanders".¹⁰¹ This hierarchy also, however, does not include perpetrators and related groups. Ashworth and Hartmann distinguish victims, perpetrators, and bystanders (observers) as three categories of audiences for places of death and suffering and debate the management issues of interpreting and presenting such sites in ways acceptable to all categories.¹⁰² Germany hosts numerous examples of sites popular for dark tourism where official narratives carefully consider the perspectives and potential trauma of also perpetrator-descendants. These sites extend beyond well-known former Nazi death camps to include "documentation centres" situated at places like Hitler's second home in Berchtesgaden and the Nuremberg Nazi Party rally grounds.¹⁰³ If

⁹⁸ Ibid, 94-130.

⁹⁹ Philip R. Stone, "Dark tourism and significant other death: Towards a Model of Mortality Mediation," *Annals of Tourism Research* 39, 3 (2012), 1565.

¹⁰⁰ Hashimoto and Telfer, "Contested geopolitical messages", 400.

¹⁰¹ Clark, "Coming to terms", 178.

¹⁰² Gregory John Ashworth and Rudi Hartmann, *Horror and human tragedy revisited: The management of sites of atrocities for tourism*, (New York: Cognizant Communication Corporation, 2005).

¹⁰³ Rudi Hartman, "Tourism to Memorial Sites of the Holocaust", *The Palgrave Handbook of Dark*

acceptance from conflicting visitor groups is a priority, dissonance in heritage narratives is a necessity, because “[...] all heritage is dissonant to someone, and all dissonance is someone’s heritage.”¹⁰⁴

From a postcolonial perspective, some dissonance in memories encompassed at colonial heritage sites should be expected and accepted. It may often be natural for commercial managers of heritage sites to seek harmonious narratives as palatable as possible to the dominant tourist groups. However, examining intersections of dark tourism and postcolonial studies, Carrigan argues that dark tourism scholarship can have transformative potential by shifting the focus from management issues to the empowerment of unheard and marginalised groups.¹⁰⁵ Informed by memory studies such as Feuchtwang’s study on the memorialisation of Taiwanese victims of the post-colonial nationalist rule (Guomindang), it can be effectively argued that sites of memory may “constitute a civic ritual of recognition that can assuage the shame of those originally humiliated,” and that presenting a rectified narrative of truth accountable to 1) “direct victims and their families”, 2) “the people of the [local community],” and 3) “the international community,” is an effective way of delivering a sense of justice for “forgotten” crimes.¹⁰⁶

The last two decades of research into dark tourism present an abundance of studies across academic disciplines, but very few studies explore dark tourism from a postcolonial perspective.¹⁰⁷ Again, Tunbridge and Ashworth’s dissonant heritage framework is highly relevant because the importance of decolonised narratives are considered from the perspectives of managers as well as visitor groups with dissonant collective memories.¹⁰⁸

Discussing the educational value of dark tourism at sites encompassing dissonant

Tourism Studies, edited by Philip R. Stone, Rudi Hartmann, Tony Seaton, Richard Sharpley and Leanne White (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 469-507.

¹⁰⁴ Tunbridge and Ashworth, *Dissonant heritage*, 263.

¹⁰⁵ Anthony Carrigan, “Dark tourism and postcolonial studies: critical intersections”, *Postcolonial Studies* 17, 3 (2014), 240, 247.

¹⁰⁶ Stephan Feuchtwang, “Memorials to injustice”, *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship Between Past and Present*, edited by Duncan Bell (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan), 185, 194.

¹⁰⁷ Light, “Progress in dark tourism”.

¹⁰⁸ Tunbridge and Ashworth, *Dissonant heritage*.

memories, one may wonder how historical truth can be discovered amongst diverse and contrasting interpretations of the past. Prominent historian of East Asia Tessa Morris-Suzuki argues that contemplating on dissonant narratives does not reveal a “single authoritative ‘historical truth’”, but that it can elevate our understanding of how “people in the present try to make sense of the past”.¹⁰⁹ For such reflection to be meaningful, Morris-Suzuki stresses the need for “an open-ended and evolving relationship with the future,” a concept she terms “historical truthfulness”.¹¹⁰ Morris-Suzuki asserts that historical truthfulness necessitates a willingness to comprehend the interconnected web of relationships spanning historical events, the conveyors of knowledge about these events, and the individuals who receive and interpret this knowledge. Furthermore, it necessitates reflecting on the roles of diverse media, such as heritage sites and textbooks, in conveying knowledge, and how these roles influence people’s interpretations. Such introspection counters interpretations that evade responsibility by suggesting history is entirely subjective and that truths are multifaceted. Instead, it redirects attention towards the need to continually engage with and relearn history as marginalised perspectives are highlighted and amplified by diverse groups across various media platforms.¹¹¹

1.6 Dark Tourism and Colonial Cultural Heritage in Korea

There is no equivalent term for “dark tourism” in the Korean language, and as there are no well-known translations, the Koreanised form of the English term, “*dakeu tueorijeum*”, is most commonly used in Korean academic studies on the topic.¹¹² Naver’s Korean dictionary defines “*dakeu tueorijeum*” as “educational travel to disaster sites or places where tragic events have occurred”.¹¹³ The National Institute of the Korean language (subsidiary of the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism) creates Korean terms

¹⁰⁹ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Past Within Us: media, memory, history*, (The Bath Press, 2005), 28.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 28-29.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 1-32.

¹¹² Song Jaeho, Nam Yunseop and Kim Seogyun, “Seutoritelling-eul hwalyonghan dakeu tu-eorijeum koseu hyeongsanghwa-e gwanhan yeon-gu [A Study for Dark Tourism course imagery which use Storytelling]”. *Gwangwangyeongu Jeoneol*, 26, 5 (2012), 167.

¹¹³ Naver Korean dictionary online, “dakeu tueorijeum” (n.d.) <https://ko.dict.naver.com/#/entry/koko/28fe58abe77c4144955893c3dda68930> (last accessed 13 August 2023).

from loanwords for the sake of linguistic purism, and their linguistically Korean term for dark tourism is “*yeoksa gyohun yeohaeng*” which literally translates to “history learning travel”.¹¹⁴

Academic exploration and experimental initiatives pertaining to dark tourism emerged in Korea during the 2000s, coinciding with the growing recognition of its potential for advancing historical education.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, the landscape of Korean research in the realm of dark tourism remains sparse, and the country has not been able to properly develop tourism sites for dark tourism.¹¹⁶ The concept of dark tourism is only recently becoming known amongst Korean general public, as indicated in Yang Jinyeon’s case study of the Historic Park of Geoje POW Camp which mapped domestic dark tourism visitors’ motivations, in which only 15.5% of the questioned visitors responded they had heard the term.¹¹⁷

Despite significant wide gaps in Korean academic research on dark tourism, many local scholars recognise potential benefits and conflicts of its facilitation. Ryu Ju-Hyun has argued for the necessity of utilising “negative place assets (*bujeongjeok jangsojasan*)” and the implementation of dark tourism in Korea, and asserts that important lessons are lost in the conventional way of only focusing on positive images of touristic sites while omitting “disgraceful and embarrassing” narratives.¹¹⁸ Jang and Gang found that traumatic memories of colonialism and the Korean War are perceived as a challenge for related dark tourism facilitation, evident also by the fact that many relevant heritage sites are neglected or have been dismantled.¹¹⁹ On the other hand, Lolitasari and Yun’s case

¹¹⁴ National Institute of Korean Language 2020. “dakeu tueoriyeum” search result. Accessed 25 November 2020

https://www.korean.go.kr/front/imprv/refineView.do?mn_id=&imprv_refine_seq=1978&pageIndex=1

¹¹⁵ Jang Seonggon and Gang Dongjin, “Jisokkaneunghan dakeu tu-eoriyeum (Dark Tourism) ui gaenyeom jeonguiwa jeongaegwajeong punseok [An Analysis of the Process and the Definition of Sustainable Dark Tourism],” *Hanguk doshi seolgyehagoeji doshiseolgye*, 18, 2 (2017), 64.

¹¹⁶ Gang Eunjeong and Go Seungik, “Jejujiyeok dakeu tu-eoriyeum-e daehan gochal - ilche gangeomgireul jungshimeuro [A Study on Dark Tourism in Jeju - Focusing on the Japanese Colonial Period],” *Jeju gwangwanghakyongu*, 15, 2 (2011), 5-21.

¹¹⁷ Yang Jinyeon, “Geoje P.O.W yongso bangmungaegui dakeu tu-eoriyeum inshige gwanhan tamseokjeong yeon-gu [An Exploratory Study on Visitors’ Perceptions of Dark Tourism in Geoje P.O.W(Prisoner-of-war) Camp]”, *Hangukgwangwanghakhoe haksulbalpyodaehoe*, 50 (2018), 146.

¹¹⁸ Ryu Ju-hyun, “Bujeongjeok changsojasan-eul hwalyonghan gwangwang gaebal-ui piryoseong [A Study for the Necessity of Alternative Tourism Development Using Negative Place Assets]”, *Hanguktoshijirihakhoeji*, 10, 3 (2007), 77.

¹¹⁹ Jang and Gang, “An Analysis”.

study of domestic visitors' emotional responses at the Seodaemun Prison History Hall, a site directly related to Japanese colonialism, found that the majority valued the educational aspects of their visits and felt also positive emotions such as appreciation, empathy and pride when confronted with the prison's tragic history.¹²⁰ Youn and Uzzell mapped younger Koreans' conceptualisation of colonial heritage sites and found that not all colonial heritage sites in Korea poses identity threats, but especially sites that have served politically or socially significant roles in both colonial and post-colonial Korea carry potential identity threats because related narratives directly inform the Korean national identity.¹²¹

Jeong Eunhye has studied dark tourism at neglected Korean sites of colonial memory such as Sorok Island and Mitsubishi (Samneung) Village and asserts that strong negative feelings towards the colonial period often prevent Korean appreciation for colonial heritage.¹²² Jeong stresses the necessity of preserving also colonial cultural heritage and emphasises dark tourism's significance as a tool for solidifying and preserving history and memories that could potentially disappear. Hyun Kyung Lee also asserts the necessity of preserving "difficult" or "inconvenient heritage (*bulpyeon munhwayusan*)", highlighting its powerful influence and potential for utilisation as a political tool in international memory disputes.¹²³ Likewise, in Gang and Go's study on dark tourism on Jeju Island with a focus on colonial heritage, the authors argue that while Jeju is internationally known as a beautiful island, the potential for dark tourism in relation to Japanese colonial military facilities is heavily underestimated.¹²⁴ In Jeju Development

¹²⁰ Ade Triana Lolitasari and Yun Huijeong "Dakeu tu-eorijeum gwangwangja-ui gwallamdongseon mit gwallamhaengtae - Seodaemunhyeongmuso yeoksagwan-eul daesangeuro [Tourists' Circulations and Behaviours in Dark Tourism Sites: Focussed on Seodaemun Prison History Hall]". *The Journal of the Korea Contents Association*, 16, 9 (2016), 198-210.

¹²¹ Youn Seung Ho and David Uzzell, "The young generations' conceptualisation of cultural tourism: colonial heritage attractions in South Korea," *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 21, 12 (2016), 24-28.

¹²² Jeong Eunhye, "Singmingwollyeogi banyeongdoen gyeongwan-ui bojon gachie daehan yeon-gu: ilche ha hyeongsongdoen jeonnam sorokdo-wa incheon samneung(Mitsubishi) ma-eul-eul saryero" [A Study on the Conservation Value of Landscape within Colonial Power: Sorok Island and Mitsubishi Village as Colonial Examples]. *Hanguktoshijirihakhojei*, 19, 1 (2016), 86.

¹²³ Hyun Kyung Lee, "Bulpyeonmunhwayusan (difficult heritage)" ui gaenyeom mit yeokae daehan gochal [Study on the concept and roles of "Difficult Heritage"]. *Doshiyeongu* 20, (2018) 163-192; Hyun Kyung Lee, *'Difficult Heritage' in Nation Building South Korea and post-Conflict Japanese Colonial Occupation Architecture* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

¹²⁴ Gang and Go, "A Study on Dark Tourism in Jeju", 194.

Institute's (currently "Jeju Research Institute") research magazine, Mun Sundeok stated that proactive development for dark tourism in relation to colonial cultural heritage (and the Jeju uprising) would encourage peace and human rights education and lead to new and increased tourism demand.¹²⁵ She uses examples such as the Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders in China, and touristic development around the Korean DMZ to illustrate successful application of educational dark tourism.

Some Korean sites of colonial heritage have been developed for tourism in a way as to not invoke traumatic collective memories. In Gunsan city, for example, a modern history museum compliments preserved and reconstructed Japanese colonial buildings and houses open for tourists. The local Gunsan government was actively involved in this development.¹²⁶ However, the official narratives associated with colonial heritage sites in Gunsan do not emphasise difficult memories, dark tourism, and history education. Instead, they are aligned with the domestic touristic trends that use nostalgia to establish contemporary leisure spaces.¹²⁷ A similar example can be found in Guryongpo in Pohang, where the local government has restored the colonial main street and several Japanese buildings with the official purpose of increasing tourism and preserving evidence of Japanese exploitation of the Korean people.¹²⁸ Despite the latter stated objective, however, potential adverse reactions from Japanese tourists were taken into account during the development process. Consequently, many attractions also in Guryongpo are focussed on evoking nostalgia and offering "Japanese experiences", with minimal emphasis on difficult history.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Mun Sundeok, "Jejujiyeog-ui dakeu tu-eorijeum hyeonhwangwa hwalseonghwa pangan [Current Status and Activation Plan for Dark Tourism on Jeju]". *Jejubalcheon yeonguwon FOCUS*, 183, 12 (2013), 3.

¹²⁶ Bak Suhyeon, "Geundaemunhwayusangwangwang-ui jinjeongseong-e daehan gochal -gungnae dakeu tu-eorijeum-ui baljeon banghyang [Study on the Authenticity of Modern Cultural Heritage Tourism - Development Direction of Dark Tourism in Korea]", *Yeogagwangwangyeongu*, 25, 1 (2016), 37-55.

¹²⁷ Todoroki Hiroshi, "Kankoku no kyū kaikō-jō ni tōei sareta 'Nippon' - Tōji no toshi keikaku to gendai no kankō keikaku no aida de ["Japan" projected on the former Open Port Settlements in Korea: Colonial city plans of the time against modern tourism plans]". *Ritsumeikan daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyū-sho kijō*, 121, 12 (2019) 165-198.

¹²⁸ Oh Seona, Ōnuma Hisao and Seo Sangmun, "Kindai rekishi bunka isan toshite no shokuminchiki (nitteikyōsenki) no Nihonjin shūjū chiku fukugen no ugoki: Kankoku nantōbu kaigan ni aru Pohan-shi no Kuryonpo wo chūshin ni [Moves to Restore Japanese Residential Areas from the Period of Japanese Colonial Rule as Modern Historical and Cultural Heritage: Focusing on Guryongpo in Pohang City on the South-eastern Coast of Korea]", *Kyōai gakuen Maebashi kokusai daigaku ronshū* 17 (2017), 79.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 79, 87.

Many of the specific Korean colonial sites mentioned here are not near other popular tourist attractions and are not well-known to international tourists. However, connection to tragic events and remoteness does not equal absence of touristic potential. The Joint Security Area (JSA) is located in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) of Korea and requires advance reservation through government approved travel agencies, and even with dress-codes and heavy limitation on movement and photography it is still visited by a substantial number of international and domestic tourists.¹³⁰

1.7 Dark Tourism and Colonial Cultural Heritage in Japan

Dark tourism was first introduced to Japanese academia in a presentation by the Japan-based human geography scholar Caroline Funck in 2008, but the topic did not receive much attention until a few years after the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami as the philosopher Azuma Hiroki began a project to prepare the Fukushima nuclear disaster site for dark tourism akin to that of Chernobyl in Ukraine.¹³¹ Since around this time, the aforementioned Ide Akira has focussed on dark tourism studies and relevant book publications, becoming the most well-known dark tourism scholar in Japan.¹³² As discussed, Ide promotes dark tourism as an educational means for engaging with difficult memories of the past. The Daijisen Japanese dictionary defines dark tourism (*dāku tsūrizumu*) as “travel to former sites of war and disaster or other sites related to human death and tragic events for the purpose of learning”.¹³³ Like in the Korean dictionary definition discussed above, *learning* is understood to be an essential aspect of dark tourism in Japan.

¹³⁰ Timothy Jeonglyeol Lee and Eun-Jung Kang, “Living with war - The Korean truce”. In *Tourism and War*, edited by Richard Butler and Wantanee Suntikul, 121-131. Abingdon: Routledge.

¹³¹ Ide Akira, “The situation of Dark Tourism in Japan and Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station”, conference paper, International Conference on Humanities, Literature and Economics (ICHLE’14) Jan. 1-2, 2014, Bangkok. <http://icehm.org/upload/8031ED0114025.pdf>

¹³² See for example Ide Akira, *Dark tourism expansion*; Ide, *World Heritage of tragedy*; Ide, *Dark Tourism: Travel in the context*.

¹³³ Daijisen Japanese dictionary provided online by goo (n.d.). “Dāku tsūrizumu”, Accessed 25 November 2020.

<https://dictionary.goo.ne.jp/word/%E3%83%80%E3%83%BC%E3%82%AF%E3%83%84%E3%83%BC%E3%83%AA%E3%82%BA%E3%83%A0/#jn-268914>

In Japanese academia, the term “negative heritage (*fu no isan*)” is commonly used for heritage of difficult memory.¹³⁴ The term *fu no isan* was initially used to refer to a wide range of “negative legacies” understood to have mostly negative effects, but has since the 1990s often been applied to mean “negative heritage” in relation to social and political issues of Asia-Pacific War memories with a redefined interpretation; “a past event that had caused tremendous damage to people and society and whose memory should be conserved to pass on to future generations for its moralistic value”.¹³⁵ Accordingly, any sites of *fu no isan* are potential dark tourism sites. However, such dark tourism potential is often obstructed by both official memory politics and influence from companies culpable for historical tragedies. For instance, living ex-miners often use the term *fu no isan* in their memory narrations at the Miike Coal Mine, part of the World Heritage inscribed Meiji Industrial Sites, but their perspective is ignored in official narratives partly because the local economy still heavily relies on Mitsui, the company that owned and operated the mines for more than a century.¹³⁶

Expectations of domestic tourists are also a central factor when selecting memories to be included in official narratives of sites of tragedy. According to Ide Akira, the idea that tragedy should be blamed on living perpetrators and forgotten after their death for the sake of the community, is strongly rooted in Japan and this is a central reason appreciation of dark tourism has been lacking.¹³⁷ Ide emphasises how dark tourism can reveal memories concealed by the state and local communities, and that revealing such difficult memories is important in our global era in order to build trust with neighbouring nations. Gomibuchi conducted case studies on the recent touristic narratives of Hashima as well as the Ashio Copper mines (the latter not yet a World Heritage site).¹³⁸ He concluded that while the history of Koreans forced to work in these places during the Asia-Pacific War was not actively concealed, it had been selectively omitted as Japanese nationalism ties

¹³⁴ Oyadomari Motoko, “Dark Tourism shiron ‘fu no isan wa kankō shigen ni nariuru ka?’ [Pilot study on dark tourism: ‘Can negative heritage become a tourism resource?’]”. *Edogawa Daigaku kiyō* 22 ,3 (2012), 139-148; Matsuura, “World heritage”.

¹³⁵ Matsuura, “World heritage”, 321.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Interview with Ide Akira by Mizuno Azusa for *Asahi Shimbun Globe+*, 15 August 2019. Accessed 26 November 2020. <https://globe.asahi.com/article/12605479>

¹³⁸ Gomibuchi Noritsugu, “Taikō-teki kioku to nashonarizumu [Counter-memory and nationalism]”. *Ningen seikatsu bunka kenkyū*, 28 (2018), 541-548.

in with the capitalisation of memories and creates modernised narratives where negative memories are “bleached” (*hyōhaku sareta kioku*) to serve tourists more comfortable experiences.¹³⁹ This corresponds with Uemura’s perspective that for difficult heritage to be successful as tourist attractions, the level of tragedy must be adjusted to match the visitors’ expectations so that they can temporarily and comfortably escape their daily lives.¹⁴⁰

Yoshida analyses Japanese war museums with opposing memory politics and their role in public education and have found that right-wing (hero) narratives of war have become increasingly popular in Japan in recent years.¹⁴¹ The Yūshūkan War Museum, part of the controversial Yasukuni Shrine complex, is well-known for its revisionist narratives glorifying Japan’s war efforts while omitting and/ or denying a number of Japanese war atrocities. However, its continuous efforts to appeal to younger generations have not been particularly effective.¹⁴² Many other Japanese museums also present hero narratives celebrating military actions such as the 1931 invasion of Manchuria and the Asia-Pacific War, especially those managed by the Self Defence Forces.¹⁴³

Sites encompassing memories of the Imperial Japanese Army as a perpetrator are, perhaps surprisingly, not uncommon in Japan. There are peace museums and local history museums, mostly privately managed, with critical narratives of war spread all over the country, and they are very frequently visited on school trips as part of students’ “peace education”.¹⁴⁴ According to the UN, Japan has in fact the highest number of peace

¹³⁹ Ibid 541, 546.

¹⁴⁰ Uemura Takahiro. 2009. “Fu no isan” to kankō [“Negative Heritage” and Sightseeing]. *Risshō daigaku bungakubu ronsō*, 128, 3 (2009), 72.

¹⁴¹ Yoshida Takashi, “The Nanjing Massacre. Changing Contours of History and Memory in Japan, China, and the U.S.,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 4, 12 (2006); Yoshida, “Revising the Past, Complicating the Future: The Yushukan War Museum,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 5, 12 (2007); Yoshida, “Historiography of the Asia-Pacific War in Japan”. *History Faculty Publications* 4 (2008) https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/history_pubs/4 (accessed 30 March 2020); Yoshida, “Remembering Colonial Korea in Postwar Japan,” *History Wars' and Reconciliation in Japan and Korea: The Roles of Historians, Artists and Activists*, edited by Michael Lewis, (New York: Springer, 2016) 17-32.

¹⁴² Yoshida, “Revising the Past”, 3, 6; Shaun O’Dwyer, “The Yasukuni Shrine and the Competing Patriotic Pasts of East Asia”. *History and Memory* 22, 2 (2010) 147-177.

¹⁴³ Laura Hein and Akiko Takenaka, “Exhibiting World War II in Japan and the United States,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, 5, 7 (2007), 2.

¹⁴⁴ Philip Seaton, “Family, Friends and Furusato: ‘Home’ in the Formation of Japanese War Memories”. *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 5, 7 (2007). Examples mentioned in works cited in this chapter

museums of any country in the world.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, Japanese museums and heritage sites often incorporate employed or volunteering *kataribe* (storytellers) from the local community, which at sites such as the Okinawa Peace Park share vernacular memories that sometimes directly oppose the official narratives.¹⁴⁶ However, grassroots heritage centres are always under threat from the hostility of nationalist politicians and sections of the Japanese mass media.¹⁴⁷ The Liberal Democratic Party governments have been explicitly critical to left-leaning narratives of war, evident for example in their “Research report on Japanese war museums (*Zenkoku no sensō hakubutsukan ni kansuru chōsa hōkokusho*)” published in 1996, in which the Osaka International Peace Center was criticised for “propaganda activities based on a politically biased ideology” for presenting perpetrator narratives of imperial Japan.¹⁴⁸

Official Japanese war memory is dominated by victim narratives and collective memories of the atomic bombings. Apart from Yasukuni Shrine, the most important war-related heritage sites for the majority of the Japanese are probably the peace parks and peace museums of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which official narratives promotes pacifism but, especially in the case of Hiroshima, contain very little acknowledgement of the Koreans killed by the atomic bombs as a result of being mobilised to Japan for forced labour.¹⁴⁹ The Hiroshima Peace Park Monument dedicated to Korean victims and survivors, located next to one of the public toilets in the park, describes Korean victims as regular members of the Japanese communities and has no mention of forced labour. Official Japanese war narratives in Hiroshima and its peace park are almost solely victim narratives constructed

include, in no particular order, the Women’s Active Museum on War and Peace (Tokyo), the Korea Museum (Tokyo), the History Museum of Japanese Koreans (Tokyo), Grassroots House Peace Museum (Kochi), Maruki Gallery for the Hiroshima Panels (Saitama), Saitama Prefecture Peace Museum, the Kyoto Museum for World Peace at Ritsumeikan University, the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum, Okunoshima Poison Gas Museum (Hiroshima), Peace Aichi Museum of War and Peace, the Museum for Bamboo-Bush Grave Markers (Hokkaido), the Osaka Human rights Museum, Osaka International Peace Center, the Kawasaki Peace Museum and Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum.

¹⁴⁵ Yamane Kazuyo, *Grassroots Museums for Peace in Japan: Unknown Efforts for Peace and Reconciliation* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag, 2009), xii.

¹⁴⁶ Hashimoto and Telfer, “Contested geopolitical messages”.

¹⁴⁷ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “Out With Human Rights, In With Government-Authored History: The Comfort Women and the Hashimoto Prescription for a ‘New Japan’”. *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, 10, 36 (2012).

¹⁴⁸ Hein and Takenaka, “Exhibiting World War II”, 6.

¹⁴⁹ Malcolm Cooper, “The Pacific War battlefields: Tourist attractions or war memorials?”. *International Journal of Tourism Research* 8, 3 (2006), 218-219.

for peace education.¹⁵⁰ Hiroshima City is actively branding itself as “a city of peace”, selectively erasing its deep interconnectedness with Japanese colonialism as a military city during the colonial period and the Asia-Pacific War from its tourist sites.¹⁵¹

1.8 Conclusion and Conceptual Framework

The terms discussed in this literature review form the conceptual framework for this study. In addition to dark tourism terminology, core concepts such as collective memory, social identity and collective trauma are borrowed from inter-disciplinary academic literature related to memory, identity, and heritage. Applying these concepts, this research examines how dark tourism may highlight marginalised memories of war and colonialism and affect collective memories and social identity of visitor groups to sites of difficult memory.

For the purpose of this study, Ide Akira’s interpretation of dark tourism as a method for enhancing understanding of the past and present through travel to sites of difficult and dissonant memories is utilised. In line with prevailing interpretations of dark tourism in Japan and Korea, Ide emphasises its educational significance, distinct from voyeuristic or morbid interests more often associated with dark tourism in Euro-American countries. To underscore this interpretation, the term “educational dark tourism” is frequently used. This term encompasses Tessa Morris-Suzuki’s concept of historical truthfulness, emphasising the pursuit of an enhanced understanding how diverse and contextualised interpretations of the past across different temporal and spatial dimensions moulds collective memories in contemporary society, while acknowledging that historical truths cannot be purely subjective nor universally absolute.

The term “collective memory” is used as a broad term describing “the circumstance in which different persons, not necessarily known to each other at all, nevertheless recall the same event—again, each in [their] own way”.¹⁵² In order to describe and analyse how

¹⁵⁰ Hashimoto, *The Long Defeat*.

¹⁵¹ Ran Zwigenberg, “Hiroshima Castle and the Long Shadow of Militarism in Postwar Japan”. *Japan Review* 33 Special Issue: War, Tourism, and Modern Japan (2019) 195–218.

¹⁵² Casey, “Public Memory”, 24.

various forms of collective memories interact and collide, collective memories are categorised as official memory, public memory and vernacular collective memory (or vernacular memory). This framework has been constructed for this research by adopting Carol Gluck's definitions of official and vernacular memory and including public memory as a third category of collective memory as defined by Edward Casey. In this context, sites of difficult memory suitable for dark tourism can be understood as public memory informed to various extents by a combination of official and vernacular collective memories. Echoing the notions of official and vernacular memory, narratives and sites of memory overseen by governmental entities are classified as "official" narratives and sites, whereas "private" sites pertain to non-governmental locales of vernacular collective memory. Public memory, in turn, embodies the amalgamation of official and vernacular memory manifested through public discourse in both official and private sites of memory. The term "sites of memory" pertains, within this study, to physical locales like heritage sites, museums, and memorials, excluding intangible crystallisations of memory encompassed within Nora's "lieu de mémoire".

The analysis of the selection of represented memories in official narratives of the past employs the concepts of memory politics and identity politics. To comprehend how dissonance in historical narratives can jeopardise the social identities of both elites and marginalised groups, thereby complicating the pursuit of tourism narratives acceptable for all visitor groups, the theory of collective trauma is employed.¹⁵³ In the context of discussing social identities, the framework of contrasting ingroups and outgroups is applied.¹⁵⁴ In conducting parallel case studies in Korea and Japan, the term "the Other" denotes the outgroup from the perspective of the ingroup—namely, Japanese people from the viewpoint of Koreans, and vice versa.

Heritage encompassing dissonant collective memories, or "dissonant heritage", is a term central to this study denoting inconsistencies comparable to cognitive dissonance in selective attempts of documenting the past through heritage.¹⁵⁵ Most relevant to this study

¹⁵³ Erikson, *Everything in Its Path*; Erikson, "Notes on Trauma"; Alexander et al, *Cultural Trauma*.

¹⁵⁴ Tajfel and Turner, "An integrative theory"; Tajfel, *Human groups*; Tajfel and Turner, "The social identity"; Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*; Huddy, "From Social to Political Identity"; Turner et al, *Rediscovering the Social Group*.

¹⁵⁵ Tunbridge and Ashworth, *Dissonant heritage*.

is “dissonance in and between victim and perpetrator narratives at heritage sites” of difficult memories.¹⁵⁶ “Dissonance” will be used throughout the study based on this interpretation to describe minor and major contradictions in collective memory at dark tourism sites, implying potential of causing identity threats and exacerbating collective trauma to related groups of stakeholders. Visitors to sites of memory are broadly categorised as “Korean”, “Japanese” and other “observers” or “bystanders”, referring to foreign visitors who do not share national identity with historical groups and individuals central to memories presented.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 20.

¹⁵⁷ Ashworth and Hartmann, *Horror and human tragedy*.

Chapter 2 Methodology

This chapter discusses the practical research methods that were employed to collect and analyse primary research data for this study. The largely unexplored topic of impacts of dark tourism on the visualisation of difficult and dissonant colonial collective memories in Korea and Japan necessitated a theoretical framework based on numerous disciplines. Similarly, a simplistic methodological research design would not have yielded sufficient data on all aspects of the research objectives. However, a combination of well-established research methods often applied in tourism and heritage studies proved highly adaptable for the purposes of this research project. This study adopted an interdisciplinary framework rooted in memory studies, identity studies, and dark tourism studies, and implemented a mixed-method ethnographic case study design, primarily relying on qualitative data but also complemented by quantitative data.

Two case studies were conducted for each of Korea and Japan, specifically examining dark tourism in relation to colonial history in the regions of Seoul and Nagasaki. Case study triangulation encompassed: 1) semi-structured personally administered audio-recorded interviews with stakeholders, 2) a questionnaire targeting potential Korean tourists to sites of colonial memory in Japan, and 3) ethnographic observations, including informal conversations with domestic and international tourists in the two regions. A survey planned for potential Japanese tourists to sites of colonial memory in Korea could not be executed due to time limitations for fieldwork in Japan, directly linked to the country's COVID-19 pandemic measures. One month was spent for fieldwork in Japan, and five months in Korea. The study and fieldwork were supported by the Seoul National University Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies where I was a Junior Fellow from March to September 2022.

2.1 Case Studies

Ethnographic case studies—the blended method of ethnography and case studies, has been chosen specifically because advantages from both designs can be purposefully applied to generate necessary research data within time limitations. Ethnographic

research applies qualitative methods focussed on immersive fieldwork, often lasting years, to describe and interpret cultures or social groups, while case studies often focus on locations or organisations and sometimes involves multiple researchers applying mixed methods in stages over time to answer *how*, *what* and/or *why* questions.¹ The blended form of ethnographic case-studies allows for focussed ethnographic qualitative fieldwork lasting weeks or months to combine with mixed method case study data collection enabling exploration of causality links not commonly seen in purely ethnographic research.² These factors mitigate disadvantages of fieldwork conducted by a single researcher bound by limitations of time and other resources. Furthermore, the data collection method of observation in this study involved researcher participation. The researcher's bias may influence observation- and/or interview subjects and data collected from them, which necessitates acknowledgement and descriptions of the researcher as a potentially biased data collection tool—a central aspect of ethnography.³

2.1.1 Case study selection

The historical royal palace of Gyeongbokgung and the former colonial prison of Seodaemun were chosen as case studies in Seoul. These popular tourism destinations encapsulate public memory of colonialism. However, Gyeongbokgung, often visited for casual sightseeing and leisure tourism, differs from Seodaemun Prison, which houses a prison museum highlighting colonial suffering and resistance. The pronounced disparity in primary official symbolism and memory politics of these sites provides the opportunity to analyse the potential for dark tourism at both a conventional and an unconventional Korean heritage site for dark tourism.

In Nagasaki, Japan, the nearby islands of Hashima (“Battleship Island”) and Takashima have been selected for comprehensive analysis. Both islands possess coal mines with

¹ Patricia I. Fusch, Gene E. Fusch, and Lawrence R. Ness, “How to Conduct a Mini-Ethnographic Case Study: A Guide for Novice Researchers,” *The Qualitative Report*, 22, 3 (2017), 923-941.

² Ibid.

³ Margaret D. LeCompte, “Bias in the Biography: Bias and Subjectivity in Ethnographic Research,” *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 18, 1 (1987), 43-52; Anne. E. Pezalla, Jonathan Pettigrew, and Michelle Miller-Day, “Researching the researcher-as-instrument: An exercise in interviewer self-reflexivity”. *Qualitative Research* 12, 2 (2012), 165-185.

wartime Korean forced labour history that are World Heritage inscribed components of “Sites of Japan’s Meiji Industrial Revolution”. The official denial of this history by Japan is contested by Korean victims and their descendants, and this ongoing conflict is covered by the news media in both countries. While Hashima is abandoned and functions as a heavily promoted tourism destination, Takashima, which maintains a small number of inhabitants, is not well-known even in Japan. The shared history of Korean forced labour on the two islands, of which only Hashima is promoted for tourism, enables a comprehensive analysis of how marginalised memories can be highlighted through dark tourism at both a site of tightly managed mainstream tourism and a site of untapped tourism potential.

Seoul and Nagasaki both possesses sites known for dark tourism and both are popular with visitors from Korea and Japan. While they will be compared for an enhanced understanding of the research topic, they are opposing cases not suited for replication logic within this study. Only one region from each country has been selected due to time and resource limitations. In 2019, about 150,000 Korean tourists visited Nagasaki prefecture, accounting for more than one third of international visitors.⁴ Seoul was the historical capital of Korea during Japanese colonial rule, and a great number of sites are intrinsically linked to collective memories of war and colonialism. According to data from Korea Tourism Organisation (KTO), between approximately 2.3 and 3.3 million Japanese tourists visited Korea every year from 2016 to 2019, and Seoul/Incheon is the most popular entry port.⁵ In 2019, for example, 80% of Japanese tourists entered Korea through Seoul airports (Incheon and Gimpo).⁶

⁴ Hōnichi rabo, Nagasaki-ken no imbaundo juyō [Inbound demand in Nagasaki Prefecture] (n.d.). <https://honichi.com/areas/kyushuokinawa/nagasaki/#:~:text=%E9%95%B7%E5%B4%8E%E7%9C%8C%E3%81%AE%E8%A8%AA%E6%97%A5%E5%A4%96%E5%9B%BD,%E4%BA%BA%E3%81%A8%E3%81%84%E3%81%86%E7%B5%90%E6%9E%9C%E3%81%A7%E3%81%97%E3%81%9F%E3%80%82> (accessed 6 January 2021).

⁵ KTO, Monthly Statistics of Tourism (n.d.). Online tourism data generator available from <http://kto.visitkorea.or.kr/eng/tourismStatics/keyFacts/KoreaMonthlyStatistics/eng/inout/inout.kto> (accessed 7 January 2021).

⁶ Ibid.

2.2 Qualitative Data

Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and ethnographic participant observation of Korean and Japanese visitors to dark tourism sites of colonial memory were applied as qualitative research methods. These methods are widely acknowledged and extensively used in tourism studies in Asia.⁷ Interviews offered diverse perspectives from stakeholders of Korean and Japanese memory politics and sites of memory. Ethnographic participant observation was conducted throughout the fieldwork period in Japan and Korea, collecting qualitative data on the behaviour, opinions, and viewpoints of Korean and Japanese locals and tourists, particularly during visits to each other's countries, as well as data on anglophone tourists. This provided deeper insights into various perspectives, aiding in visualising the potential impact of dark tourism developments on tourism narratives and related social identities concerning collective memories of colonialism in Korea and Japan.

2.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

I interviewed 17 stakeholders in 12 interviews lasting between approximately 40 minutes and 2 hours each. Table 1 below provides an overview of interview participants. See [Appendix I](#) for introductions of each interviewed stakeholder.

⁷ Sarah N. R. Wijesinghe and Paolo Mura, "Situating Asian Tourism Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies: From Colonialism to Neo-colonialism". *Ontologies, Epistemologies, Methodologies, and Methods*, edited by Paolo Mura and Catheryn Khoo-Lattimore (Singapore: Springer, 2018), 109.

Table 1 – Interview Participants

| Date (all in 2022) | Affiliation | Interview participants | Duration (hours and minutes) |
|---------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| 2 June | Uri Munhwa Sungyeol (NGO providing guided tours of Korean heritage sites) | Director Gang Cheonung, volunteer guides Suzanna Samstag Oh and Kwon Hyeokjun | 2:04 |
| 8 June | Asia Peace and History Institute | Director Lee SinCheol (Adjunct Professor at Sungkyunkwan University) | 0:39 |
| 8 June | Asia Peace and History Institute | Han Hye-in (researcher trained in Japan) | 1:04 |
| 21 June | Seodaemun Prison History Hall | Director Park Kyung-mok | 0:48 |
| 30 June | Centre for Historical Truth | Head researcher Kim SeungEun and researcher Nogi Kaori | 1:34 |
| 1 July | ZenKimchi - company operating “the dark side of Seoul” tours. | Company founder and President Joe McPherson | 1:06 |
| 13 July | Chōsen Daigakkō (Korea University, Tokyo) | Vice Director of Centre for Korean Studies Kim Chol Su and Public Relations Office Director Lee Yong Chol | 1:30 |
| 1 Aug. | Mindan (Korean Residents Union in Japan) Nagasaki Regional Headquarters | Senior Consultant Kang Seong Choon and Executive Director of Support centre for Korean travellers Kim Sang Jin | 1:19 |
| 19 Aug. | Sungshin University | Professor Seo Kyoung-Duk | 0:54 |
| 23 Aug. | Centre for Historical Truth | Chief of External Cooperation Office Kim Yeonghwan (formerly Executive Director of Grass Roots House peace museum in Kōchi) | 1:25 |
| 31 Aug. | Movement for One Corea | Ku Yonchol (activist and Hashima forced labour witness) | 1:01 |
| 20 Sept. | Kanazawa University | Associate Professor Ide Akira | 1:17 |

Semi-structured interviews were conducted according to a pre-constructed protocol, encompassing both empirical and theoretical questions to foster reciprocity and reflexivity between the interviewer and interviewee.⁸ Through these interviews, the research examined: 1) the coexistence of dissonant public and vernacular collective memories at sites of colonial memory in Korea and Japan, 2) obstacles and success factors in dark tourism developments, and 3) efforts to include or exclude collective memories

⁸ Anne Galletta, *Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and Beyond* (NY & London: New York University Press, 2013).

of marginalised groups in related tourism site narratives. Interviews were an appropriate method for eliciting relevant data from stakeholders, given their personal nature, enabling detailed exploration of “opinions, feelings, emotions, and experiences” related to sensitive topics, including dissonant colonial memories.⁹ Many interviewees were busy professionals without a prior personal connection to the researcher, making multiple or extended interviews less feasible. Semi-structured shorter interviews were optimal, focusing on open-ended questions that revealed the interviewee’s own sense of reality and meaning within time constraints.¹⁰

2.2.2 Participation and Observation

In order to collect qualitative data and uncover also unanticipated data, the method of naturalistic observation was selected. I engaged in dark tourism at the case study sites, while observing other visitors and, when natural, engaged in informal conversation with visitors and staff. Contrary to systematic observation used to collect quantitative data, formalised rules as well as formalised recording and analysis procedures are avoided in natural observation through which the researcher “seeks to describe the phenomenon of interest and develop explanations and understandings in the process”.¹¹

Observational research methods include non-intrusive observation and covert research, but non-covert participant observation was selected for this research for 1) ethically motivated considerations of research transparency, 2) because interaction with participants is necessary for effective collection of appropriate data, and 3) because my ethnicity eliminates the option of covertly infiltrating the Korean and Japanese groups of tourists.¹² Participant observation as a research method must be adjusted for each project, but the researcher may assume a role within the fieldwork situation and have casual social

⁹ Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for small-scale social research projects*, (Maidenhead: Open University press, Third edition 2007, first published 1998), 174-75.

¹⁰ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*. Sixth Edition (LA: Sage, 2018).

¹¹ Anthony James Veal, *Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism: A Practical Guide*, Third edition 2006, (Essex: Pearson education, 1992), 173.

¹² Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide*, 70, 217-18.

interactions with the subjects.¹³ For this research project, I made my intentions transparent and explained my role as a researcher at the first natural opportunity. The nature of conversations was exploratory, and therefore I took great care to understand my own bias and influence subjects as little as possible.¹⁴

2.2.3 Qualitative Analysis

After the conclusion of fieldwork, qualitative data obtained from stakeholder interviews and participant observation were analysed and triangulated. The interview data was prepared for analysis through transcription of interviews (in their original languages) and underwent coding based on identifiable themes and categorisation into groups relevant to the research questions.¹⁵ NVivo analysis software was applied for this process. The analysis and discussion were presented from a first-person perspective to acknowledge the potential impact of myself as the researcher on the study.¹⁶ In the later stages of the iterative mixed-method analysis, qualitative and quantitative data were compared side by side as part of a comprehensive examination.¹⁷

2.3 Quantitative Data

Quantitative data were collected from 250 Koreans by the Seodaemun Prison History Hall in Seoul by survey in the form of on-site questionnaires with Likert-scale statements and closed-ended questions. The target population was potential Korean visitors to dark tourism sites in Japan relevant to Korean suffering. Seodaemun Prison is an iconic dark tourism site of Korean suffering, and Koreans by this site were deemed to be potential visitors to dark tourism sites with relevant history in Japan. The survey did not only target

¹³ Fusch, Fusch and Ness, “How to Conduct a Mini-Ethnographic Case Study”.

¹⁴ LeCompte, “Bias in the Biography”.

¹⁵ Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide*, 286-95.

¹⁶ Ibid, 301; Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz and Linda L. Shaw, “Participant Observation and Fieldnotes,” *Handbook of Ethnography*, edited by Paul Atkinson, Amanda Coffey, Sara Delamont, John Lofland and Lyn Lofland: 352-368. (London: Sage, 2007).

¹⁷ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Fifth edition (LA: Sage, 2018), 300-2.

Koreans who knew the term “dark tourism”, but all Koreans who were aware of tourism in Korea, with colonial narratives, describable as dark tourism according to definitions discussed in the literature review. Permission to distribute the questionnaire was obtained in advance from Director Park Kyung-mok of the Seodaemun Prison History Hall. For further details on the methodology of the survey and extensive survey results, see [Appendix VI](#).

2.4 Limitations and Ethical Considerations

As mentioned, Japanese COVID-19 prevention measures affected the fieldwork plan. I intended to spend three months in each Korea and Japan, but as I could only obtain a Japanese visa for one month, I spent one month in Japan and five months in Korea conducting fieldwork. For this reason, the planned questionnaire survey for Japanese respondents was not conducted. However, quantitative data that could not be collected in Japan was partly compensated for by qualitative data collected in both Japan and Korea, as well as in the United Kingdom where I interviewed Ide Akira during his temporary stay in September 2022.

From the beginning of this project, it was acknowledged as a limitation that time constraints and, especially, lack of Chinese language proficiency, prevented the inclusion of data collection and analysis regarding Chinese perspectives on colonial memory and tourism in Korea and Japan. The limitation is significant because Chinese tourists account for a large ratio of visitors to many heritage sites in Korea and Japan. It would be beneficial if this gap was covered in future studies.

It should also be noted that this exploratory study involving four case studies is not sufficient for a robust conclusion regarding the future of dark tourism as a tool for highlighting marginalised memory of colonialism in the two countries. Future studies involving additional case studies in broader regions are needed.

High standards of ethics were applied to all stages of the research process in accordance with the SOAS Research Ethics Policy and the SOAS Code of Practice for using personal

data in research.¹⁸ The nature and objectives of the research was fully exposed for subjects participating. Anonymity has been preserved for all participants unless otherwise agreed and officially confirmed by the participant in consent forms or audio-recordings, and personal data has been securely stored and protected in accordance with the Data Protection Act.¹⁹ Ethical guidelines for ethnographic research have been followed for all cases of observation in which I did not have an opportunity to announce myself as a researcher. There are clear guidelines in ethnography for the use of data obtained from ethnographic observation: “(a) any use of the material should ensure that no one suffers as a result, and (b) any use of the material should avoid disclosing the identities of those involved”.²⁰ Accordingly, data from these observations have been anonymised.

Adhering to feedback from the Research Ethics Panel of SOAS, the phone number of a support centre (Korean lifeline “*Hanguk saengmyeongeui jeonhwa*”) was printed on all questionnaires for the event of a respondent being emotionally affected by questions and statements in the survey. During survey collection, I verbally presented myself as a researcher from SOAS, wearing a cap with the SOAS name and logo, which was also printed on the questionnaires.

I was partly funded for this research by the Seoul National University Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies as a Junior Fellow from March to September 2022. No potential conflicts of interest have been identified.

¹⁸ SOAS Research & KE Delivery, *Research Ethics Policy*. Available online at <https://www.soas.ac.uk/research/ethics/file150923.pdf>; *Code of Practice for SOAS staff and students: Using Personal Data in Research*. <https://www.soas.ac.uk/infocomp/dpa/dparesearch/file150710.pdf> (both accessed 13 January 2021).

¹⁹ Data Protection Act 2018, c. 12 Available online at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted> (accessed 13 January 2021).

²⁰ Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide*, 220.

Chapter 3 Tourism and colonial memory at Gyeongbokgung

The palace of Gyeongbokgung is one of the most historically significant constructions in Korea. Through its long and turbulent history, the palace has become a symbol of Korean culture and identity.¹ Indeed, the Korean collective memory of Gyeongbokgung's past and present encapsulates pivotal events that have fundamentally shaped the modern Korean nation. Many of these relates to Korea's colonisation by imperial Japan. While colonial memory may be acknowledged as highly significant to Korean identity, it is considered as dark and uncomfortable by many Koreans. Colonial history is not ignored at Gyeongbokgung today, but as will be discussed, events related to colonialism have been significantly simplified to occupy an essential but restricted space in a larger narrative seeking to celebrate Korea's royal history as the roots of Korean culture. However, such simplifications may reduce the accuracy of visitors' historical imagination and obstruct potential for educational dark tourism.

The first part of this chapter delves into the history of Gyeongbokgung, shedding light on lesser-known intricacies surrounding well-known events that transpired during the period leading up to and throughout Korea's colonial occupation by imperial Japan. A closer look at these historical events also serves to underscore the value of Gyeongbokgung as a site of colonial memory ideal for dark tourism. The second part of this chapter analyses the officially intended symbolisms of present-day Gyeongbokgung. The third part examines the official narratives of the palace, analysing information panels and other official texts at the site, as well as official guided tours and the contents of the audio guide. The fourth section examines viewpoints regarding official narratives from Korean, Anglophone, and Japanese visitors. The fifth and final part summarises findings, while implications are discussed in further detail in the [final chapter](#) of this thesis.

¹ Jang Jiyeon, "Gyeongbokgung: The Primary Joseon Palace," *Koreana* Vol. 24, No. 4 (Winter, 2010): 8-15; Hyun Kyung Lee, *'Difficult Heritage' in Nation Building: South Korea and Post-Conflict Japanese Colonial Occupation Architecture* (Palgrave Macmillan eBook, 2019), 162-210.

3.1 Historical Background

A more comprehensive overview of Gyeongbokgung's history focusing on events related to colonial memory can be found in [Appendix II](#). Presented below is a condensed overview that highlights the pivotal facets of challenging recollections associated with the palace.

3.1.1 Reconstructing the palace as a symbol of authority amidst power disputes

Gyeongbokgung palace was built in 1394-95 as the main palace of the Joseon Dynasty under King Taejo. Located in Hanyang (modern-day Seoul), its site was chosen using Korean geomancy principles.² A fire in 1553 led to partial reconstruction resulting in a diminished palace, and during the Imjin War (1592-1598), the palace was burned down, with potential culprits including Japanese invaders, rioting Koreans, or even palace staff for strategic purposes.³ It was rebuilt in the 1860s by King Gojong's father and de facto ruler, Heungseon Daewongun, placing a severe financial burden on the nation and sparking public dissent.⁴ Fires plagued the reconstruction, leading to additional rebuilding in 1873 and 1876. King Gojong moved to Gyeongbokgung in 1884, after the construction of a new royal residence within, named Geoncheonggung.⁵ It was left unpainted to emphasise that it was built as a private residence with private funds rather than collected taxes. Despite challenges, the palace stood as a symbol of Joseon Korea and its ruling family's power amid domestic and international power disputes.

Queen Myeongseong (a.k.a. Queen Min, posthumously Empress Myeongseong) strategically consolidated political influence within her domain and that of her lineage,

² Jang Jiyeon, "Gyeongbokgung: The Primary Joseon Palace," *Koreana* Vol. 24, No. 4 (Winter, 2010): 8-15

³ Hyun Kyung Lee, *'Difficult Heritage' in Nation Building: South Korea and Post-Conflict Japanese Colonial Occupation Architecture* (Palgrave Macmillan eBook, 2019), 163-4.

⁴ Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, translated by Edward W. Wagner with Edward J. Shultz (Seoul: Ilchokak publishers 1984), 261-262.; Youl Hwa Dang, *Korean Ancient Palaces: Kyōngbokkung Palace, Ch'angdōkkung Palace, Ch'anggyōnggung Palace, Tōksugung Palace, Chongmyo Shrine*, (Seoul: Youl Hwa Dang Publishers, 1988) Second Edition, 1993.

⁵ Michael Kim, "Collective Memory and Commemorative Space: Reflections on Korean Modernity and the Kyōngbok Palace Reconstruction 1865-2010," *International Area Review*, 13, 4 (Winter 2010), 80.

the Min clan. She supported the impeachment of King Gojong's father, the Daewongun, which was removed from power in 1874.⁶ With the Daewongun retired, Japan employed gunboat diplomacy to secure the unequal 1876 Treaty of Ganghwa, which entailed the opening of Korean ports, the grant of extraterritoriality to Japan, and the stipulation that Korea was not a tributary state of China. King Gojong desired modernisation and welcomed Japanese military presence with advanced weaponry, against the will of Queen Myeongseong and the Min clan who favoured Chinese protection.⁷ King Gojong sent missions to Japan for modernisation despite their opposition. In 1881, he invited Japanese lieutenant Horimoto Reizō to train the new Korean Special Skills Force (Byeolgigun).

These power struggles pushed the Daewongun to support a Korean military revolt in July 1882, known as the Imo incident, in which Horimoto Reizō was killed, and the Japanese legation burned down.⁸ The background of the riot was the king's negation of Korean regular forces in favour of the Japanese Special Skills Force. The Queen's nephew, Min Gyeomho, was murdered for paying regular forces with spoiled food in an attack on Changdoekgung palace in which the queen narrowly escaped death by fleeing in disguise.⁹ As a result of the Imo incident, King Gojong reinstated his father as the de facto ruler of the dynasty, and a state funeral was prepared for the queen who was thought to be have been assassinated.¹⁰ However, China sent troops to Korea which forced the Daewongun to Tianjin against his will, and reaffirmed Chinese suzerainty over Korea with the support of Queen Myeongseong who could return to the palace alive and well.¹¹ Power disputes continued and more members of the Min clan were killed in the failed Gapsin Coup in 1884, led by the Korean patriotic Enlightenment Party desiring Japanese modernisation.¹² Although Russian presence and political influence could grow with the

⁶ Charles Roger Tennant, *A History of Korea* (NY: Routledge 1996), 208.

⁷ Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History, Updated Edition* (NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), eBook, 129-42.

⁸ Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 271-2.

⁹ Donald Keene, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and his World, 1852-1912* (NY: Columbia University Press 2002), 373-4; Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 272-3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Keith Pratt and Richard Rutt: *Korea: A Historical and Cultural Dictionary* (NY: Routledge 1999), 184-185.

¹² Pratt and Rutt: *Korea*, 203-204.

failed coup, Japanese merchants thrived.¹³

3.1.2 The Sino-Japanese War and dominance over Korea

In 1894, Japan initiated the first Sino-Japanese War, leveraging the Donghak peasant revolution in Korea against oppressive conditions, including exploitation by Korean aristocrats and Japanese merchants.¹⁴ As Korean rebels gained ground, King Gojong sought help from China, leading to a clash with Japanese forces on July 25, 1894. Shortly before, Japanese troops forcefully occupied Gyeongbokgung palace, aiming to remove the pro-Chinese queen.¹⁵ Japanese troops forced their way inside the palace and returned fire on Korean soldiers in a deadly battle resulting in Japanese victory.¹⁶ A new Korean government was formed headed by pro-Japanese Kim Hong-jip as Prime Minister.

The Gabo Reforms (1894-1896) modernised Korea's government, reducing royal family power in favour of Japanese-supported reforms, which aligned with existing progressive Korean ideas. The social class system including slavery was abolished, child marriage was ended, widow remarriage was allowed, traditional Confucian examinations were ended, and a newly created Ministry of Education expanded the school system and modernised textbooks. King Gojong's involvement in the reforms after the Japanese occupation of Gyeongbokgung marked a symbolic shift in his political power, as he swore to implement reforms, relinquishing his remaining authority on January 7, 1895. With the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki on 17 April 1895, Japan had won the first Sino-Japanese war, gaining Taiwan and the Liaodong Peninsula, and China was made to end its suzerainty over Korea. The Gabo reforms represents the beginning of modern Korean politics, free from China's dominance but under the shadow of Japanese imperialism.¹⁷

¹³ Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 282.

¹⁴ See for example Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History* 283-88; Cumings, *Korea's Place*, 129-34.

¹⁵ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 480; Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 290.

¹⁶ Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR) and the British Library, "Outbreak of the war: Japan and China dispatch troops to Korea, fighting begins – Declaration of war", The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: as seen in prints and archives, online exhibition (2015).

<https://www.jacar.go.jp/english/jacarbl-fsjwar-e/smart/about/p002.html>

¹⁷ Young Ick Lew, *Gabo gyeongjang yeongu [Studies on the Gabo Reform Movement]* (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1990) 178-222.

3.1.3 The Queen's Assassination

By 1895, Queen Myeongseong was the only remaining politically significant member of the royal family not broken by Japan's aggressive meddling. Following China's defeat, the Min clan recognised Russia's potency, particularly evident in the Tripartite Intervention of April, during which Russia, Germany, and France coerced Japan into relinquishing the newly acquired Liaodong Peninsula in China. Queen Myeongseong capitalised on this geopolitical shift, strategically appointing pro-Russian Korean politicians to her cabinet. This move signalled her emergence as a potent adversary to Japan's expansionist ambitions.¹⁸

Miura Gōro, a Japanese lieutenant general appointed Minister to Korea in September 1895, planned the assassination of Queen Myeongseong to reduce Russian influence.¹⁹ Miura recruited the Japanese-trained Korean Hullyeondae military force to stage a deceptive coup, ostensibly under the orders of the Daewongun. The plan aimed to eliminate the Queen by orchestrating a coup and implicating the royal family in her demise. Historical records imply that the Japanese emperor and government was unaware of the assassination plot. Miura secured the participation of Japanese mercenaries, including *rōnin*, or *sōshi* (unemployed warriors, thugs, or bandits), as well as Japanese company employees and Japanese soldiers stationed in Korea.²⁰

The assassination of Queen Myeongseong, known as the Eulmi incident, took place on 8 October 1895. A group of around 40 Japanese mercenaries and police, some disguised as Korean officers, advanced toward the palace, employing both stealth and force.²¹

¹⁸ Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 294-5; Duus, *The Abacus*, 108-12.

¹⁹ Isabella Bird Bishop, *Korea and her Neighbours*, (New York, Chicago, Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1897), 269-82; Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910* (LA: University of California Press, 1995), 108-12.

²⁰ Kim Munja, *Myeongseong hwanghu sihaewa ilbonin* [The murder of Empress Myeongseong and the Japanese], Korean edition translated by Thaeaksa Publishing (Paju: Thaeaksa 2011), first published in Japanese, 2009; Tsunoda Fusako, *Minbi ansatsu: Chōsen ōchō makki no Kokubo* [The assassination of Queen Min: The last empress of the Joseon Dynasty], (Tokyo: Shinchōsha 1993), 373-92; Yi Sugyeong and Pak Inshik, "Chōsen ōhi satsugai jiken no saikō [Reassessing the murder of the Korean queen]", *Tōkyō gakugeidaigaku kiyō jinbun shakai kagakukei* 1, 58 (2007), 93-105.

²¹ Tsunoda, *The assassination*, 385.

Simultaneously, around 200 mutinying soldiers from the second battalion of the Hullyeondae and additional Japanese soldiers joined the incursion.²² As dawn broke, the attackers, including some who had scaled the palace walls, converged at Gwanghwamun Gate of Gyeongbokgung and proceeded towards the royal residence of Geoncheonggung.

A Ukrainian architect from the Russian Empire, designer of the Russian legation and friend of King Gojong, Afanasy Ivanovich Seredin-Sabatin, was in the palace and witnessed the attack.²³ So did the American General William McEntyre Dye, who served as advisor to King Gojong and commander of the palace guards.²⁴ Seredin-Sabatin's witness account describes how the Japanese mercenaries pulled court ladies outside by their hair while searching for the queen.²⁵ However, no undisputable account exists of exactly where and how the queen was assassinated in the Geoncheonggung residence, and if the fatal slashes were delivered by a Korean or Japanese assassin.

According to a report by Ishizuka Eizō, a Japanese advisor to the Korean cabinet at the time, the queen's body was stripped naked and her "private parts examined" before the cremation.²⁶ This report is sometimes suggested as evidence that the queen was raped before her cremation, a common belief in contemporary Korea. As stated by many witnesses, the 43-year-old queen was difficult to identify because she had the appearance of a woman in her twenties. In relation to the following court case of the murder, a telegram from the prosecutor to the Minister of Justice stated that while the queen had a young face, the appearance of her breasts suggested she was older, indicating that the

²² Ibid, 389-90.

²³ Noh Hyung-seok, "Russian architect personally witnessed Empress Myeongseong's assassination by Japanese ronin, account reveals", *The Hankyoreh*, 20 October 2020. https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/966501.html (accessed 28 June 2023); Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 515-17.

²⁴ Tsunoda, *The assassination*, 397.

²⁵ An abbreviated English translation of Seredin-Sabatin's testimony by Alexandre Mansourov, Center for Korean Research of Columbia University (1995) can be found here:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20121012005946/http://koreaweb.ws/ks/ksr/queenmin.txt>

²⁶ "局部検査"- See copy of relevant page of this report in Jeong Jihwan, "'Myeongseong Hwanghu, sihae jeon 'neungyok' danghaetda': hanil woldeukeopgwa 107-nyeonjeon 'Eulmi sabyeon' ['Empress Myeongseong was sexually violated before her murder': Korea-Japan World Cup and the Eulmi Incident 107 years ago]", *Oh My News*, 3 June 2002.

http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS_Web/View/at_pg.aspx?CNTN_CD=A0000077332 (accessed 28 June 2023).

attackers had indeed undressed the queen's body.²⁷

Miura directed Uchida Sadatsuchi, the Japanese consul, to absolve Japan from any involvement in the assassination of Queen Myeongseong. However, due to the attack having many witnesses including foreign elites, Miura's plan to frame the Daewongun as the assassins' leader failed.

Following orders from Japan's Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Uchida investigated the assassination. He collected testimonies and traced the attackers' movements within Gyeongbokgung.²⁸ His report revealed contradictory accounts from the Japanese mercenaries involved, many of whom boasted about having personally ended the queen's life.²⁹ Uchida drew a detailed map outlining the attackers' path from Gwanghwamun to Geoncheonggung, where the queen was murdered.

Uchida's investigation revealed that the queen's body was burned near Noksan hill adjacent to Geoncheonggung, though exact details remain uncertain. Additional insights emerged in a 1938 reinvestigation, indicating that her remains were dumped in Hyangweonji pond inside the palace.³⁰ A monument commemorating the queen's cremation once stood by Noksan hill, illustrated in the travelogue of Isabella Bird, but its current status is uncertain.³¹

As a result of Uchida's investigation and foreign pressure in Korea for punishing the culprits, 48 suspects including Miura were sent to Japan to stand trial in Hiroshima.³² On 20 January 1896, the court held that Miura and other Japanese, not Koreans, had planned the palace attack and assassination, but released all defendants due to a lack of official evidence of the murder.³³

Despite achieving the queen's removal, Miura's plot backfired, exposing Japanese

²⁷ Tsunoda, *The assassination*, 400.

²⁸ Kim Munja, *The murder*, 301-7.

²⁹ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 516.

³⁰ Kim Munja, *The murder*, 306.

³¹ Isabella Bird left Korea in March 1897. Monument is illustrated in Bird, *Korea*, 268. Undated pictures also exist.

³² Kim Munja, *The murder*, 319; Bird, *Korea*, 277.

³³ Kim Munja, *The murder*, 319; Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 520-1.

involvement and eroding trust. The Hullyeondae took control of Gyeongbokgung, holding King Gojong hostage and leading to a coerced royal edict deposing the queen.³⁴ A new cabinet, led by Kim Hong-jip, embraced Japanese-inspired modernisation, including mandatory top knot cutting, sparking anti-Japanese guerilla fighters, or “Righteous Armies”, across the nation.³⁵ King Gojong and the crown prince escaped the palace to the Russian legation in 1896, leading to a temporary pro-Russian government. Kim Hong-jip, hated by the Korean public for his reforms, was dragged out through Gwanghwamun where angry mobs stoned and/or trampled him before his body was cut into pieces and his severed head put on display.³⁶ Japan’s power declined until its victory in the Russo-Japanese war in 1905. Amidst this, Wu Beomseon, who commanded the Hullyeondae during the assassination, later faced revenge and assassination in Japan by Korean patriots.³⁷

Before losing all power to Japan, on 12 October 1897, Gojong declared himself emperor as he proclaimed Korea a fully independent empire, the *Daehan Jeguk*. Posthumously, the Min queen was titled as Empress Myeongseong, with an elaborate funeral held two years after her demise. Her lost body led to her clothing’s burial, accompanied by a finger bone found at her cremation site in Gyeongbokgung.³⁸ The Emperor Gojong and Empress Myeongseong’s Hongneung tomb near Seoul was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2009.³⁹

After Russia’s defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, Japan turned Korea into a protectorate in 1905 and fully annexed it in 1910. Emperor Gojong’s forced abdication in 1907, replacing him with his more controllable son, Sunjong, paved the way for Japan’s colonial

³⁴ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 519-20.

³⁵ Duus, *The Abacus*, 111; Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 294-5; Cumings, *Korea’s Place*, 136; Yi and Pak, “Reassessing the murder”, 100.

³⁶ Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 300; Duus, *The Abacus*, 118; Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 521-2, 827-28.

³⁷ Jeong Manjin, “U Beomseon cheodan uisadeul, dongnibyugongjaro injeonghaeya [The patriots who punished Wu Beomseon should be recognised as independence fighters]”, *Oh My News*, 9 October 2020. http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS_Web/View/at_pg.aspx?CNTN_CD=A0002682296 (accessed 9 December 2022).

³⁸ Robert Neff, “Empress Myeongseong's Funeral procession: Part 3”, *The Korea Times*, 28 November 2021. https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2021/11/721_319523.html (Accessed 28 June 2023); Cumings, *Korea’s Place*, 138.

³⁹ UNESCO, “Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty”, World Heritage list website (n.d.) <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1319/> (Accessed 28 June 2023).

occupation under a new treaty. Gojong's alleged poisoning by Japan upon his sudden death in 1919 fuelled the March First Movement for national independence. Although official records attribute his demise to cerebral haemorrhage, accounts from Korean and Japanese sources maintains suspicions of poisoning by his Korean doctor on behalf of Japanese authorities.⁴⁰

3.1.4 Gyeongbokgung under imperial Japan

Following Japan's formal annexation of Korea in 1910, the colonial administration embarked on constructing a new Government-General Building within the Gyeongbokgung palace grounds. This monumental structure, completed in 1926, served as a visual emblem of imperial Japan's authoritative control, effectively supplanting the traditional Joseon Dynasty's political centre. The location's historical significance and modern architectural design underscored Japan's claim as a powerful and legitimate ruler of Korea. To make way for this building, a significant number of palace structures were dismantled, with more being demolished for the 1916 Joseon Industrial Exposition. Held on the palace grounds, opened to the public for the first time, the exposition showcased colonial modernity and juxtaposed traditional palace remnants with expansive European-style modern exhibition halls.⁴¹

The Government-General Building's erection reshaped the palace landscape, symbolising imperial Japan's dominance while obscuring original palace structures, which were relegated to historical attractions behind the colonial edifice. In present-day Korea, it is commonly believed that Japan strategically manipulated the geomantic energies of Gyeongbokgung by constructing the Government-General Building and relocating Gwanghwamun to obstruct the energy flow. Nevertheless, no official documents

⁴⁰ Lee Hai-Woong and Kim Hoon, "Joseon sidae Gojong-ui jilbyeong-e gwanhan gochal - Joseon wangjo sillok-eul jungsim-euro [A Research on the Disease of King Gojong in the Choseon Dynasty]". *The Journal of Korean Medical History* 24, 2 (2011), 125-34; Choi Yeong-ho and Yi Tae-jin, "The Mystery of Emperor Kojong's Sudden Death in 1919: Were the Highest Japanese Officials Responsible?" *Korean Studies* Vol. 35 (2011).

⁴¹ Todd A. Henry, *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (LA: University of California Press, 2014).

substantiate this belief.

In response to the immense opposition demonstrated through the March First Movement in 1919, colonial authorities shifted approach to a “Cultural Policy” aimed at selectively valuing Korean culture and promoting the idea of co-prosperity. This policy manifested in the 1929 Korea Exposition, also held at the Gyeongbokgung palace grounds. Reconstructed “Korean” pavilions, inaccurately reflecting Korean architecture, created a path leading visitors to the original Gyeonghoeru pavilion, before culminating at the Japanese Naichi-kan exhibition hall.⁴²

Avoiding deliberate use of European architecture as symbols of modernisation, and the theme of imperial Japan protecting Korean culture at the Korea Exposition foreshadowed the ideology of Pan-Asian co-prosperity.⁴³ This ideology aimed to portray Japan’s role in the Asia-Pacific War as defenders against Western imperialism, positioning themselves as protectors of Asian nations and their respective cultures. It was only after Japan’s defeat in the war in 1945 that Korea could regain its independence. For many Koreans with few or no individual memories of the colonial period, the Government-General Building may have represented post-colonial South Korean dictatorships more than Japanese colonialism.

3.2 Official symbolism and purpose of Gyeongbokgung

What does Gyeongbokgung symbolise today? The palace can be described as “a storybook summarising a lengthy period in the history of Korea.”⁴⁴ During more than half of the Joseon era, Gyeongbokgung laid in ruins in the capital’s centre as a constant reminder of the dynasty’s limitations. The Daewongun’s unpopular palace reconstruction exploited the city’s residents and jeopardised the country’s economy in order for

⁴² Hong Kal, “Modeling the West, Returning to Asia: Shifting Politics of Representation in Japanese Colonial Expositions in Korea”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 47:3 (July 2005), 507 – 531; Yoonchun Jung, *Inventing the identity of modern Korean architecture, 1904-1929*, Ph.D. diss. McGill University, 2014.

⁴³ Hong Kal, “Modeling the West”.

⁴⁴ Kim Dong-uk. *Palaces of Korea*, (New Jersey & Seoul: Hollym International, 2006), 67.

Gyeongbokgung to shine as a symbol of royal Korean power when the ruling elite was weakened by its own power struggles. Subsequently, Imperial Japan utilised Gyeongbokgung to symbolise their idea of Korean inferiority by arranging expositions on the palace grounds and the juxtaposing of the grand and modern Japanese Government-General Building in front of the palace. When the Japanese Government-General Building was demolished in 1995, allowing Gyeongbokgung to re-emerge, President Kim Yong-sam gave a speech in which he stated:

“Only by demolishing this building can Gyeongbokgung, which symbolises the legitimacy of our national history, regain its original appearance. This is in keeping with the wishes and intentions of all people of our Korean nation, for the sake of clearing colonial remnants and restoring our national spirit.”⁴⁵

Official memory gives the impression that the whole Korean nation agreed the Japanese Government-General Building must be demolished and Gyeongbokgung rebuilt in order to restore “the Korean national spirit”. With the iconic and *officially* detrimental reminder of dark Japanese colonial rule finally demolished, the re-emerged Gyeongbokgung was made a bright symbol of Korean culture, tradition, power, and legitimacy. To maintain these symbolisms, official history must focus mostly on pre-colonial narratives from the perspectives of the Korean royals and aristocrats. Difficult memories of exploited civilians, internal power struggles, and of colonial oppression complicate the symbolisms desired by the state. The Gyeongbokgung Palace Management Office (hereafter Gyeongbokgung Office) is ultimately managed by the state through the Cultural Heritage Administration of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. On Gyeongbokgung’s official Korean website, the Management Office invites visitors to “experience the essence of dignified high-class royal culture at Gyeongbokgung, the primary palace of Joseon Korea in the centre of the capital city of Seoul.”⁴⁶

Gyeongbokgung, by far the most visited royal palace in Korea, is extremely popular with

⁴⁵ Kim Young-sam, 50th Anniversary of National Liberation Speech, 15 August 1995. https://ko.wikisource.org/wiki/%EC%A0%9C50%EC%A3%BC%EB%85%84_%EA%B4%91%EB%B3%B5%EC%A0%88_%EA%B2%BD%EC%B6%95%EC%82%AC (accessed 29 November 2022).

⁴⁶ “Sudo seourui jungsimigo joseonui eutteum gunggworin gyeongbokgungeseo gyeokjo nopgo pumwi inneun wangsil munhwau jinsureul matbosigi baramnida.” Gyeongbokgung, “Gyeongbokgung’s History”, official website (n.d.) http://www.royalpalace.go.kr/content/data/data_01.asp (accessed 29 November 2022).

both domestic and international visitors. In 2019, a total of 5,346,746 people visited the palace, of which 1,471,909 (27.5%) were foreign visitors.⁴⁷ On the website TripAdvisor (known as the world's largest travel website), where over ten-thousand sites and experiences in South Korea are rated by visitors, Gyeongbokgung is listed as the number one traveller favourite in the country.⁴⁸ Gyeongbokgung is an important Korean symbol to foreign visitors as well, of which most spend a limited amount of time in the country. The selection and moulding of collective memory to be presented to visitors at Gyeongbokgung is thus significant to many foreign visitors' overall impression of Korea.

It is in the interest of the Korean government to mould and maintain a strong and positive national identity for Koreans, as well as to promote a positive image of Korea to international visitors. The Gyeongbokgung Office's choice to focus on providing "the essence of dignified high-class royal culture" is likely reflected in such official interests. However, as expected at heritage sites, information on when and why buildings were reconstructed must be presented to visitors. Official narratives cannot ignore how the majority of palace structures are reconstructions of buildings demolished by Imperial Japan. How does the official narrative of Korea's symbol of national legitimacy incorporate how the palace was destroyed and reconstructed twice as a result of Japanese aggressions?

3.2.1 Exploring Gyeongbokgung's official narratives

I spent five full days as a tourist at Gyeongbokgung as part of fieldwork for this thesis in 2022,⁴⁹ in addition to at least six previous visits between 2010 and 2018. As international tourism was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic during my period of fieldwork, I returned to Gyeongbokgung for additional observations and tour participation twice in the summer of 2023.⁵⁰ During fieldwork, I explored official narratives as a meticulous

⁴⁷ Korean Statistical Information Service.

https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=150&tblId=TX_15002_A068 (accessed 6 December 2022)

⁴⁸ As of November 2022

⁴⁹ April 6, 11, 18, 24, and May 21

⁵⁰ May 25 and June 11.

tourist engaging with all official information panels, pamphlets, and tours.⁵¹ In addition, I observed and engaged in informal conversation with a variety of staff and visitors. My scope is limited to narratives in Korean, English and Japanese. As Chinese account for a large ratio of foreign visitors to Gyeongbokgung, examining narratives in Chinese and perceptions of Chinese tourists would add a significant dimension to this study. However, this aspect was not considered essential due to the apparent lack of interest from both the Chinese government and the public in engaging in international dialogue regarding colonial memory or in disseminating Chinese national memory to foreign neighbours.

3.2.2 Difficult history along the beaten track of Gyeongbokgung

As many other tourists, I usually enter Gyeongbokgung through its main gate, Gwanghwamun.⁵² With Bugaksan mountain as a distant backdrop, the gate looks enormous when walking towards it across Gwanghwamun Plaza and the traditional Korean royal architecture of the elaborate gate and palace roofs towering over the palace walls appear majestic. Without memory or pre-existing knowledge, it is impossible to imagine how small the gate and palace appeared when the Japanese Government-General Building dominated the view. As visitors pass through the gates, the ticket office becomes visible, and only a minority of tourists turn around to see Gwanghwamun from the inside, also spotting its information panel.

The information panel, as with most of the information panels on the palace grounds, contains similar explanations in Korean, English, Chinese and Japanese. It informs visitors that Gwanghwamun is the south gate, symbolising summer and fire, and that it was originally constructed as the main gate in 1395. It explains that the gate was rebuilt as a concrete structure in 1968 after being bombed in the Korean war, and that it was “fully restored in its original location in 2010.” Its last sentences describe watchtowers of the palace walls and that one was “demolished during the Japanese occupation”. Only the

⁵¹ Texts and tours in Korean, Japanese and English were examined.

⁵² Gyeongbokgung can also be entered through modern gates in the southeast and southwest walls, or through the Gyeongbokgung subway stop exit inside the palace walls. Using these entrances, some tourists may miss Gwanghwamun completely.

English text has an additional sentence explaining that Gwanghwamun “had been” moved to the east “when the headquarters of the Japanese Government-General in Korea was built right behind Gwanghwamun in the 1920s.” As with other information panels in the palace, detrimental actions of the colonial government are narrated in a passive voice without a subject in both English and Korean.

From the limited information presented, it is clear that “the Japanese occupation” was a significant chapter in the history of Gyeongbokgung.⁵³ However, questions surrounding this period are only briefly and partly answered as one moves further into the palace, and visitors with little knowledge of East-Asian history may completely miss that the “the Japanese occupation” refers to a period of colonialism. This is problematic also from a Korean public perspective, considering that only 11.6% of respondents of this research’s Seodaemun survey responded that if foreigners visiting Korea are not interested in history, it does not matter if they do not hear about the colonial period.

Visitors to Gyeongbokgung obtain tickets from the ticket booth behind Gwanghwamun before proceeding to have it scanned as they pass through the next gate, Hŕngnyemun. The ticket, as tickets to all royal palaces in Seoul, contains a single paragraph in Korean and English summarising the history of the palace. The selected information included in the brief official summary confirms that Japan’s colonial occupation is a central and essential chapter of Gyeongbokgung’s history:

“History of Gyeongbokgung Palace. In 1395, three years after the foundation of the Joseon Dynasty by King Taejo (Yi Seong-gye), the new main palace, Gyeongbokgung Palace was completed after the capital of the new dynasty was moved from Gaegyeong to Seoul (then known as Hanyang). The palace was destroyed by fire during the Japanese invasion of 1592 and was not reconstructed until 1867, the fifth year of King Gojong. During the Japanese occupation from 1910 to 1945, most of the palace was torn down; only a few buildings including Gyeonghoeru Pavilion and Geunjeongjeon

⁵³ In Korea, Japan’s colonial occupation of the country is sometimes referred to simply as “the Japanese occupation” rather than “colonisation” to emphasise the view that it was an illegal foreign military takeover. However, without additional explanation, the term “occupation” by itself is misleading because it erroneously implies that imperial Japan did not intend to maintain the Korean peninsula as permanent colonial territory.

*Hall were left standing. An effort to fully restore Gyeongbokgung Palace to its former glory has been ongoing since 1990. The Japanese Government-General building was removed, making way for the full restoration of Heungnyemun Gate to its original state. The royal quarters and the crown prince's quarters were also restored to their original state. In 2010, restoration of Gwanghwamun Gate, the main entrance to the palace, was completed.”*⁵⁴

Past Heungnyemun Gate, in front of the Yeongjegyo (bridge over Geumcheon forbidden stream), visitors will find a large introductory information panel, the Information Centre, and information pamphlets in Korean, English, Japanese, Chinese, Thai, Arabic, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Malay, Russian, Spanish, French, Italian, and German. The history of Gyeongbokgung summarised on the large information panel is similar to the summaries in the information pamphlets, all containing three paragraphs. The first paragraph describes how Gyeongbokgung was established in 1395 and the meaning of its name.⁵⁵ The second paragraph informs that the palace burned down during the Japanese invasion in the late 16th century, and that the Daewongun reconstructed about 500 buildings “in order to restore the greatness of the Dynasty in 1867.”⁵⁶ The third paragraph has that the palace “was largely torn down during the Japanese occupation” (specified only in the pamphlet as a pretext for holding the Joseon Industrial Exhibition, or the “Korean Product Promotion Fair”), and explains that the Japanese Government-General Building was demolished as part of the palace restoration started in 1990.

The next gate, Geunjeongmun, leads to the most important and popular building in the palace complex, the Geunjeongjeon throne hall which was preserved during colonial rule. As soon as Korea eased COVID-related entry restrictions in spring 2022, foreign visitors again crowded the five openings allowing views inside the meticulously decorated main hall of the palace. The Geunjeongjeon is also a highly popular background for photographs for the many Korean and international tourists who take pictures of

⁵⁴ Gyeongbokgung admission ticket, 24 April 2022.

⁵⁵ According to the information panel “Gyeongbokgung” means “the Palace Greatly Blessed by Heaven,” and according to the information pamphlet it means “brilliance and fortune.” It could be translated more literally as “the Palace of Great Fortune.”

⁵⁶ “Gyeongbokgung,” Information panel. Observed summer 2022.

themselves wearing hanbok (traditional Korean clothing).⁵⁷ The information panel briefly explains the purpose of this main hall and that it was rebuilt in 1867. The same panel also describes and explains the Geumcheon (forbidden stream) in the preceding area, and notes that the Heungnyemun gate, outer cloisters, and Yeongjegyo Bridge were reconstructed in 2001. The information pamphlet adds that the Geunjeongjeon was built “to replace the original, which was burnt down during the Japanese Invasion in 1592”.

From the Geunjeongjeon throne hall, visitors proceed in various directions. It is uncommon for tourists to visit all areas of the extensive palace grounds (0.43km²) in one visit. Some busy and/or uninterested visitors leave the palace after seeing the Geunjeongjeon. Other information panels around the palace such as at the Donggung, the Sojubang House, and the Jaseondang hall have one sentence each reminding visitors that they are witnessing reconstructions due to the original buildings having been destroyed as a result of Japanese attacks on Korean sovereignty. Also the pamphlet mentions destruction due to Japanese invasion and occupation when describing nine out of twelve structures introduced within. The official narratives that visitors are most likely to engage with continuously refer to the destruction of the palace during Japanese aggressions. As mentioned, such an introduction to the palace is required to justify why most buildings are recent reconstructions. However, despite repetitive reminders, few details are provided on Korea and Gyeongbokgung under Japanese rule. Naturally, such details could distract attention from the positively framed narratives of Joseon Korea’s Gyeongbokgung—the official narratives the Gyeongbokgung Office desire most to promote.

3.2.3 Royal culture and achievements in the spotlight

From Geunjeongjeon, many tourists head west to Gyeonghoeru, another palace building that survived Japanese rule. This two-story pavilion, elevated above a pond, is considered one of the most beautiful sites in Gyeongbokgung, evident from the many hanbok-clad

⁵⁷ All visitors wearing hanbok gain free entry to the palace. Due to its popularity, a large number of businesses around the palace offer and promote hanbok rentals at low prices.

visitors that accumulate by the pond for scenic photographs. Gyeonghoeru's information panel explains its late Josŏn-era use for "royal banquets and entertainment of foreign envoys" and that "royalty enjoyed boating" around it. It is not mentioned that the pavilion is visible only because colonial authorities tore down the high walls that had surrounded it to ensure that only royalty and those invited could enjoy it.⁵⁸

Directly opposite Gyeonghoeru is the much smaller and visually less impressive Sujeongjeon hall. Surviving in its current form since 1867, this well-preserved hall remains as it was when it was used by the new cabinet of Prime Minister Kim Hong-jip after the Gabo reforms began in 1894. However, it is located in the same area it is assumed that Hangul, the Korean script, was invented during the rule of King Sejong in 1443. King Sejong himself is usually credited for the invention of Hangul, and both him and the script are iconic elements of Korean history and culture that bring great pride to many, if not most, Koreans.⁵⁹ Thus, the Sujeongjeon hall information panel describes mostly the invention of hangul and the site's use before 1592. The final sentence, which has that "Sujeongjeon was used as the cabinet office during the Reform Movement of 1894", becomes a footnote of understated significance.

3.2.4 Geoncheonggung and the memory of Queen Myeongseong

A third particularly popular scenic area of Gyeongbokgung is the quadrilateral Hyangwonji pond with its circular Hyangwonjeong pavilion. This is the pond into which many believe Queen Myeongseong's burned remains were thrown. Behind the pond is the royal residence, Geoncheonggung, where Queen Myeongseong was assassinated, but only a minority of visitors who reach the pond continue on to explore inside the walls of the royal residential area.

The brief single-paragraph text on the information panel by the pond, titled

⁵⁸ This fact was, however, mentioned by the guide when I participated in an official tour of Gyeonghoeru (6 April 2022). These tours, lasting about 20 minutes, are conducted only in Korean for a few weeks each year and require advance reservations.

⁵⁹ See for example Jae Jung Song, *The Korean Language (Abingdon and New York: Routledge 2006)*, 53-54.

“Hyangwonjeong Pavilion and Geoncheonggung Residence,” describes the queen’s assassination in one sentence. “A tragic chapter in Korea’s history was recorded here in 1895 when Empress Myeongseong was assassinated by the Japanese.” Although no further details are provided at this spot, it is evident that informing or reminding visitors of the queen’s assassination is considered important by the Management Office because mention of this incident could have been limited to the inside of the Geoncheonggung residence. The information pamphlet contains a similar joint description of Hyangwonjeong and Geoncheonggung.

The enwalled Geoncheonggung residence consists of three connected yangban-style buildings in the far north-eastern part of Gyeongbokgung. King Gojong resided in Jangandang, the main quarters in the west side of Geoncheonggung, and Queen Myeongseong in Gonnyeonghap, the inner quarters in the east side. As previously mentioned, the Japanese report by consul Uchida based on eyewitness statements held that the queen was murdered in Jangandang before being moved temporarily to her residence in Gonnyeonghap.

Geoncheonggung’s main information panel describes it as King Gojong and Queen Myeongseong’s residence built in 1873. It further states that the residence was “the first place in Korea to have electric lights fitted up in 1887 by the Edison Electric Light Company, and was also the scene where Empress Myeongseong was murdered by Japanese assassins in 1895.” These contrasting events of celebration and tragedy are described the same way in one sentence in both Korean and English. With walls and buildings unpainted, Geoncheonggung is less noticeable than other more visited parts of the palace complex. Although having been open for tourists previously, all buildings in the residence are closed with no plans for reopening.⁶⁰

There are various information panels inside the Geoncheonggung residence complex, but the panel in front of Queen Myeongseong’s residence of Gonnyeonghap which describes her assassination receives the most attention from visitors. Many foreign tourists walk straight past the panel, but those I observed accompanied by private guides were told to

⁶⁰ As of summer 2022. Conversation with official palace guide.

examine it, and one guide even pointed out some of the spots marked on Uchida's map. Many Koreans reading the information panel act surprised when they realise that they are standing near the site of the assassination, and most talk about it with their friends or family on the site. It is considered a very important narrative by many, exemplified by a visiting Korean family in which the parents told their young children to read out loud the text on the panel. The English text on the panel, which is an official translation of the Korean text, reads as follows:

“Gonnyeonghap was the residence of Queen Myeongseong, built alongside the king's residence, Geoncheonggung Residence. This is also the place where Queen Myeongseong was assassinated by Japanese on Oct. 8, 1895 (the 32nd year of King Gojong's reign). Dr. Annie Ellers Bunker, an American who served the royal family of Joseon for seven years as a medical doctor, described the queen as a kind, gentle and beautiful woman. As Japan invaded Manchuria after having won the Sino-Japanese War in February 1895, the royal family of the Joseon Dynasty advocated stronger ties between Korea and Russia in an attempt to block Japanese influence in the country. However, this caused a group of Japanese assassins to raid the queen's residence and slaughter her on October 8 in 1895. They burned her body and buried the remains at the foot of Noksan Hill, east of Geoncheonggung Residence. Later, a state funeral was granted after the remains were collected and placed in Gyeongungung Palace (present day Deoksugung Palace).”⁶¹

A single description as “kind, gentle and beautiful” is the only description of the queen's personality and achievements in Gyeongbokgung's official memory.⁶² The officially selected feminised description of the queen fails to acknowledge her significance and provides no hints as to why she was murdered. As discussed, Queen Myeongseong was in fact a highly strategic power broker who until her death successfully impeded Japanese attempts to take control over Korea and its politics. Another of the queen's foreign medical doctors, Lillias Horton Underwood, described her as a “subtle and able diplomatist” and a progressive patriot who appeared beautiful when revealing her “force, intellect and strength of character.”⁶³ British explorer Isabella Bird, who also knew the

⁶¹ “Gonnyeonghap Hall”, Gyeongbokgung information panel. Observed summer 2022.

⁶² Some of the official tour guides adds that she loved her husband very much, without providing any examples or records for this unreliable claim.

⁶³ “Slightly pale and quite thin, with somewhat sharp features and brilliant piercing eyes, she did not strike me at first sight as being beautiful, but no one could help reading force, intellect and strength of character in that face, and as she became engaged in conversation, vivacity, naivete, wit, all brightened her countenance, and gave it a wonderful charm, far greater than mere physical beauty; and I have seen

queen personally, described her as a strong and intelligent political nepotist who caused the death of many as she “fought with all her charm, shrewdness, and sagacity for power, for the dignity and safety of her husband and son, and for the downfall of the [Daewongun].”⁶⁴

Queen Myeongseong could justifiably be presented as a strong Korean female leader who resisted subordination under her conservative father-in-law and husband, becoming so powerful that imperialist diplomats plotted her assassination in a desperate and dangerous attempt to increase imperial Japan’s political influence over Korea. Queen Myeongseong’s strategy of obtaining Russian support against Japanese influence was successful and allowed a Russian living within the royal residence to witness her murder, preventing Japanese diplomats from making the Daewongun their scapegoat. In Gyeongbokgung’s current official memory, however, Queen Myeongseong’s intellect and political power are forgotten, her qualities watered down to align her description with archaic Confucian idealisations of women. The Korean and Japanese text on the information panel specifies that she was described as “beautiful having the beauty of Korean women.” At today’s Gyeongbokgung, Queen Myeongseong has been reduced to a feminised symbol of a perceived innocent Korea, victimised by the perceived evil Japanese.⁶⁵

the queen of Korea when she looked positively beautiful. She possessed mental qualities of a high order, as I soon learned, and [...] she possessed a very intelligent idea of the great nations of the world and their governments [...]. She was a subtle and able diplomatist and usually outwitted her keenest opponents; she was, moreover, a sovereign of broad and progressive policy, patriotic, and devoted to the best interests of her country and sought the good of the people [...].” Lillias Horton Underwood, *Fifteen years among the topknots*, (New York: American Tract Society, 1904) pp.24.

⁶⁴ “[...] I was impressed with the grace and charming manner of the Queen, her thoughtful kindness, her singular intelligence and force, and her remarkable conversational power [...]. I was not surprised at her singular political influence, or her sway over the King and many others. She was surrounded by enemies, chief among them being the [Daewongun], the King's father, all embittered against her because by her talent and force she had succeeded in placing members of her family in nearly all the chief offices of State. Her life was a battle. She fought with all her charm, shrewdness, and sagacity for power, for the dignity and safety of her husband and son, and for the downfall of the [Daewongun]. She had cut short many lives, but in doing so she had not violated Korean tradition and custom [...].” Isabella Bird Bishop, *Korea and her Neighbours*, (New York, Chicago, Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1897) pp 254-55.

⁶⁵ Forgetting that the assassination was unlikely approved by higher Japanese authorities, and that many Koreans participated in Miura’s plan enhances the dichotomy of Korean innocence and Japanese treacherousness.

3.2.5 Narratives of Gyeongbokgung's official guided tours

Gyeongbokgung offers guided tours of the palace by professional official guides for no additional cost. Any visitor or groups with less than 10 members can join guided tours without a reservation. The tours start at designated times in front of the large information panel by the Yeongjegyo bridge. Tours in Korean are offered 12 times a day on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, and nine times a day on other days (except Tuesdays when the palace is closed). Tours in English are offered three times a day, while tours in Japanese and Chinese are offered twice a day. In addition, tours are offered in Indonesian, Vietnamese and Spanish⁶⁶ on Fridays and Saturdays. The guides, who are usually female and clad in hanbok, stand in front of the information panel for about ten minutes before the tour is set to begin. Tours go ahead as long as one or more participants show up at the designated time, and visitors may join or leave at any point during the tour. Tours last approximately one hour, and all tours follow the same route ending by Hyangwonji pond.⁶⁷

I participated in official tours in Korean, English and Japanese during spring of 2022, and again during spring of 2023. Some of the official guides conduct tours in both Korean and a foreign language. Official palace guides are trained specifically at the palace for which they were employed, and usually never transfer to any of the other Korean royal palaces.⁶⁸ The Gyeongbokgung Office conducts biannual monitoring of tours by its own official guides as well as those of guides from other companies and organisations.⁶⁹ The themes and core narratives presented by official guides are intended to be identical in all languages, but guides are free to personalise parts of their narration with stories and jokes of their choice.⁷⁰ Narratives discussed below are core narratives included in all tours, unless otherwise specified.

⁶⁶ Tours in Spanish were under preparation during my visits in spring and summer of 2022, and were implemented at some point before December 2022.

⁶⁷ Some official guides end the tour earlier by Jagyeongjeon on hot summer days.

⁶⁸ Suzanna Oh, Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol Interview

⁶⁹ Gang Cheonung, Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol Interview

⁷⁰ Informal conversations with official guides, April 2022 and June 2023.

3.2.5.1 Tours in Korean

Official tours in Korean are popular, each usually gathering groups larger than ten people even on weekdays. Groups can get much larger, especially on weekends, and guides use a microphone to reach all participants. Many of the Korean participants are domestic tourists from outside the capital.⁷¹ The tour route passes the Geunjeongjeon Throne Hall and Sajeongjeon Hall, before going west to the Sujeongjeon Hall and Gyeonghoeru Pavilion. It then goes east passing Gyotaejeon Hall and Jagyeongjeon Hall before turning north and ending in front of the Hyangwonji pond. Narratives are mainly focussed on how each of the buildings were used, especially during the years King Gojong and Queen Myeongseong resided in the palace. Some official guides carry a collection of large photographs relevant to their narration. Historical photographs add depth and value to the tours, but they are only used for Korean language tours and not by all guides.

The guide begins tours by summarising the general history of Gyeongbokgung. It is explained that it burned down during the 16th century Japanese invasions of Korea, without explicitly stating Japanese set the fire. Next, the former location of the Japanese Government-General Building is pointed out, sometimes accompanied by photographs clearly illustrating its exact location and the effect of its juxtaposition in front of the much smaller palace buildings. It is explained with neutral wordings and expressions that many of the palace structures were moved or destroyed before the construction of the colonial building. As is the case with the palace's information panels, Japan is not mentioned again until the end of the tour, with the exception of referring to when particular buildings were destroyed and rebuilt. Stopping at the Sujeongjeon Hall, narratives revolve around King Sejong and Hangul, and its use by Kim Hong-jip's cabinet is only mentioned in passing with no reference to the cause or effect of the Gabo reforms.

At the tour's final stop in front of the Hyangwonji pond, guides may display pictures of the Geoncheonggung Residence, whose entrance is visible from the pond. Participants can then decide if they want to explore further by themselves, reducing the required time and walking distance of the tour. The pond is also a more convenient location for pointing

⁷¹ One group of participants I conversed with were visiting from Jeonju, entering the palace for their first time.

out toilets and exits at the end of the tour. Before ending the tour, the guide provides a general explanation of Geoncheonggung's purpose as a royal residence and notes that it was the location of the Eulmi Incident (Myeongseong's assassination). Some guides provide no details, while others mention the queen's political relations to Russia as background. One guide explained the assassination mission was codenamed "fox hunt", highlighting the disrespect and demeaning attitude the Japanese elite in Korea held towards its royal family. The same guide pointed out the location of the queen's cremation and stated her remains were thrown in the Hyangwonji pond. No guides observed mentioned internal power struggles or the fact that Koreans of the Hullyeondae participated in the assassination, resulting in a simplification of history reflecting Korean victimhood nationalism. It is worth noting that none of the official guides expressed negative emotions towards Japan or the Japanese while narrating the assassination.

3.2.5.2 Tours in English

The official tour in English is similar to that in Korean, but narratives are significantly less detailed, and no pictures are shown for reference. Members of the royal family are almost exclusively referred to only by their title, making it difficult and sometimes impossible to make distinctions between narratives set prior to the 1592 invasion and those set after the Daewongun's 1867 palace reconstruction. Official guides are fluent in English and easy to understand, but explanations are often described as "dry" by Euro-American visitors, with little or no jokes or meaningful interaction with participants.⁷² However, there are significant differences in the narrative style of English-speaking guides, and some successfully use humour to make their tours more enjoyable and engaging.

Contrary to information panels, the English-speaking tour guides do not take for granted that visitors have preexisting knowledge of Korea's history under Japanese colonial rule. They must also be aware that the term "Japanese occupation" as used on information

⁷² Official guides do converse with participants before starting the tours. They ask questions for example about the nationality of participants and about other palaces they may have visited in the past. However, such interaction is not frequently utilised during the tour which may feel generic and rehearsed.

panels is confusing for visitors unfamiliar with Korean history. During the introductory explanation of the palace, the guides explain that Japan attacked Korea twice during the 1592-1598 invasions and that “there was a Japanese colonial period from 1910 to 1945.” The language is neutral when describing these key events, avoiding any explicit framing of victims and perpetrators. However, the tone and wordings change when describing the construction of the Japanese Government-General Building and the queen’s assassination. The guides explain that Japan chose the location of their Korean headquarters deliberately to cut off the Korean “energy” or “feng shui” flowing to the Korean royal palace and authorities.⁷³ Unlike the tours in Korean, a mournful tone is sometimes used to emphasise colonial injustice.

While mention of “the Eulmi Incident” is minimal on the official Korean tour, participants of the English tour are provided with some detail and emotional emphasis when reaching the tour’s last stop by the pond. One guide initiated this narrative by stating that “the pond looks peaceful now, but it has a very sad history.” The guide provided a reason for “the Japanese” to plan Queen Myeongseong’s assassination, explaining that she had wanted stronger Korean relations with Russia and not with Japan. This was the first time in the tour narrative a queen was referred to by name. The guides state that “the Japanese” broke into the palace and killed the queen, “burned her by the hill, and threw her body in the pond,” while pointing out these locations to the participants. It is repeated multiple times that it is “very sad” and “a tragedy,” but little context is provided.

One tour in English ended with the guide adding her interpretation of King Gojong’s reason for leaving Gyeongbokgung, and a narrative of his death. This interpretation appears to be individual, and not mentioned by other official guides. According to the

⁷³ This is a theory often presented as fact in Korea, but it has been recognised as a myth to a larger degree after the removal of the Japanese Government-General Building was completed in 2000. When Gyeongbokgung was first constructed, its location was chosen based on theories of geomantic energy, and colonial authorities built the Japanese Government-General Building on palace grounds as part of a colonial urban planning strategy which aimed to destroy Seoul’s traditional urban structure. However, the interpretation that the Japanese construction was specifically intended to block geomantic energies can be considered a misunderstanding rooted in strong anti-colonial sentiment amongst the Korean public. See Son Eun-Shin and Pae Jeong-Hann, “Geundae yeoksa gyeongwanui bojongwa cheolgeo: Gu joseonchongdokbu cheolgeo nonjaengeul saryero [Conflicts between the Conservation and Removal of the Modern Historic Landscapes: A Case of the Demolition Controversy of the Japanese General Government Building in Seoul]”, *Hanguk jogyeong hakoeji* 46(4): 2018, p. 27;34.

guide, the king was so devastated by his wife's murder that he could not even eat, and he had to leave the palace (according to historical records, the king did not eat food cooked at Gyeongbokgung after the assassination due to fear of being poisoned, and he escaped the palace because it was guarded by the pro-Japanese Hullyeondae that participated in the assassination⁷⁴). King Gojong was portrayed as more loving of his queen than other previous kings, which the guide had explained were busy meeting their many concubines on rotation.⁷⁵ The narrative ended with Gojong's death, as the guide stated that also he was killed by "the Japanese", with poisoned coffee. This unconfirmed rumour was stated as fact, ending the tour dramatically with a tragic love story in which both the king and queen were murdered by Japanese aggressors.

The above narratives of the murders of the king and queen were the most dramatic episodes presented in the official English tour. Ending the tour with these narratives make them increasingly memorable, likely to remain as strong impressions in the memories of participants. The framing of the deaths of the king and queen as a tragic ending to a love story makes the narrative relatable to contemporary visitors and portrays "the Japanese" as true villains. It was perhaps to make King Gojong and his love story more relatable that it was not mentioned how he continued to produce children with his other consorts after Queen Myeongseong's murder. While not all official English-speaking guides convey the theory that King Gojong was murdered by Japanese colonisers, the recurring theme of the innocence and unwavering love of the king and queen imparts fairytale-like qualities to the narrative.

It is important to note how it sometimes becomes difficult to distinguish official memory from public memory, because public memory can become part of official tours through unofficial collective memories shared by official guides. Transformed by the guide, the tour described above can easily be defined as a dark tourism tour. It presents participants with contrasting impressions of positive and negative events for contemplation, with memorable narratives of violent deaths. However, it is crucial to recognize that selective and occasionally inaccurate historical narrations can perpetuate a sense of victimhood

⁷⁴ For example Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, p. 520.

⁷⁵ The role of concubines was explained when stopping at the original royal sleeping quarters of Gangnyeongjeon Hall.

nationalism, ultimately diminishing universality and educational value of the tour.

3.2.5.3 Tours in Japanese

I joined an official tour of Gyeongbokgung in Japanese in April 2022 as the only participant. Due to strict COVID-19 related restrictions in Japan, few Japanese tourists visited Korea during my fieldwork period and Japanese tours did not commence on a regular basis. This was the guide's first time to conduct a tour in Japanese since tourism entry restrictions were imposed about two years before, and she had stopped wearing the official hanbok, not expecting any Japanese-speaking tourists. As being the only participant as a foreign researcher was a significant limitation for observing the Japanese tour, I returned to join the same tour on 25 May 2023, in which six Japanese tourists participated.

There were advantages for data collection as the first tour in 2022 was personalised and allowed for questions and informal conversation. Due to my many questions and the guide's generosity, the tour ended up being about 20 minutes longer than regular official tours. In addition, I had a 15-minute informal conversation the same month with another official Gyeongbokgung guide who conducted Japanese tours before the pandemic. Furthermore, informal conversations with other staff, such as a senior employee in the office behind the audio guide reception resulted in valuable data collection relevant to Japanese visitors and official Japanese tours. By joining the same tour by the same guide together with Japanese participants one year later I could confirm that the framings and details of the guide's narration had not been significantly tweaked on my first individual tour.

The Japanese-speaking official guide started the tour as usual, briefly summarising palace history, including Japanese invasions and the construction of the Japanese Government-General Building. On the tour with Japanese participants, military leader of Japan at the time, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, was named to contextualise the 1592-98 invasions. The narration of the destruction of Gyeongbokgung during these invasions was carefully worded and did not specify Japanese perpetrators. However, the explanation was brief,

and at least one of the Japanese tour participants understood the fire that destroyed the palace to have been deliberately ignited by Japanese invaders.⁷⁶

The facts that colonial expositions were held on palace grounds and that buildings were demolished for this purpose, not mentioned on other standard tours, were included on both Japanese tours I participated in. The theory of Japan deliberately disrupting the Korean geomantic energies (*pungsu-jiri/fūsui*) was stated as fact in the same way as on the English tour. The fact that the walls surrounding Gyeonghoeru was destroyed by Japan for better views was also included. Unsurprisingly, the information relevant to Japanese colonialism was conveyed objectively without any negative descriptions of the Japanese. The Daewongun was described as a highly intelligent person during the explanation of Gyeongbokgung's 1867 reconstruction. Such positive descriptions of Korean key figures in official narratives do not necessarily match the views of the guides.⁷⁷ The tour was largely identical to that in Korean, more detailed and comprehensive than the English tour.

The Japanese tour also usually ends by the Hyangwonji pond, or outside the gates of Jagyeongjeon Hall on hot summer days to minimise walking distance. However, even in the case of the latter, the guide narrates Queen Myeongseong's assassination and suggests visiting Geoncheonggung after the end of the tour. It is clearly considered an essential tour narrative. As I had stated my interest in official narratives of Queen Myeongseong's assassination, I was on my first tour guided inside the walls of the Geoncheonggung and given a more elaborate explanation than on usual tours. The guide initiated the story of Queen Myeongseong by explaining that after the Tripartite Intervention, Korea saw Russia as an important potential ally for protection against Japan. Narrating about Queen Myeongseong's political powers and efforts to place more pro-Russian Koreans in powerful positions, the guide provided a motive for the queen's murder. Regarding the Japanese assassins, she explained that they were a mix of civilians and people in high positions, such as diplomats and "the company president of a newspaper" (Adachi Kenzō of the Kanjō Shimpō, see [Appendix II.IV](#)). It was noted that some Koreans participated

⁷⁶ Informal conversation with participant after end of tour.

⁷⁷ Asking my guide's personal evaluation of the Daewongun, the response was negative raising gender discrimination as the main reason.

in the assassination, without specific mention of the Hullyeondae.

I asked for any details on the logistics of the assassination as we sat down on a ledge in front of Gonnyeonghap, Queen Myeongseong's residence. The guide stated that the queen was cut down inside Gonnyeonghap by an unidentified assassin before being burned by the adjacent Noksan hill, and ultimately thrown in the Hyangwonji pond. The guide continued that because no remains could be found and retrieved, only the queen's clothes were buried in the state funeral (omitting the two-year gap between the assassination and funeral, and her temporary posthumous loss of royal ranks).

Multiple official guides at the palace who have guided in Japanese stated that they do not censor, tweak, or otherwise soften tour narratives for Japanese ears, but mitigate conflicts by narrating difficult history in an apathetic and matter-of-fact fashion. This was also the case on my tour with Japanese participants in 2023. The guide did not explain the Tripartite Intervention or other significant political events in detail, but nonetheless portrayed Myeongseong as an intelligent and politically active queen that was seen as an obstacle to Japan due to her efforts to strengthen Korea-Russia relations. The most significant difference from the more detailed explanation on my individual tour the year before, was that the assassins were all presented as Japanese rōnin, with no mention of Korean perpetrators. It was not clear that the assassination plot was conceived in the Japanese legation in Korea, and it was presented as a calculated step in an already existing plan of colonising Korea. Although this narrative is incomplete and lacks clarification of details in dispute, it provides enough information to comprehend (to a limited extent) why and how the queen was murdered with the intention of weakening Russia's influence for the sake of Japanese dominance of Korean politics.

At the end of the individual tour, the guide took me to the original foundation stones of the Jaseondang hall, located right outside the east gate of Geoncheonggung by Noksan hill. There it was explained how Ōkura Kihachirō, father of the founder of Hotel Okura in Tokyo, bought the Jaseondang hall and transported it to his private property in 1914, when the building was dismantled in preparation for the Joseon Industrial Exhibition. The Jaseondang hall burned down in the 1923 Great Kantō earthquake, and its foundation stones were found on the property of Okura Hotel in 1993 and returned to

Gyeongbokgung.⁷⁸ This narrative was repeated at the end of the Japanese tour in 2023 and appears to be considered especially important by this specific guide, as it was not mentioned on any other tours. The narrative of the Jaseondang and repatriation of its foundation stones, unknown to most visitors, reveals more about how Korean heritage was destroyed or taken and preserved by various colonial stakeholders than any of the official narratives included in other standard tours. It is also a narrative of non-government efforts to repatriate an important piece of cultural heritage, once removed by colonial powers, to the postcolonial nation—a narrative enabling visitors to draw comparisons to postcolonial issues in other parts of the world.

Visitors fortunate to join a small group with a knowledgeable guide may, as I did, request specific focus on difficult history. In my case, the result was a tour well fitted for educational dark tourism. From the 2023 tour and from conversations with official guides, it became clear that narratives relevant to Japanese colonialism are not reduced or filtered for participants of the Japanese-language tour. Korean royalty is celebrated while Japanese assassins and colonialists are condemned. However, generalising terms that may categorise the Japanese in the historical narratives and contemporary Japanese people together (“the Japanese”) are avoided, minimising risks of identity threats. Moreover, the Korean guides who are fluent in Japanese are, upon conversation, genuinely fond of many aspects of Japan and its culture and enjoy applying the language to their work. If their absence of negative feelings towards Japan is sensed by Japanese visitors, risks of historical narratives causing identity threats are further minimised.

3.2.6 Tours by volunteering guides

On Saturdays and Sundays, some of the Korean language tours of Gyeongbokgung are led by volunteer guides from the NPO’s Hanguui Jaebalgyeon and Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol, respectively. These are in official cooperation with the Gyeongbokgung

⁷⁸ The guide was surprised I already knew about these foundation stones, stating that it is very rare for visitors to explore this area by Noksan hill. Indeed, the only other visitors I have observed in this area wore hanbok and were taking pictures undisturbed in the east gateway of Geoncheonggung, seemingly uninterested in Jaseondang.

Office and conduct Korean language tours not needing prior reservation from the same point as official guides (group tours in other languages may be arranged through advance contact). It is not obvious to tour participants that they are volunteer guides until the end of the tour when they introduce their organisation. These open tours by volunteers on weekends did not operate during my fieldwork period due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and I have not had the opportunity to participate in a tour by Hangugui Jaebalgyeon. I did participate in an extended tour by Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol requiring prior reservation in April 2022, as well as a regular Sunday tour by the same organisation in June 2023.

The main purpose of Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol's activities is to generate deeper interest in Korean culture and heritage and to raise awareness of the importance of protecting cultural heritage.⁷⁹ Although guides are volunteers, the depths of their knowledge may exceed those of official palace guides. In order to be certified as a guide for Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol, volunteers have to partake in 30 specialised lectures, compose their own tour narration script, and be approved after seven test tours actually guiding participants. Naturally, only individuals with a strong interest and significant preexisting knowledge of Korean history would partake in such a programme.

The Sunday tours led by volunteers from Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol follows the exact same route as official guides and cover the same core narratives. However, much of the tour is spent explaining cultural aspects of the palace in detail, such as how to read King Sejong's sundial or the specific meaning behind the many various statues of auspicious animals surrounding the Geunjeongjeon. Colonial memory is almost absent, except from obligatory mention of the former location of the Government-General Building and the date and location of Queen Myeongseong's assassination. On the tour I joined, "Japan" or "the Japanese" were not even mentioned when talking about the assassination, as it was considered common knowledge and the guide apparently had no intention of devoting time to speak about Japan. No forms of nationalistic bias were apparent in any parts of the tour narrative. While the tour is well developed and highly educational, it is not suitable for dark tourism due to its limited timeframe is devoted elsewhere than

⁷⁹ Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol Interview.

difficult history.

The Sunday tour lasted one hour and 20 minutes, while the extended tour booked through Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol lasted two hours and 20 minutes. In stark contrast to the Sunday tour, as discussed further below, the extended tour included detailed and historically accurate narratives of both colonial expositions and the queen's assassination. These narratives, with details on who planned and participated in the assassination, are considered essential by Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol on the extended tours,⁸⁰ but are apparently not prioritised when time is restricted.

3.2.7 Official narratives of Gyeongbokgung's audio guide and website

The audio guide and the official website of Gyeongbokgung are discussed together because they both provide similar official narratives of difficult history with greater detail than those of the in situ information panels. It is rare to see visitors using audio guides at the palace, and it is assumed that most visitors do not examine historical narratives on the official website before visiting. However, the narratives of the audio guide and the official website reveal the ideal focus and framing of the queen's assassination from the perspective of the Gyeongbokgung Office, that have not been tweaked as those presented orally by human guides.

Gyeongbokgung offers visitors audio guides in Korean, English, Japanese and Chinese for a small fee. The poorly advertised audio guide office and rental counter is located next to the regular ticket booths.⁸¹ Audio guide entries are playable by pointing the audio guide at numbered areas on a map that comes with the device. The narratives are identical in Korean, English and Japanese, but the English script suffers from inconsistent and at times erroneous translations. For example, in the audio guide's English entry about the queen's assassination, she is only referred to as "Myeongseong Hwanghu", with no explanation that she was queen and that "Hwanghu" is her Korean posthumous rank which translates to "Empress". This makes the English audio guide difficult, at times

⁸⁰ Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol Interview.

⁸¹ The audio guide is not mentioned on the official palace website.

impossible, to follow for many visitors. Moreover, English entries in the audio guide are voiced monotonously in varying sound quality by several different speakers. The narratives of the audio guide are occasionally updated with new recordings edited in, causing such inconsistencies.⁸² Below is a direct citation of the English audio guide recording for Geoncheonggung.

“Geoncheonggung Palace, built in 1873, the tenth year of Emperor Gojong. Geoncheonggung Palace, which is a small building belonging to the Gyeongbokgung Palace, is the residential place for Emperor Gojong and Myeongseong Hwanghu. The Emperor Gojong once moved to Changdeokgung Palace because of the fire disaster that occurred in Gyeongbokgung Palace. When he moved back, he chose to stay in the relatively remote Gyeongbokgung Palace, in order to avoid the interruption from Japan.⁸³ In fact, the Geoncheonggung palace is not only the residential place for the Emperor Gojong, but also the greeting hall to receive the foreign envoys. On August 20th, 1895, the 32nd year of Emperor Gojong, a flock of mobs headed by the Japanese envoy Miura Goro madly broke into Gonnyeong Hall which is the residential place for Myeongseong Hwanghu and brutally killed her at Geoncheonggung.⁸⁴ This event was called ‘Eulmi Emergency.’ In 1990, the restoring of the Geoncheonggung Palace was listed into the overall restoration plans at Gyeongbokgung Palace, and it also became the representative of the bitter suffering history of the Korean nation...”

The official website of Gyeongbokgung (royalpalace.go.kr) has Korean and English versions only, with less contents in English. In addition to the previously discussed introduction of Gyeongbokgung’s history, both the English and Korean websites include information on many of the specific structures within the palace. Only the Korean website contains an FAQ. This FAQ contains two questions related to difficult history and Japan; one about the queen’s assassination, cited further below, and one asking about expositions held by imperial Japan at Gyeongbokgung. The FAQ’s official answer to the latter asserts that Japan held unspecific expositions and art exhibitions at the palace as an excuse to

⁸² Conversation with employee in audio guide rental office.

⁸³ The corresponding entry in Korean does not state that Gyeongbokgung was “relatively remote”, but that Gojong stayed in Geoncheonggung which is located in a remote part of Gyeongbokgung.

⁸⁴ Date is noted according to lunar calendar. It is not clarified that Gonnyeonghap is a part of Geoncheonggung.

destroy palace buildings and weaken the king's power.⁸⁵ The selection of these two questions in the FAQ speaks to the acknowledged significance of discussing the topics of Queen Myeongseong's assassination and the colonial destruction of palace buildings.

The page about Geoncheonggung on the official website has a simple but specific description of the assassination: "In 1895, a group of Japanese assassins raided this residence and slaughtered Queen Myeongseong, King Gojong's wife. She died in Okoru, the high veranda of Gonnyeonghap."⁸⁶ This very specific location is also noted as the place the queen died in some Korean history textbooks as well as on the official websites of the Korean Cultural Heritage Administration, without specifying any historical records for reference.⁸⁷ Okoru is also given as the site of death in various books and websites such as Wikipedia, without any reliable reference.⁸⁸ Both the exact location of the murder and the name "Okoru" is disputed.⁸⁹ The FAQ on the Korean website, translated below, gives another more detailed account of the incident.

Where was Empress Myeongseong assassinated? Empress Myeongseong was assassinated by Japanese people in Gonnyeonghap in Geoncheonggung, which is located to the north of Hyangwonjeong pavilion. Empress Myeongseong was assassinated because while Japan was attempting to control Korea, Empress Myeongseong wanted to strengthen relations with Russia. How could Japan enter Gyeongbokgung and assassinate Empress Myeongseong? In the early morning of 8 October 1895, they entered Gyeongbokgung's Gwanghwamun gate and passed the west

⁸⁵ Gyeongbokgung Official website, FAQ (accessed 5 December)

https://www.royalpalace.go.kr/content/data/data_02.asp

⁸⁶ Gyeongbokgung Official website, "Geoncheonggung Residence" (accessed 5 December 2022).

http://www.royalpalace.go.kr:8080/html/eng_gbg/data/data_03_11.jsp

⁸⁷ Korean Cultural Heritage Administration,

"Geoncheonggung" .http://www.heritage.go.kr/heri/gungDetail/gogungDetail.do?serial_number=177&language=kor&detail_code=27&gung_number=1 (accessed 8 December 2022)

⁸⁸ The English and Korean language Wikipedia entries for "Empress Myeongseong" references (at the time of writing) Hwang Wongap, *Hanguksareul bakkun yeoindeul*, (Seoul: Chaegiinneunmaeul 2002). The book is a collection of narratives of mythical and factual women in Korean history. It's narrative of Queen Myeongseong contains several erroneous descriptions of Koncheonggung, does not mention involvement of Korean soldiers, and gives no sources for stating Okoru as the site of death. Okoru is also stated as the site of death in other books without stated sources, such as Kim Dong-uk, "Korean Palaces" pp. 88.

⁸⁹ Kim Byeongheon, "Kim Byeongheonui dasi jipeoboneun uri yeoksa(37)", *Monthly Chosun*, 27 October. http://monthly.chosun.com/client/mcol/column_view.asp?Idx=813&Newsnumb=20171026611 (accessed 4 February 2023)

side of Geunjeongjeon's walls before sneaking into Geoncheonggung located in the far back of Gyeongbokgung. Inside the Geoncheonggung is Jangandang where the king was, and Gonnyeonghap where Empress Myeongseong was, and it is said that the Japanese went to Gonnyeonghap and assassinated Empress Myeongseong. After Empress Myeongseong died, it is said that they took her to a hill to the east (Noksan) and set her body on fire before throwing her ashes in the pond by Hyangwonjeong and burying other remains by Noksan. It was truly an awful incident. Invading a palace and murdering the queen of another country is an example of imperial Japan's barbarism.⁹⁰

Examining difficult history in the official narratives of Gyeongbokgung reveals that the destruction of palace buildings during the colonial period is most frequently mentioned, and that the assassination of Queen Myeongseong is the most detailed official memory. While the destruction of palace buildings is usually narrated without explicit moral judgement, the queen's murder is labelled as a sad and tragic event that reflects the collective memory of national suffering due to "imperial Japan's barbarism". Historical records of Korean opposition to Queen Myeongseong due to her policies and nepotism and, perhaps most importantly, records of the Korean Hullyeondae playing a large and essential part in the assassination is officially forgotten. The result are simplified narratives of innocent Koreans and barbaric Japanese. Many official versions of the Eulmi Incident narrative have been presented here, but a regular visitor would not observe them all, likely resulting in a further simplified imagination of the causes and effects of this assassination.

3.3 Perceptions of Gyeongbokgung's official narratives

At Gyeongbokgung, and other heritage sites, the management must select the historical events to be represented in official narratives and consider adequate levels of detail to be included. In doing so, a balance must be found between narratives and details that need to be told, and narratives and details that visitors are interested in hearing about. Therefore,

⁹⁰ Gyeongbokgung Official website, FAQ (accessed 5 December)
https://www.royalpalace.go.kr/content/data/data_02.asp

interpretations of the experiences of various types of visitors are valuable data to managers that may influence how they mould official narratives. In the case of Gyeongbokgung's official history relevant to Japanese colonialism, we see trends of perpetrator-narratives about the Japanese, and victim-narratives about Korea and its royal members. Visitors who are not Korean or Japanese become bystanders or observers of this antithesis. Naturally, such narratives are experienced differently by Korean and Japanese visitors due to their differences in national identities and pre-existing knowledge. Informal conversations with a large number of Korean and Japanese who have visited each other's countries confirm that it is common to experience the Other's evaluations of colonial history as directly relevant to their evaluations of Japanese and Korean national identities.

It is common for domestic visitors to Korean palaces to be enthralled by learning new historical details from knowledgeable guides on site.⁹¹ An academic investigation from 2011 showed that Korean visitors to Gyeongbokgung were generally satisfied with its official guides and their narratives, and that this is directly related to a high number of repeat visitors.⁹² For the 2011 investigation, researchers collected and analysed questionnaire responses from 213 Korean visitors who had participated in official Gyeongbokgung tours on weekends. The sample population, revealing typical Korean participant demographics, had a composition of 54.5% female participants, with 78.4% of the full sample population in age groups of 20-49 years. 42.7% came from Seoul, and 33.8% from Gyeonggi Province which surrounds the capital. 62% were repeat visitors. Participants evaluated the tour as highly interesting, especially because it satisfied intellectual needs and was experienced as lively (*Saengdonggam inneun haeseol*). Furthermore, the value of the tour was evaluated to be high, especially due to narratives being perceived as educational and historically accurate.

Gyeongbokgung is one of the most popular tourist sites in Seoul, also for Japanese tourists.⁹³ Younger Japanese visitors, such as most Japanese students in Korea, usually

⁹¹ Suzanna Oh, Interview.

⁹² Minho Chun, "Influence of Cultural Tourism Interpretation on Tourist Satisfaction: Focussed on the Cultural Tourism Interpretation of Gyeongbokgung," In *the Journal of the Korea Contents Association*, Vol 11(12), 12 November 2011, 909-918.

⁹³ Nogi, Interview.

do not participate in tours and many prioritise hanbok-wearing experiences and relevant souvenir photography at the palace.⁹⁴ Before the COVID-19 pandemic, official Gyeongbokgung tours were popular with middle-aged Japanese tourists, many of whom were repeat visitors to Korea and the palace.⁹⁵ On KONEST.com, a well-known Japanese-language travel site for Korea, Japanese visitors have rated Gyeongbokgung 4.7 out of 5 stars.⁹⁶ Only two out of 258 comments on Gyeongbokgung were negative, one criticising the reservation system for special events and the other stating the palace is uninteresting because “all gates look the same.” While many commented on the beauty of the palace, the most frequent praise was directed at the free official tours in Japanese. Japanese visitors describe the tour as educational and interesting, and many compliment the fluent Japanese spoken by Korean guides.

Japanese participants on the tour I joined in May 2023 also appeared satisfied with the tour, and did not appear uncomfortable with colonial narratives. One Japanese participant engaged in conversation with me in-between stops on the tour, initially fascinated I had joined a Japanese language tour. This participant mentioned to me that it appeared the guide only gave a brief explanation of the 1592-98 invasions because Japanese people may feel uncomfortable, and that they would have liked to hear more details. The same participant was curious about details of Queen Myeongseong’s assassination and started to ask me details about it immediately after the tour’s end, by this time knowing I was doing relevant research. Another Japanese tour participant overheard the conversation and approached me for keywords necessary for finding more information online. Both participants were not previously aware of this historical event which generated sufficient curiosity to actively seek additional information. The narrative of the Jaseondang and its repatriation also generate interest in Japanese visitors. One participant of the May 2023 tour came to Korea mainly due to strong interest in K-pop, but got curious to join the tour after hearing this narrative from their Japanese spouse who had previously joined the same tour.

⁹⁴ Informal conversations with two Japanese-speaking official Gyeongbokgung guides, 2022.

⁹⁵ Ibid; KONEST, “Gyeongbokgung”, https://www.konest.com/contents/spot_mise_detail.html?id=265 (accessed 6 December 2022)

⁹⁶ At the time of writing. KONEST, “Gyeongbokgung”, https://www.konest.com/contents/spot_mise_detail.html?id=265 (accessed 6 December 2022)

The majority of reviews of Gyeongbokgung from anglophone international visitors are positive, many praising the Palace Royal Guard Changing Ceremony, “beautiful” and “lovely” architecture and nature, insight into Korean culture and history, free entry when wearing hanbok, as well as the availability of free guided tours in English.⁹⁷ A study from 2020 which analysed negative Gyeongbokgung reviews posted between 2008 and 2019 revealed reasons some international visitors were not satisfied with their visit.⁹⁸ The most prominent themes of the negative reviews were that the palace was experienced as 1) “fake” due to its reconstructions; 2) less impressive than other palaces (such as the Forbidden City in Beijing); 3) uninteresting (many similar buildings); 4) unfriendly for tourists; 5) not worth visiting over other Korean palaces and museums (not as interesting or beautiful). Many of the negative reviews which insinuated that Gyeongbokgung is not tourist friendly stated that a tour guide is needed to understand and/or appreciate the site, and the information panels were criticised for being inadequate. Others complained about the large number of hanbok-wearing visitors who come for selfies “without appreciating the beauty and history” of the palace.

The above suggests that despite the existence of victim and perpetrator narratives, Gyeongbokgung Office has selected, moulded and presented its official history in ways that satisfy most visitor expectations and do not pose hard-hitting identity threats to average Korean and Japanese visitors. While many visitors note the usefulness of the information panels are limited, most participants of official guided tours are satisfied with the historical interpretations provided, regardless of their nationality. The data reveals that especially visitor satisfaction of anglophone visitors (bystanders) could be further heightened by improving the volume and accessibility of official historical interpretations at the palace. From a post-colonial point of view, it is imperative to question to what extent colonial narratives may be increased in volume and complexity without significantly challenging the agendas and expectations of managers and visitor groups.

⁹⁷ TripAdvisor reviews accessed 6 December 2022.

⁹⁸ Jung Eun Hong, “Qualitative Analysis of Users’ Negative Reviews on TripAdvisor: International Tourists’ Reviews on Gyeongbokgung Palace in Seoul, Korea,” In *the International Journal of Geospatial and Environmental Research*, vol. 7 (1:5), June 2020

3.4 Summary of Findings

I have conducted an analysis of the official narratives and symbolic representations associated with Gyeongbokgung Palace, which serves as an exemplary illustration of a celebrated Korean heritage site interwoven with complex memories tied to Korea's colonial occupation by imperial Japan. Gyeongbokgung Palace has functioned as a focal point for memory and identity politics, spanning the periods before, during, and after colonisation. While it has undergone reconstruction to serve as a symbol of Korean culture and legitimacy once more, its historical underpinnings, including Queen Myeongseong's assassination, the international power dynamics preceding Korea's colonisation, and its role as the colonial government headquarters, are not omitted from official narratives.

The case study underscores that alongside positive and potentially identity-affirming recollections, sites like Gyeongbokgung Palace can also incorporate challenging memories of colonial subjugation within their official narratives. However, the balance between these divergent narratives cannot be equal due to the site's popularity and intended symbolism. While certain difficult memories, such as the destruction of palace structures by colonial authorities, cannot be disregarded when narrating the history of the palace, they also cannot overshadow the central focus of narratives in a celebrated site upholding Korean legitimacy. Colonial history is acknowledged frequently, yet these references are brief and simplified. Conversely, selected aspects of the royal culture of the Joseon dynasty are promoted and narrated comprehensively. Consequentially, official memories presented at Gyeongbokgung may be explored through dark tourism to obtain a limited but significant understanding of how the palace has been central to both proud and devastating national historical events that have contributed to the formation of contemporary Korean society and identity.

Simplified official narratives of difficult memories linked to Korea's colonisation at Gyeongbokgung present Korea as an innocent victim of Japanese barbarism. A prominent example is how Queen Myeongseong is simply described as kind and beautiful, despite actually having played a pivotal role in domestic and international power disputes, paired with the omission of the fact that a large number of Korean soldiers participated in her

assassination. Memories of pre-colonial patriotic Koreans who saw Japan as a model for modernising Korea does not fit the simplified official narrative and are thus ignored.

Official guides offer popular guided tours in various languages, providing palace visitors with both official and personal interpretations of its history that go beyond what is presented on information panels. However, despite tour narratives of guides being monitored by the Gyeongbokgung Office, official and individual interpretations by guides occasionally results in misleading storytelling. This is particularly evident in depictions of the last ruling Korean royal family, often portrayed as a typical family where members perpetually exhibit unwavering love and support, mirroring the ideals of modern Korean households. Nevertheless, official guides appear to seek to maintain historical accuracy, leading to official tours being of generally high quality and well-received by diverse audiences.

The extent of information and intricacy within official tour narratives tends to be more limited in English tours compared to Korean and Japanese tours. This discrepancy seems to stem from the fact that English-speaking visitors typically possess less prior knowledge about Korean history and relevant historical figures. Nevertheless, despite variations in the depth of historical narratives across different languages and administrative concerns regarding how especially Japanese visitors may perceive Korean colonial memory, Japanese-language tours do not omit details encompassed in Korean-language tours concerning colonial history. However, Japanese-speaking official guides at Gyeongbokgung Palace refrain from making ethnic generalisations and sweeping statements about “the Japanese”. Contrary to the belief held by some senior members of the Gyeongbokgung administration, the vast majority of Japanese visitors to Korea and the palace are not deterred or offended by the prevailing negative portrayals of Japanese imperialists in the official memory. This indicates that these historical Japanese figures do not commonly resonate with the identity of contemporary Japanese visitors to the country.

The primary challenge in effectively facilitating educational dark tourism through the dissemination of official memory lies in the entrenched nationalistic divide between Korean victims and Japanese perpetrators. Additionally, official narratives lack the

necessary context to comprehend how both domestic and international power struggles contributed to the division within the Joseon Korean government, ultimately enabling Japan's incorporation of an unwilling Korea into its empire. Enhancing the official remembrance by acknowledging the roles of pre-colonial pro-Japanese Korean elites and soldiers, as well as highlighting the divergent perspectives and agendas within Joseon Korea's leadership, would significantly enhance the suitability of Gyeongbokgung's official narratives for educational dark tourism.⁹⁹ Existing unofficial tours by external guides which encompass a more comprehensive array of nuanced colonial memories demonstrate Gyeongbokgung's high potential as a site for educational dark tourism. [Chapter 6](#) contains more in-depth exploration of the implications drawn from these findings.

⁹⁹ There are significant disparities between Korean historiography and the simplified official narratives presented at heritage sites like Gyeongbokgung regarding Korean attitudes towards Japan in the years leading up to Korea's colonisation. Korean historians have long recognised that many patriotic late Joseon dynasty intellectuals saw Meiji Japan as an ideal model for Korea's modernisation. See for example Chai-sik Chung, "Changing Korean Perceptions of Japan on the Eve of Modern Transformation: The Case of Neo-Confucian Yangban Intellectuals", *Korean Studies*, 19, 1995, 39-50.

Chapter 4 Nationalism and critical reflection at Seodaemun Prison History Hall

This chapter focus on the case study of Seodaemun Prison History Hall, examining it as a dark tourism site of conflicting memories and symbolisms. In contrast to Gyeongbokgung, Seodaemun Prison is predominantly known as a site of difficult colonial memory, and is popular for forms of educational tourism definable, and occasionally labelled as, dark tourism. The prison's history spans across both the colonial period and subsequent period of post-colonial dictatorial rule, but relevant memories have been selectively highlighted and marginalised in line with evolving memory politics.

The first part of this chapter examines the prison's historical functions, starting from its construction as a Japanese prison to its current role as a heritage site and museum. The second part delves into the evolution of the prison museum's official symbolisms. The third part critically analyses the official narratives presented within Seodaemun Prison History Hall, encompassing the exhibitions, informational panel narratives, and guided tours offered at the site. The fourth part focuses on the perspectives of Korean, Japanese, and Anglophone visitors, providing insights into their experiences and interpretations of the site. Finally, the chapter concludes by summarising the key findings. Implications of case study findings are discussed in the final chapter.

4.1 Historical background

A more comprehensive overview of Seodaemun Prison's historical background can be found in [Appendix IV](#). Presented below is an abbreviated version.

4.1.1 Korea's first modern prison system

Seodaemun Prison was a Japanese prison constructed in Korea in 1908—two years before Korea was officially colonised by imperial Japan. Japan had obtained control of Korean internal affairs, including the jurisdiction and operation of prisons, through the Japan–

Korea Treaty of 1907 which followed the Japan-Korea Protectorate Treaty in 1905.¹ By 1910, eight large main prisons had been built in Seoul, Gongju, Hamhung, Pyongyang, Haeju, Daegu, Busan, and Gwangju, as well as 14 additional branch prisons in smaller cities.² Imperial Japan exploited the perceived need to modernise colonised territories like Korea as justification for their expansion of power, and the Japanese prison system was showcased as a salient example of Korean modernisation and progress under Japanese rule.³ The total number of inmates in this new Japanese prison network was 2,018 in 1908, 5,300 in 1909, and reached 12,249 in 1918.⁴

The initial construction of Seodaemun Prison, then known as Gyeongseong Prison (Gyeongseong Gamok/Keijō Kangoku) was completed on 21 October 1908 close to Seoul's West Gate (Seodaemun) and Independence Gate (Dongnimmun).⁵ The Independence Gate had been constructed by Seo Jae-pil one decade earlier to symbolise the end of Chinese suzerainty over Korea, but the adjacent construction of a large modern Japanese prison abused this space to signify Japanese power.⁶ The prison had capacity to house 500 prisoners in 1908.⁷ This was almost double that of the total national capacity of the Joseon Korean prison system which traditionally had relied primarily on physically punitive measures rather than imprisonment.⁸

¹ Bruce Cumings, *Korea's place in the sun: a modern history*, updated edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005, first published in 1998), 161-68.

² In his doctoral thesis, Michael L. Sprunger provides a thorough analysis of the Joseon Korean penal system from 1875 and how it changed under Japanese control. See Michael L. Sprunger, "Grafting Justice: Crime and the Politics of Punishment in Korea, 1875-1938" (Doctoral thesis, University of Hawaii, 2011), 188. For an extensive overview of Korea's modern criminal justice in the late Joseon Dynasty, see Do Myeonhoe, *Hanguk geundae hyeongsajaepan jedosa [A History of Modern Criminal Justice in Korea]* (Seoul: Pureun yeoksa, 2014).

³ Jin Woong Kang, "The Prison and Power in Colonial Korea," *Asian Studies Review*, 40:3 (2016), 413-426.

⁴ Jin Woong Kang, "The Prison", 417.

⁵ Kim Samung, Nam Doyeong and Jeong Jinseok, *Seodaemun hyeongmuso 100nyeon hoegowa Jeonmang* (Seoul: Seodaemun hyeongmuso yeoksagwan, 2008), 3-4.

⁶ Hyun Kyung Lee, *'Difficult Heritage' in Nation Building South Korea and post-Conflict Japanese Colonial Occupation Architecture* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 110-13.

⁷ Kim, Nam and Jeong, *Seodaemun hyeongmuso*, 5

⁸ In his doctoral thesis, Michael L. Sprunger provides a thorough analysis of the Joseon Korean penal system from 1875 and how it changed under Japanese control. See Michael L. Sprunger, "Grafting Justice: Crime and the Politics of Punishment in Korea, 1875-1938" (Doctoral thesis, University of Hawaii, 2011), 188. For an extensive overview of Korea's modern criminal justice in the late Joseon Dynasty, see Do Myeonhoe, *Hanguk geundae hyeongsajaepan jedosa [A History of Modern Criminal Justice in Korea]* (Seoul: Pureun yeoksa, 2014).

Gyeongseong Prison soon reached maximum capacity and another prison was built in Seoul's Mapo district in 1912.⁹ As the new prison became Seoul's main prison, it was given the name Gyeongseong/Keijō Prison (Gyeongseong Gamok/Keijō Kangoku) while the original Gyeongseong Prison was renamed as Seodaemun Prison (Seodaemun Gamok/Seidaimon Kangoku). Seodaemun Prison was substantially expanded to hold 3,000 inmates in 1923 (and renamed as it known today as Seodaemun *Hyeongmuseumo*/Seidaimon *Keimusho*, the more modern term for prison used in Japan meaning penitentiary)¹⁰. At this time, the new Gyeongseong/Keijō Prison built in 1912 had half that capacity at 1,500.¹¹ After Korea's liberation Seodaemun Prison was again renamed Gyeongseong Prison, and went through three more name changes before its closure in 1987. Within this thesis, "Seodaemun Prison" refers to all incarnations of the first Japanese prison built in Seoul in 1908 as well as the current museum (Seodaemun Prison History Hall), while "Keijō Prison" refers to the second prison built in 1912.

4.1.2 Discrimination and violence in the guise of colonial modernisation

Already since 1907, Imperial Japan utilised images and descriptions of new Europeanised penal facilities and enforced penal reforms in Korea to propagate that Japan was modernising the country.¹² The Europeanised prisons followed a panopticon design for surveillance in which long rectangular prison wards encircled an observation unit (from an arial perspective forming the shape of a propeller). Most inmates were made to work ten to 14 hours producing clothes and textiles (or war supplies during the war) for the Japanese empire.

Imperial Japan contradicted its own rhetoric of modernisation by arguing that Koreans had a tradition of using physical violence as punishment and that it was purposeful that this continued because Koreans were said to be too "underdeveloped" to be motivated by

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Seodaemun Prison History Hall, *The place of Independence and Democracy: Seodaemun Prison History Hall* (Seoul: Seodaemun Prison History Hall and Seodaemun Management Corporation, 2018), 6.

¹¹ Sprunger, "Grafting Justice," 114.

¹² Alexis Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea: Discourse and Power* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 102.

modern punishments.¹³ Thus, flogging was legally continued in Korea for Korean criminals, but could not be used on Japanese criminals because torture was legally banned in Japan in 1882.¹⁴ Despite such discrimination, Japan successfully portrayed itself to Euro-American powers as a legitimate ruler of Korea by emulating many aspects of Euro-American modernity and colonialism.

From December 1910, the colonial police were given powers of summary judgement allowing them to flog Koreans without trial, sometimes resulting in fatal injuries.¹⁵ By 1916, more criminals were sentenced to flogging than imprisonment (with 52,546 floggings officially recorded that year, of which 70% were based on summary judgements).¹⁶ Consistent with propaganda claiming that flogging was a Korean tradition unsuitable for Japanese, in prisons, it was Korean staff that were made to carry out such punishments on their fellow nationals.¹⁷ The flogging of Koreans was finally abolished in 1920 as part of the “cultural rule” introduced after the 1919 Korean March First Independence Movement.¹⁸

During the colonial period, there were more Korean jailers than Japanese, although elite positions such as prison warders were generally staffed by Japanese.¹⁹ According to Seodaemun Prison History Hall, 145 out of 339 employees at Seodaemun Prison were Korean (43%) in 1937.²⁰ Two out of 30 middle level officers were Korean, and both high level officers were Japanese.

Despite claims of colonial authorities that criminals were treated fairly, torture of suspects and prisoners was common throughout the period of colonial rule, before and after flogging was officially abolished. Such torture was first made publicly known through the “105 Persons Incident”, in which 105 out of about 700 suspects of an alleged assassination attempt on Governor-General Terauchi Masatake were sentenced to

¹³ Jin Woong Kang, “The Prison,” 417-18.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Baker, “Establishment of a legal system,” 194-202.

¹⁶ Chulwoo Lee, “Modernity, Legality, and Power in Korea Under Japanese Rule,” *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, edited by Gi-wook Shin (Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 32-33.

¹⁷ Dudden, *Japan's Colonization*, 116.

¹⁸ Jin Woong Kang, “the Prison”, 419.

¹⁹ Dudden, *Japan's Colonization*, 116.

²⁰ Seodaemun Prison History Hall, *The place of Independence*, 97.

imprisonment in Seodaemun Prison.²¹ The investigation largely targeted the independence activist organisation Shinminhoe (New People's Association) and its supporters, which included a large number of Korean Christians taught by foreigners from Euro-American countries. The sentencing of 105 Korean suspects with connections to foreign missionaries despite lack of evidence caused controversy in the US, and many international spectators came to observe the appeal hearings. With international attention, the accused were provided with interpreters and allowed to detail how they had all confessed under extreme physical torture. However, the continuation of torture for confessions did not raise further controversy as Euro-American spectators were sufficiently satisfied that 99 of the accused 105 were acquitted due to the modern European appeals proceedings.²²

4.1.3 Prisoners in colonial Seodaemun Prison

Complete records of colonial Seodaemun Prison's prisoners have not been found, but it can be estimated that the prison's total number of prisoners for the colonial period was between 65,000 and 94,000.²³ Numbered prisoner record cards with prisoner numbers have been found for 4,837 individuals who were interned in Seodaemun Prison between 1919-1944. The prisoner record cards were exclusively generated for those deemed to necessitate heightened monitoring. This group primarily consisted of political offenders, particularly independence activists, who accounted for approximately 88% of the extant record cards from Seodaemun Prison.²⁴ Most of the prisoners with record cards were in their twenties (57.7%), and while 25 were sentenced to life imprisonment, the majority (53%) served between 1-4 years in Seodaemun Prison. Seodaemun Prison included a relatively small building for female prisoners, and 180 (4%) of discovered prisoner record

²¹ For a compact overview of the incident, see Yun Gyeongno, "Sasil, ireoke bonda 2 - 105-in sageon [Perceiving the facts 2 – The 105 Persons Incident]", *Naeireul yeoneun yeoksa* 6, 2001, 97-107. Yun Gyeongno's comprehensive research on the 105 Persons Incident is available in Yun Gyeongno, *105-in sageongwa sinminhoe yeongu* (Seoul: Hanseong University Press, 2012).

²² Dudden, *Japan's Colonization*, 117-129; Jin Woong Kang, "the Prison."

²³ Park Kyung-mok, "Iljegangjeomgi."

²⁴ Colonial authorities created records of all prisoners, not only for those assigned record cards, but most of the general records are assumed to have been destroyed at the end of the colonial period.

cards belonged to women.

31 (0.6%) of the known Seodaemun Prison record cards belong to Japanese prisoners, all of whom were political offenders either supporting Korean independence or otherwise conducting political activities against imperial Japan.²⁵ These include prominent Japanese communists who worked with Koreans, such as Isogaya Sueji of the Hungnam Nitrogenous Fertilizer Plant and Miyake Shikanosuke who was a professor at the Keijō Imperial University.²⁶ As prison record cards were not created for most non-political prisoners, the ratio of Korean to Japanese prisoners with prison cards would not reflect the overall ratio of Korean to Japanese prisoners in the facility. The prison record cards are not a reliable source for estimating the proportion of political and non-political offenses, or the distribution of prisoners based on their nationalities.

As will be discussed, some official narratives at today's Seodaemun Prison History Hall imply that the prison was originally built to imprison members of the "righteous armies". However, these were just a fraction of those imprisoned there. Most members of "righteous armies" were not arrested but massacred by police and soldiers. Japan reported that clashes around Korea from July 1907 to December 1908 resulted in 14,566 deaths of insurgents, compared to 179 deaths of Japanese police and soldiers.²⁷

4.1.4 Illuminating colonial memory to cast a shadow over post-colonial history

After Korea's liberation from imperial Japan in 1945, Seodaemun Prison was in continued use by subsequent authorities until 1987, when it was closed and mostly

²⁵ Cultural Heritage Committee, 2018 nyeondo munhwajae wiwonhoe (geundae munhwajaebugwa) je 9 cha hoeuijaryo [2018 Materials for the 9th meeting of the Cultural Heritage Committee (Modern Cultural Heritage Division)], 18 September 2018, p. 24. Accessible at http://english.cha.go.kr/cmm/fms/BoardFileDownload.do;jsessionid=vK8uQF57cFnHEG1DaHAqR5UqERW HXvxWSObHy0lpd0BtxOBC0UtqYHrEGCizBzOL?atchFileId=FILE_000000000034559&fileSn=1&dwIdHistYn=Y&bbsId=BBSMSTR_1019 (last accessed 22 March 2023).

²⁶ Kim Gyeong-il, "Jibaewa yeondaoui saieseo: Jaejoilbonin jisigin Miyake Sikanoseuke [Between Subjugation and Solidarity: Miyake Shikanosuke, a Japanese Intellectual in Colonial Korea]", *Sahoewa yeoksa* (105) 2015, 287-318; Inoue Manabu, "Ri Cheyu to Miyake Shikanosuke no kaikō - Kimu Iruson kōnichi yūgekitai ni tsuranaru tatakai" [The encounter between Yi Jaeyu and Miyake Shikanosuke: A battle connected to the Kim Il-sung anti-Japanese guerrilla unit], 1 December 2008, *Chōsen Shinpō*. <http://korea-np.co.jp/j-2008/06/0806j1201-00001.htm>

²⁷ Baker, "Establishment of a legal system," 209.

demolished in time before the 1988 Seoul Olympics. It is no secret in Korea that post-colonial Seodaemun Prison continued to imprison large numbers of political criminals (such as communists and democracy activists), but collective memories and evaluations of post-colonial dictatorships and the *minjung* democracy movement are still divided and disputed within the country.

Hyun Kyung Lee and Russell Burge have separately provided extensive summaries of Seodaemun Prison's post-colonial history, including the prison's transformation into a heritage site and museum opened in 1998.²⁸ After the Korean War, authoritarian Korean leaders continued to imprison political prisoners, many of whom were democracy activists, until the prison's closure. Importantly, the post-colonial Seodaemun Prison, like other Korean prisons, employed Korean warders from the colonial period and post-colonial prisoners were not treated very differently to those of preceding colonial authorities. The systems of surveillance, violence, and regulation of privileges based on behaviour, which included rationing of food, were not abolished. Furthermore, unjust torture and hanging of political prisoners persisted.²⁹

The value of colonial sites of memory was rarely recognised in Korea before the turn of the millennium, but Seodaemun Prison was uniquely acknowledged as such at a time when the country's former military dictatorship faced strong public resistance and international attention.³⁰ The year before the 1988 Seoul Olympics, Chun Doo-hwan closed Seodaemun Prison and ordered that it be turned into a heritage site of colonial memory before demolishing over 90% of its buildings.³¹ It was registered as National Historical Site No. 324 in 1988. Eventually, post-colonial features such as facades of white tiles, high guard towers, and pro-democratic graffiti on cell walls were destroyed to restore (or reimagine) colonial memory.³²

²⁸ Hyun Kyung Lee, *Difficult Heritage*, 105-158.; Russell Burge, "The Prison and the Postcolony: Contested Memory and the Museumification of Sŏdaemun Hyŏngmuso," *The Journal of Korean Studies*, 2017, Vol. 22, No. 1, 33-67.

²⁹ See for example Annie I. Bang, "Acquitted 32 years after execution," *The Korea Herald*, 5 April 2010. <https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20070124000017>

³⁰ Park Kyung-mok Interview.

³¹ Burge, "The Prison and the Post-colony," 37-8.

³² Informal conversation with former political prisoner who served time in Seodaemun Prison in 1987, introduced to me by memory activists in Seoul, 2022.

The Independence Park, including Seodaemun Prison, the Independence Gate and statues commemorating the struggle for independence, was opened in 1992 under management by the Seoul Metropolitan Government. Policy changes three years later transferred management of Seodaemun Prison to Seodaemun-gu (Seodaemun district local authorities), which planned and executed the opening of the Seodaemun Prison History Hall in 1998.³³ At this time, post-colonial memory had been erased from official narratives, and two of three exhibition floors were filled with mannequins of grinning Japanese warders torturing half-naked and bloody Korean independence activists.

4.1.5 Recent efforts to approach post-colonial memory and historical truthfulness

Originally preserved under the authoritarian rule of Chun Doo-hwan to erase its post-colonial history, the prison's narrative has evolved under subsequent liberal governments. This shift allows for a more inclusive portrayal, encompassing the memories of democracy activists mistreated as political prisoners. The prison museum's current director, Park Kyung-mok, assumed this position in 2004, under the liberal presidency of Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2008). Director Park implemented significant shifts in the prison museum's exhibitions and narrative framework from 2009, coinciding with major restorations of prison buildings.

Director Park Kyung-mok welcomed this study and participated in a research interview providing valuable data.³⁴ Upon assuming his position in 2004, he concurred with prominent criticisms of the exhibitions' disregard for post-colonial history and excessive utilisation of violent imagery and effects at the time. The majority of potentially shocking mannequins and effects were removed in 2009. Director Park provides three main reasons for reducing the portrayal of violence.³⁵ 1) The historical authenticity of the specific scenes could not be confirmed as they were based on interpretations by curators rather than primary sources, 2) the violent scenes emanated anti-Japanese sentiment detrimental to the educational potential of the History Hall, and 3) it was desired to make the

³³ Hyun Kyung Lee, *'Difficult Heritage'* 128-30.

³⁴ 21 June 2022.

³⁵ Park Kyung-mok interview.

exhibitions accessible for younger children unprepared for visual representations of extreme violence.

Since Park Kyung-mok became director, post-colonial memory has also been introduced in official narratives such as onsite information panels, but colonial memory still encompasses 80 to 90% of exhibitions and explanations.³⁶ Director Park states that narratives of independence activists and democracy activists should be connected as one story as both movements shared the same “spirit (jeongshin)” and that work is underway to visualise currently lacking post-colonial memory. However, he added that post-colonial narratives are more difficult to present because documents are lacking, and records of former prisoners are protected for 70 years by privacy laws. Furthermore, Director Park acknowledges that relevant post-colonial narratives are difficult to present because they are sensitive and contested.

4.2 Dominant and Official symbolism of Seodaemun Prison

According to Director Park, Seodaemun Prison’s current official narratives primarily focus on, 1), the history of the prison from construction until closure in 1987, and 2), the experiences of those interred in the prison during this period for political crimes.³⁷ Information panels in Seodaemun Prison state that it had been “a symbol of oppression and terror” until 1987, but that it was “reopened on November 5, 1998 [...] to preserve the historic place as a symbol of national independence and the democratisation movement”.³⁸ This is inaccurate because symbolisms have been adjusted and contested by official stakeholders throughout its two and a half decades as a History Hall, and the democratisation movement was not officially mentioned in this museum until 2010. In an official book published by Seodaemun Prison in 2008 to commemorate its centennial history, Dongguk University Professor Emeritus of History Nam Doyeong stated that the

³⁶ Park Kyung-mok interview.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Seodaemun Prison, “A symbol of oppression and terror, Seodaemun Prison,” information panel on ground floor of the Administration building; Seodaemun Prison, “Former Seodaemun Prison, Seoul”, information panel in front of Administration Building (both observed April 2022).

prison is a “sacred place of the Independence Movement (dongnip undongui seongji)”.³⁹

The official museum book published in 2018 and sold in the museum’s gift store is titled “The place of Independence and Democracy”, clearly indicating an expansion of official memory.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the backside of museum tickets state in Korean and English that “Seodaemun Prison is a modern prison built by the Japanese Empire. It is a historical site: a lot of independence activists and pro-democracy activists were imprisoned.” In contrast, in the official pamphlets handed out to visitors, only the fact that the “colonial prison was used to imprison independence activists until the liberation of Korea in 1945” is highlighted in the prison’s description.

It becomes confusing to attempt to define the specific intended official symbolism of Seodaemun Prison not only because semiotic emphases have evolved and are dissonant in official material, but also because official views are not unified. Many official actors involved in the management of Seodaemun Prison and the Independence Park are reluctant to pair memories of colonial independence activists with those of post-colonial activists who fought against authoritarian Korean regimes still celebrated by the political right. In an official study of Seodaemun Independence Park authored by Seodaemun-gu Office’s Public Design Team leader in 2019, it is stated that the prison is “a symbol of resistance to Japan” and that because “it is criticized for neglecting the democratic patriots”, the National Memorial of the Korean Provisional Government was constructed “to remember the Provisional Government as the start of democracy”.⁴¹ The National Memorial of the Korean Provisional Government is a large museum opened next to the prison in 2022.⁴² According to this framing, the “democratic patriots” most worthy of

³⁹ Kim, Nam and Jeong, *Seodaemun hyeongmuso*, 43.

⁴⁰ Seodaemun Prison History Hall, *The Place of Independence*.

⁴¹ SuhHyun Moon and JungWoo Choi, “A Study on the Possibility Planning of Memorial Spaces in Seodaemun Independence Park,” *Journal of the Korea Institute of Spatial Design*, Vol.14 No.5, 2019, 67, 69-70.

⁴² The National Memorial of the Korean Provisional Government is dedicated to the Provisional Government established in Shanghai with Rhee Syngman as its first president. The memorial museum, aligned with recent Korean court rulings, presents the Korean Provisional Government as the legitimate origin of the Republic of Korea. This is a political framing which deems Japanese colonial rule illegal and illegitimizes the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. When I visited the memorial museum in 2022, many of its exhibition spaces were filled with Korean nationalist symbols and art, while others were dedicated to national anti-Japanese heroes such as Yun Bong-gil and Lee Bong-chang. Post-colonial democracy activists are not part of the narrative, which ends with an information panel stating that “The Korean Provisional Government fulfilled its historical mission with the establishment of the Korean

remembrance are those who fought against Japanese rule, while the memory of post-colonial activists becomes but a footnote.⁴³ Clearly, not all stakeholders of Seodaemun Prison's management agree with Director Park that the prison museum should equally value memories of colonial independence activists and post-colonial democracy activists.

Civil groups have also influenced official symbolism and public memory of Seodaemun Prison and the Independence Park. Civil groups advocating for the remembrance of the independence movement have campaigned against the inclusion of post-colonial political inmates in official memory.⁴⁴ Furthermore, in 2008, civil groups campaigned for and against a proposed memorial museum for "comfort women" in the Seodaemun Independence Park, resulting in the dismissal of the proposal due to opposition to "shameful" history of "comfort women" being memorialised together with independence activists.⁴⁵ Political prisoners who endured torture by colonial authorities are remembered as victors rather than victims because their patriotic spirit could not be defeated, and can thus be celebrated. In contrast, the memories of "comfort women" can evoke a sense of complex shame among the older generations of Koreans. This sentiment arises from a perception that Korean men were unable to rescue these women, coupled with the deeply sensitive and taboo nature of the experiences they endured.⁴⁶

The only women commemorated in the Independence park and the prison museum are political activists and martyrs, and some Koreans avoid these sites seeing them as spaces of "masculine nationality".⁴⁷ Official and public agendas together produce a system of hierarchical commemoration for the Independence Park in which colonial independence activists appear more worthy of remembrance than democracy activists, and in which

Government on August 15, 1948".

⁴³ The effect of the National Memorial of the Korean Provisional Government contributing to overshadowing the memory of post-colonial democracy activist is likely unintentional. The main implication of the museum's construction is that it attempts to legitimise the disputed interpretation that the Korean Provisional Government was the origin of the ROK, the South Korean government. This interpretation aligns with the Korean Supreme Court's 2018 ruling, which deemed Korean forced labour under imperial Japan illegal, citing the opposition by the Korean Provisional Government as evidence of the illegality of the colonial occupation.

⁴⁴ Park Kyung-mok interview.

⁴⁵ Hyun Kyung Lee, *'Difficult Heritage'*, 146-47.

⁴⁶ Han Hyein interview.

⁴⁷ Andrea Gevurtz Arai, "When is a Prison like a Folk Art Museum? Movement, Affect, and the After-Colonial in Seoul and Tokyo," in *Spaces of Possibility: In, Between, and Beyond Korea and Japan*, edited by Clark W. Sorensen, & Andrea Gevurtz Arai (University of Washington Press, 2016) p.54; pp. 59-60.

Koreans who collaborated with imperial Japan, willingly or after torture, are forgotten together with victims of sexual slavery and others not considered sufficiently patriotic by certain groups.

As implied above, not only post-colonial, but also colonial memory officially presented in Seodaemun Prison reflects one-sided national narratives monumentalised by Korean identity politics. As the Colonial Japanese Government Building was demolished in the mid-1990s “for the sake of clearing colonial remnants and restoring [Korean] national spirit,” Seodaemun Prison was being restored as a “sacred” heritage site for Korean independence.⁴⁸ Aligned with such policies of forgetting and remembering to strengthen national identity, the selection of colonial memory to preserve in Seodaemun Prison focussed on courageous Koreans resisting the Other—sadistic Japanese colonial occupiers. Attempts to highlight for example marginalised memories of colonial Korean prison warders may be opposed by those who seek to glorify national history. Most criticism of Seodaemun Prison’s official narratives are aimed at insufficient memory of post-colonial democracy activists,⁴⁹ making the improvement of colonial narratives a second priority at best. However, detailed narratives of perpetrators and victims over the full period of the facility’s existence as a functioning prison is essential in order to defeat the legacies of post-colonial propaganda and optimise the museum’s educational value.

As demonstrated, the scope and framing of memories officially highlighted in Seodaemun Prison is continuously being moulded and transformed, and this process can be expected to continue in the future. There has, for instance, been noteworthy efforts to facilitate the World Heritage inscription of Seodaemun Prison. Director Park contends that with proper preparations and communication, the Japanese government may not object to the World Heritage inscription of Seodaemun Prison. World Heritage inscribing Seodaemun Prison would enforce and justify a revision of nationalistically biased narratives because inscription requires the identification and promotion of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) inherent within the property.⁵⁰ Plans to inscribe the prison museum were

⁴⁸ Kim Young-sam, 50th Anniversary of National Liberation Speech, 15 August 1995. https://ko.wikisource.org/wiki/%EC%A0%9C50%EC%A3%BC%EB%85%84_%EA%B4%91%EB%B3%B5%EC%A0%88_%EA%B2%BD%EC%B6%95%EC%82%AC (accessed 29 November 2022).

⁴⁹ SuhHyun Moon and JungWoo Choi, “A Study on the Possibility.”

⁵⁰ See Section [5.2.1 The Outstanding Universal Value of Takashima and Hashima](#) for more details on

implemented in 2014 with the specified OUV highlighting the site's embodiment of humanity's pursuit of peace and freedom, as exemplified by the struggles of independence and democracy activists. Given that a significant portion of the prison had been demolished prior to the establishment of the museum, diminishing its standing in the eyes of UNESCO, a strategy was conceived to jointly inscribe Seodaemun Prison with the more intact Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison Museum in Manchuria. While some may view the World Heritage inscription of a Japanese colonial prison as a response to Japan's "history war," a closer examination could reveal it as an exemplary approach to confronting difficult history from an international perspective. However, the project has been paused due to the deterioration of Korea's diplomatic relations with China.⁵¹

4.3 Exploring Seodaemun Prison's official narratives

I entered Seodaemun Prison for the purpose of data collection seven times in 2022 and twice in 2023.⁵² I explored all areas accessible to visitors and collected textual and visual data (from exhibition items, information panels and pamphlets), joined official and unofficial guided tours, toured by audio-guide, and observed and engaged in informal conversation with staff and other visitors. As official tours in English require a group of two or more participants to commence, I brought acquaintances on two occasions (from Norway and Thailand) as anonymous volunteering research participants.⁵³ The first tour was cancelled as our guide had contracted COVID-19. Exploring exhibitions while exchanging opinions with the research participants who were not familiar with Korean

UNESCO's requirement of Outstanding Universal Value.

⁵¹ Park Kyung-mok Interview. Seodaemun Prison may be World Heritage inscribed in the future, depending on identifiable values presented in the site's official memory. Preserved original buildings are not a prerequisite for World Heritage status. If the official narratives were to effectively encompass human rights perspectives, the identification of OUV within Seodaemun Prison could potentially spotlight its role as a multifaceted locus representing humanity's struggle against authoritarian abuse of power and oppression. This may potentially be achieved without an international joint nomination. A serial nomination encompassing other domestic sites of oppression like the Namyeongdong interrogation building where Bak Jong-cheol and many other students and democracy activists were tortured in the 1980s could be possible in the future, necessitating new major shifts in official narratives at the sites.

⁵² 17 and 21 April, 7 May, 9, 21 and 29 June and 29 August, 2022, and 10 and 14 June, 2023. In addition, I visited in 2022 on 20 and 21 August primarily to collect survey data. I have also visited previously in 2010 and 2015.

⁵³ There were few non-Korean-speaking visitors at Seodaemun Prison during my fieldwork due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

language and colonial history allowed insight into bystander perspectives.

At the time of writing, Seodaemun Prison is open for visitors six days a week (Tuesday to Sunday), for a small entrance fee of 3,000 won. The ticket gives access to the main exhibition hall in the former administration building and all other areas of the prison grounds open to the public. Seodaemun is located only one subway stop away from Gyeongbokgung and is easily reachable by both public and private transport.

4.3.1 National memories on the path to Seodaemun Prison

For many visitors, the most convenient way to reach Seodaemun Prison is by subway to Dongnimmun Station, which nearest exit is about 50 meters from the prison gate. The station name, which has remained unchanged since the station opened in 1985, is Korean for “Independence Gate”. It speaks to the importance of the gate as a site of national memory for Korea’s long struggle for independence, and reminds those who share this collective memory of how imperial Japan strategically built its first and largest Korean prison in this symbolic location to demonstrate its power. However, many foreign visitors are unaware of the existence and significance of the Independence Gate, and some do not spot it because the gate is farther away from the subway exit than the prison. The Independence Gate and Independence Park may evoke collective memories among Korean visitors, serving as a foundation for the interpretation and understanding of the narratives surrounding Seodaemun Prison. However, most bystanders (foreign visitors with limited knowledge of Korean history) may have no such foundation for deciphering the prison museum’s selection of narratives as they engage with them onsite.

Outside the prison gate stands an official information panel, “Former Seodaemun Prison, Seoul,” indicating that the prison is designated as National Historical Site No. 324.⁵⁴ The explanatory text claims that “Seodaemun Prison was built in 1907 to incarcerate Korean patriots during Japanese colonial rule,” misleadingly ignoring the prison’s function as a

⁵⁴ The panel was presumably erected by the Cultural Heritage Administration which is responsible for preserving and promoting national heritage sites.

modern Japanese model prison, not exclusive for political prisoners.⁵⁵ As visitors enter the prison gate and purchase tickets from a booth inside, they are pointed towards the main exhibition in the former administration building. In front of the building stand two large information panels providing overviews of the history of the prison as a whole and of the administration building. Although brief, the summarised history of the prison accurately describes it as a “modern prison built by Japanese imperialists” in which “many anti-Japanese independence activists were imprisoned” during the colonial era, as well as “a number of democracy activists who resisted the various authoritarian and military regimes which ruled South Korea during the 1950s to 1980s.” Outdoor information panels provide identical explanations in Korean, English, Chinese, Japanese, and German.

In contrast to the outdoor information panels, there are two types of information panels inside the exhibition halls. The first type provides general overviews of themes and topics covered in exhibitions in Korean, English, Japanese and Chinese. The second type provides more detailed information often specifically relevant to exhibited photographs and items, but only in Korean and English (and a few are in Korean exclusively). There are numerous instances for both types of internal information panels where the Korean text includes more extensive information and/or nationalistic language, which will be discussed below. Many visitors do not fully explore all areas of the extensive prison grounds, and the exhibits housed in the former investigation building draw the largest crowds, giving them the highest potential to impact the collective memory of those who engage with them.

4.3.2 Main exhibition in the former administration building

4.3.2.1 Ground floor – Japan as a national nemesis

The former administration building holds permanent exhibitions in all floors (ground

⁵⁵ It is outdated as it does not acknowledge the heritage site’s value as a site of both colonial and post-colonial memory. The information panel itself appears aged and includes a QR code which links to a webpage no longer in existence.

floor, first floor and basement). After entering the building, visitors pass a reception desk with official pamphlets (in Korean, English, Chinese, Japanese, and German), before reaching the ground floor exhibitions themed around Japanese imperialism and the colonial functions of Seodaemun Prison. The first exhibition space, entitled “Invasive Inroads of Imperialism”, contextualises the prison’s construction in 1908. It contains dates and photographs relevant to the highlighted keywords “treaty of Ganghwa”, “Sino-Japanese war”, “the murder of Empress Myeongseong”, “Russo-Japanese war”, “Eulsa Treaty”, and “forcible annexation”. Photographs include depictions of Myeongseong’s funeral and of Geoncheonggung’s Gonnyeonghap where she was murdered, as well as Gojong as emperor before annexation dressed in a Euro-American military attire. The photographs provide important hints to the relevance of the keywords, but no captions are provided in English. For foreign visitors without a guide or pre-existing knowledge, perhaps the only comprehensible feature of this first exhibition is a colonial picture that speaks for itself—Gyeongbokgung’s Geunjeongjeon throne hall with two Japanese flags suspended over its entrance. Notwithstanding, the presented keywords and pictures are purposeful and fitting for guides or others with knowledge of Korean history when narrating how the country lost its independence to Japan.

The second and more extensive exhibition space on the ground floor presents the prison as a Japanese colonial facility for imprisoning and torturing Korean independence activists. No information is provided on Korea’s pre-colonial penal system or on the function of Seodaemun Prison as a European-style modern prison to showcase imperial Japan’s colonial rule as legitimate and beneficial in the eyes of international elites of the time. Information panels narrate that the prison initially had a capacity of 500 people, but that “Korean independence fighters arrested and imprisoned [there] reached more than 3,000 people around the March 1st Independence Movement in 1919” before being “expanded approximately 30 times larger in the 1930s due to the rapidly increased number of Korean independence activists.” This framing of colonial history reflects a dichotomous national memory of righteous Koreans suffering under immoral and violent Japanese. Naturally, any large society has its share of dangerous criminals such as murderers and rapists, and colonial Seodaemun Prison interned a variety of such Korean and Japanese criminals in addition to political prisoners. However, observations and

conversations at the museum confirmed that many Korean and foreign visitors do not consider how the colonial prison had other functions beyond obstructing the Korean independence movement.

Post-colonial history and imprisoned democracy activists are not ignored but imperial Japan is strongly implied to be a greater evil than post-colonial Korean dictatorships. Information panels state there were 23,532 prisoners in Korea in 1943, and that Japan “built and operated so many prisons along main cities on the Korean peninsula [...] making the country like a huge prison.”⁵⁶ The memory politics at work behind such manipulative rhetoric presume that observers will not make comparisons between colonial and post-colonial history. According to these numbers, the incarceration rate in Korea in 1943 (the year with the highest number of prisoners under Japanese rule) was 96.5 prisoners per 100,000 people.⁵⁷ In 2018, Korea’s incarceration rate was 108 prisoners per 100,000 people—a statistic which indicates contemporary Korea is closer to a prison state than at any point during the colonial period.⁵⁸ More importantly, as discussed, the national number of prisoners increased greatly during the rule of USAMGIK and subsequent Korean dictatorships. Post-colonial Seodaemun Prison’s capacity was pushed further than ever as the number of prisoners in this prison alone had risen to 20,963 by 1947.⁵⁹ Although imprisonment of post-colonial democracy activists is mentioned in the exhibition,⁶⁰ the erroneous implication that imperial Japan’s incarceration rate in Korea was uniquely excessive functions to whitewash crimes of post-

⁵⁶ The Korean text states that there was an average of 30 prisons in Korea in the 1930s. The English text contains a mistranslation stating that there was an average of 30 prisons in each city in colonial Korea. It is clear that the translator had a poor understanding of the colonial penal system. Such substantial errors are likely to mislead unknowing visitors and lower expectations of historical accuracy for critical observers. The description of colonial Korea as being “like a huge prison” is identical in the Korean text.

⁵⁷ Calculated based on historical records indicating that the total population of Korea in 1943 was 24,390,000. See Encyclopedia of Korean Culture, “Ingu (population).”

<https://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Article/E0046845#:~:text=%EC%9D%B8%EA%B5%AC%EC%B4%9D%EC%88%98%20%EC%B6%94%EC%9D%B4%EB%A7%8C%20%EB%B3%B4%EB%A9%B4,%EB%A7%8C%205%EC%B2%9C%EB%A7%8C%20%EB%AA%85%EC%9D%B4%20%EB%84%98%EB%8A%94%EB%8B%A4> (last accessed 16 April 2023)

⁵⁸ Institute for Crime & Justice Policy Research, “Republic of (South) Korea,” World Prison Brief (n.d.) <https://www.prisonstudies.org/country/republic-south-korea> (Last accessed 16 April 2023)

⁵⁹ Hyun Kyung Lee, ‘*Difficult Heritage*’, 118-19.

⁶⁰ One information panel explicitly states that post-colonial democracy activists “who fought against the despotic [Korean dictatorships] were imprisoned, tortured or died here.” The Korean text names some incidents as examples without indicating the scale of post-colonial imprisonment.

colonial leaders and has potential to exacerbate anti-Japanese sentiment.

The disproportionate emphasis on colonial as against post-colonial history, coupled with an excessive vilification of Japan's penal system, reinforces a hierarchy of victimisation. It is a hierarchy of attention,⁶¹ which prioritises the victims of imperial Japan for commemoration by giving greater attention to narratives of their Japanese oppressors, thereby marginalising post-colonial memory. This framing which undermines post-colonial history can reinforce a dichotomous imagination of national victims and perpetrators. In Seodaemun Prison's hierarchy of attention, Korean political prisoners of imperial Japan appear more worthy of commemoration than Korean political prisoners of post-colonial Korean dictatorships. Conversely, Japanese political prisoners held during imperial Japanese rule are largely overlooked, as are the experiences of Korean prison warders who chose stable employment under colonial authorities rather than risking their safety in the struggle for independence. Equal commemoration of all groups would be neither pragmatic nor purposeful, but the current stark imbalance of attention perpetuates a view of Japan as Korea's true Other—the nemesis of the people of Korea.

Another crucial aspect of memory politics on the ground floor is the utilisation of dramatic music. Despite Director Park's assertion that the museum's narratives are designed to convey historical accuracy and educate visitors rather than evoke emotions, I noticed that on all of my fieldwork visits, a portion of Klaus Badelt and Hans Zimmer's "He's a Pirate," the renowned theme music from Disney's "Pirates of the Caribbean" film franchise, was played repeatedly throughout the ground floor exhibitions. The music was emanating from a video display that showcased the transformation of the prison into a museum. The globally recognised theme music, with its dramatic crescendos and powerful chord progressions, can evoke a sense of triumph as well as tension and suspense.⁶² It may have been selected to emphasise the "triumph" of turning the colonial prison into a museum, but excerpts from the same music also play in the basement over video testimonies of victims of extreme torture. The dramatic music is hence interpretable

⁶¹ Sarah E. Jankowitz, *The Order of Victimhood: Violence, Hierarchy and Building Peace in Northern Ireland* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 136-41.

⁶² See YouTube comments on the theme song for examples of invoked feelings: "Pirates of the Caribbean - He's a Pirate (Extended)", YouTube, posted by Sunderbraze, 20 July 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRh-dzrI4Z4>

as a tool to heighten the emotional tension of visitors. Manipulation of visitors' emotions, whether deliberate or not, is especially problematic because narratives in the museum are nationalistically framed and present memories of "heroic" Koreans against "villainous" Japanese. Moreover, the choice of music may have undesired effects on foreign visitors. Several foreign visitors have found it highly inappropriate to repurpose music from a Hollywood adventure movie to commemorate victims of colonial oppression.

4.3.2.2 First floor – Promoting patriotic national identity

The first floor holds three exhibition halls, two of which are predominantly filled with information boards themed around national resistance to Japanese colonial rule. The remaining exhibition hall is an open space for commemoration of imprisoned independence activists. The main narrative of the two exhibition halls for national resistance is that of a united "Korean people" ("uri minjok"/ "Hangungmin") actively fighting against Japanese colonialism. Larger information panels briefly summarise and celebrate the history of "the righteous army" and the March 1st Independence Movement. Smaller information panels introduce specific groups of resistance.

The larger panels in the first exhibition hall describe the Korean people as fighting fiercely against Japan through the whole period of colonial occupation, and one states that "the whole of Korea participated" in the March 1st movement. While it is factual that the March 1st movement instigated nationwide demonstrations in 1919, the exhibitions misrepresent the reality that many Koreans under Japanese rule chose to pursue colonial business opportunities while others accepted official employment in the colonial government, military, police, and prisons (such as Seodaemun Prison). This may be a form of prescriptive forgetting,⁶³ but it may also imply that so-called "pro-Japanese collaborators" should be perceived as traitors not acceptable as true Koreans. The latter interpretation presents an obvious identity acceptance threat to Korean visitors whose progenitors accumulated wealth during the colonial period. The selective remembering of Koreans living under Japanese colonial rule may also empower Korean national

⁶³ See Paul Connerton, "Seven types of forgetting," *Memory Studies* (1) 2008: 59-71.

identity but may at the same time alienate both Korean and foreign visitors who seek to learn about and contemplate the various ways colonial rule affected those who experienced it in Korea. The memory politics at work, forgetting a large part of the population, does not enable visitors to compare Korea's actual colonial experience to that of other countries.

Selective remembering poses a challenge to the educational value of exhibitions, and in some cases, it may even amount to a form of miseducation. As described above, the history of the "105 persons incident" is a revealing example of how imperial Japan showcased their modern system of justice for international spectators who were successfully impressed when 99 of the accused 105 were acquitted. The first floor of the former administration building contains an information panel dedicated to this incident. It describes the incident as 105 members of the Sinminhoe (New People's Association) being imprisoned in Seodaemun Prison due to fabricated accusations but makes no mention of their subsequent acquittal. Accordingly, there is also no mention of the foreign spectators who considered the severe torture of innocent suspects for confessions unproblematic due to regained trust in Japanese colonial authorities after witnessing the Europeanised appeal proceedings. The selective memory omitting the conclusion and effects of the incident invokes imaginations of colonial Seodaemun Prison as arbitrarily imprisoning large groups of Korean victims unlawfully without evidence. Furthermore, museum visitors are deprived, again, of critical context necessary for reflecting on the exploitation of Korean people within a world of competing and collaborating colonial powers.⁶⁴

Several information panels naming independence activists who died in Seodaemun Prison are exclusively in Korean, effectively excluding non-Korean speakers from their remembrance. Next to the large panel summarising the independence movement are pictures of An Jung-geun, Lee Bong-chang and Yun Bong-gil, who were never interned in Seodaemun Prison but have been crystallised as icons of the independence struggle in

⁶⁴ It is also not mentioned that Kim Gu, one of the most prominent independence activists and celebrated national hero, was arrested in the 105 persons incident and served 2 years and six months in Seodaemun Prison as one of the six accused that were not acquitted. The reason for the absence of this significant information is unknown (and Kim Gu's imprisonment is mentioned without context on an information panel in the central prison building).

South Korean memory. Apart from their description as “heroic martyrs” and an illustration of the moment Yun Bong-gil’s bomb injured and killed a series of Japanese dignitaries in the 1932 Shanghai Hongkew Park Bombing, no explanation is given about the significance of these national heroes. Anyone socialised in Korea is likely to immediately recognise their portraits and interpret their inclusion as natural in a narrative of the Korean independence movement.

To many foreign visitors, like my Norwegian research participant, the celebration of “heroic martyrs” for violent attacks on their colonisers without further explanation can appear both perplexing and shocking in an official space for commemoration of victims. The justification of anti-colonial violence, which some define as terrorism, is not uncommon in formerly colonised countries and is promoted nationwide in Korea. For instance, through educational initiatives and monumentation, such as the Lee Bong-chang Legacy Museum located near Hyochang Park in Seoul. Here, Lee’s 1932 assassination attempt on Japanese Emperor Hirohito is prominently highlighted and celebrated.⁶⁵ In contrast to the Seodaemun prison museum, however, Lee’s memorial museum also provides details on his experiences of colonial oppression and how his violent act highlighted Korea’s struggle for independence, garnering significant support from China’s Guomindang government. At the Seodaemun Prison History Hall, acts of anti-colonial violence by independence fighters who were never interned in Seodaemun are presented without adequate context, depicted through nationalistic iconography incomprehensible to many foreign visitors. The lack of translations and explanations for foreign visitors implies that their comprehension is not essential in the eyes of the exhibitions’ curators.

It is worth noting here that exhibitions are gradually expanded and improved to reflect a broader image of Korea’s independence movement (as well as to balance presentations of colonial and post-colonial history). An important example is the inclusion of narratives of Korean communists in the independence movement. The second hall of national resistance contains multiple information panels describing and commemorating the resistance of Korean communist groups such as the Gando communist movement and the

⁶⁵ I visited the Lee Bong-chang Legacy Museum on 16 June 2023.

Joseon Communist Party. Members known to have died at Seodaemun Prison are commemorated as martyrs. When creating and improving exhibitions, both official historical views and those of the public are considered. In earlier decades, the system of hierarchical commemoration moulded by both official and public agendas would not have allowed for public commemoration of colonial-era Korean communists as victims and/or national heroes.

The area with information panels relevant to communist independence fighters is the only part of regular exhibitions that describes a Japanese prisoner and supporter of the independence movement. This reference is confined to a compact text box, exclusively presented in Korean, featured on an information panel outlining the “Gyeongseong Troika”. This organisation aimed to revive the Korean communist party, which had been disbanded by colonial authorities. The brief text of the information box conveys that Lee Jae-yu, a prominent figure in the Gyeongseong Troika, successfully hid from colonial authorities for months in the Korean home of Japanese professor Miyake Shikanosuke who was subsequently apprehended for aiding Lee and was incarcerated in Seodaemun Prison.⁶⁶ In an unusually sharp corner formed by a partition wall, pictures of the Gyeongseong Troika members and Miyake are displayed, obscured from most viewpoints and discernible only when approaching the information panel. While the mention of Miyake is valuable, the curatorial choice of location indicates that the memory of a Japanese national aiding communist Korean independence fighters was the least prioritised out of narratives to be presented in the exhibition.

The remaining hall for commemoration holds copies of colonial prisoner record cards posted on three of its four walls, from floor to ceiling.⁶⁷ A short audio recording featuring

⁶⁶ For more on Miyake's background, his interactions with Lee, and the circumstances surrounding his imprisonment, see Kim Gyeong-il, “Between Subjugation”, 301-9.

⁶⁷ It seems that the walls might encompass the entirety of the discovered prisoner record cards, which pertain to 4,837 individuals. However, out of the 31 discovered record cards of Japanese prisoners, I was only able to locate one which was that of Isogaya Sueji. Isogaya became a communist and started work at the Hungnam Nitrogenous Fertilizer Plant and was imprisoned for his ideology and support of Korean independence activists. His card is displayed on the right side of the room's exit (9 rows left of the door and 16 rows above the floor). The names of prisoners are only visible in Japanese characters on their prison uniforms within the pictures, and not written in text visible on the displayed cards. The inclusion of a Japanese prisoner, or prisoners, is likely to go unnoticed by everyone who does not carefully examine a large number of cards displayed.

exclusively Korean speech addressed to the spirits of independence activists, accompanied by sombre piano music, is played on repeat. The recording states that the spirits have suffered, and that they may now leave the prison as “[the people of] Korea are waiting for [them] outside the [prison] gate”.⁶⁸ Although addressed to the spirits, the recording is created and intended for museum visitors,⁶⁹ presumably to provide a sense of restorative justice. By suggesting that the spirits are leaving the prison to join their fellow Koreans outside, the recording may also be intended to visualise a direct connection between the independence activists and the contemporary Korean guests of the museum. Not only does it emphasise a shared identity, but also enforce the belief of present-day Korea as a temporal and spatial dimension shared by living Koreans and their ancestors—specifically, in this case, Korean victims of unjust colonial imprisonment and torture. Korean visitors and tortured spirits are categorised in one and the same ingroup of Koreans, blurring the distinction of Japanese imperialists and present-day Japanese people as separate outgroups.⁷⁰

From an academic standpoint, the audio recording hinders the free commemoration of the independence activists and diminishes the educational worth of the museum. It imposes a certain way for Koreans to remember the activists and wrongly suggests that Korean victims of imperial Japan have endured suffering beyond death. On the other hand, in terms of educational dark tourism, overseas visitors may find it significant to witness Korean approaches to commemoration and how they deal with historical trauma. Nevertheless, a mere translation of the audio recording may not be sufficient for this

⁶⁸ “*Daehanmingugi mun bakkeseo dangsineul gidarimnida.*”

⁶⁹ In Korea, it is commonly believed that the spirits of those who died unjustly may remain in the place of their death until they are somehow freed. Typically, attempts to communicate with such spirits are made through Korean shamanistic rituals. Therefore, I interpret the repeating recording to have been created solely or primarily for living visitors.

⁷⁰ Official narratives of the movement of spirits are problematic also considering that myths and rumours of ghosts haunting the prison are widespread in Korea. For example, at the time of writing, typing “Seodaemun Prison” in Korean in Google Search results in a list of suggested search phrases, the very first being “Seodaemun Hyeongmuso gwisin (Seodaemun Prison Ghosts)”. Any potential future unofficial tour or guidebook capitalising on claims of ghost sightings in the prison could undermine serious attempts to facilitate educational dark tourism there. Because rumours of ghosts at the prison are well-known, and due to the many broad definitions of the term “dark tourism”, it is also likely that potential educational dark tourism tours would occasionally be joined by visitors assuming dark tourism at the prison would include ghost stories. Therefore, anyone attempting to promote educational dark tourism to Seodaemun Prison must carefully consider implications of such labels.

purpose.

4.3.2.3 The basement interrogation rooms - Promoting a national identity of unsurpassed victimhood

The basement of the former administration building, which features interrogation rooms, is the most memorable part of the museum for many visitors. Unlike the upper floors, which are covered in colours and illustrations, the basement has been curated to resemble its original state as a site for political prisoner interrogation and torture during colonial times. Although graphic effects like false bloodstains and half-naked mannequins have been removed for historical accuracy, accessibility for children, and to mitigate anti-Japanese sentiment, controversial elements remain.

Most former interrogation rooms are now empty, save for colonial instruments of torture displayed inside. However, the Korean descriptions on information panels outside these rooms are the least objective and perhaps the most othering of the Japanese in the prison museum. The English translations of Korean texts are abridged versions that do not reflect the extent of Korean victimhood and nationalistic bias present in the original Korean texts. These information panels do not have Japanese or other translations. The following example contains the full explanatory text of the information panel entitled “Torture – A Tool For Ruling the Colony”.

My translation from Korean: The Japanese imperialists did not hesitate to torture and beat the independence activists in order to suppress the resistance of the Korean people and eliminate the forces of the independence movement. This kind of violence against Koreans under Japan’s colonial rule stemmed from an inferiority complex related to how Japan had historically inherited its culture from our country and was inferior to us politically and ideologically. Therefore, Japan could not use appeasement measures to rule the Korean people, and had no choice but to use indiscriminate coercion and violence. This violent ruling method was an unprecedented inhumane act even compared to the ruling methods used by other imperial powers in other parts the world.

Displayed official English translation: At the time, the Japanese used torture and inhumane acts as a method for suppressing the Korean population. These acts can be compared to some of the most atrocious war crimes committed in world history.

The implication that Koreans have suffered more than any other group of people due to imperial Japan's allegedly unsurpassed inhumanity is reflected in several information panels in the basement. Another panel speaks of "unthinkable torture inflicted by the Japanese to Korean patriots" that "were not defeated by such inhumane torture."⁷¹ The notion that the Korean people have endured the most inhumane treatment in human history may potentially reinforce the centripetal effect of collective trauma, described by Kai Erikson, which strengthens the collective identity of victim groups.⁷² However, it should be needless to say that such a notion is based on a subjective opinion that can be highly offensive to visitors identifying with other victim groups as it may undermine their collective memories of suffering. The official English version of the first above example demonstrates recognition that the text is unsuitable for non-Korean visitors. Simultaneously, it demonstrates that although the curators may have acknowledged the implications of the biased text, they ultimately did not choose to revise or improve the original Korean text. The recurring notion that the large majority of Korean political prisoners "were not defeated" and did not officially convert to imperial Japanese state ideology is another potential enhancer of national identity that deviates from historical truthfulness.⁷³

Another integral part of the basement exhibition is a large video display of edited testimonies of two survivors of colonial torture in the prison, Yi Byeonghui (1918-2012) and Yi Gyuchang (1913-2005). Subtitled in English, the victims provide graphic details on brutal torture including genital mutilation. Accompanied by the orchestral "He's a Pirate" (as mentioned above), an emotional Yi Byeonghui states with great conviction at the end of the video that Koreans must be prepared to die for their country. While recorded

⁷¹ "Traces and suffering from torture", information panel, Seodaemun Prison.

⁷² Kai Theodor Erikson, "Notes on Trauma and Community," *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth, 183-199 (Baltimore; London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2005).

⁷³ As discussed above, few prisoners were released without official conversion and the average period of incarceration was four years. By accepting the rules of the colonisers, prisoners were rewarded with relative privileges in a system that would not have been sustainable if most Korean prisoners continued to actively oppose it.

testimonies and sentiments from survivors are valuable for educational and commemorative purposes, it appears that these testimonies have been edited in a way that seeks to evoke emotions and foster patriotism among Korean visitors. The sufferings endured by countless Korean victims during the colonial period are utilised as a justification for the implied necessity of such patriotism.

4.3.2.4 Indoctrinating young Koreans through fear

The basement exhibition, which was officially labelled “A Place of Experience: Torture Room” pre-2011,⁷⁴ no longer has signs encouraging visitors to engage with recreated torture devices. The basement does, however, still contain replicated iron maiden-like torture boxes and standing torture coffins made too low to stand upright and too narrow to sit when inside.⁷⁵ Adjacent to these devices are solitary confinement cells from which a holographic actor repeatedly screams slogans for Korean independence in a distressed and anguished tone. Teachers and parents often instruct visibly frightened children to enter the replicated torture devices so that they may “experience what their ancestors did” in order to “appreciate freedom” enjoyed in Korea today.⁷⁶ During all of my visits to the prison, it appeared that a significant proportion of the visitors in the basement were elementary school students, comprising at least one-third of the total visitors. Additionally, it is a frequent occurrence for parents to bring along much younger children, including toddlers still struggling to walk independently. A number of adults were observed disregarding the pleas of the children to leave the basement, insisting that the children “must know”.

Seodaemun Prison officially encourages guardians to utilise the museum to foster patriotism in children. This is evident for example from official interactive workbooks created for visiting children, available on the museum’s website. The official workbook

⁷⁴ Noriko Sato, “Paying a visit to Seodaemun Prison History Hall,” *Journal of the Association of North-east Asian Cultures* 27 (2011): 75-6.

⁷⁵ According to Director Park Kyung-mok, there is insufficient evidence that the standing torture coffins, used in colonial police stations for interrogation, were actually used in the prison (narration of “moonlight tour” guided by Director Park on 29 June 2022).

⁷⁶ These were comments from adults telling children to enter the torture devices during my fieldwork.

made for primary school students, exclusively about colonial history, instructs children to identify various forms of depicted torture and to answer questions like “who do I want to become for the sake of independence patriots who gave us Korea?” and “what are ways to love my country?”⁷⁷

It is worth noting that the depiction of violence in education and entertainment for children and young people is relatively normalised in Korea.⁷⁸ However, considering that graphic effects were removed “because young children visiting the prison are still in the process of learning and not yet fully developed to handle such an experience,”⁷⁹ it becomes natural to question also the educational value of interactive torture devices for young visitors. It is difficult to imagine how children too young for graphic effects could be mature enough to derive educational value from “torture experiences” in the current prison museum without fostering anti-Japanese sentiment.

4.3.3 Beyond the Main exhibition

This section briefly describes the other areas of Seodaemun Prison that are open to visitors, focusing on the most relevant information for this thesis. The central prison building, located near the former administration building exit, showcases the panopticon surveillance design from the perspectives of both prison warders and prisoners. It is connected to three prison buildings (no. 10, 11, and 12), with holding cells that visitors can enter. Prison building no. 10 houses exhibitions dedicated to specific colonial independence activists, while building no. 11 is dedicated to post-colonial democracy activists. The adjacent building no. 9 is inaccessible to visitors, but the bullet holes on its exterior wall dating back to the Korean War are briefly mentioned on its information panel. The original colonial execution building is preserved, and visitors can see a noose

⁷⁷ Seodaemun Prison History Hall, Hyeonjang hakseup bogoseo (chodeunghaksaeng-yong) [Field trip report (for primary school students)], printable online workbook (n.d.).
https://sphh.sscmc.or.kr/archive/overview_03.php

⁷⁸ It is common that violent Hollywood movies are released with lower age restrictions in Korea than in the US (if not containing explicit scenes of sex or drug abuse). For examples in education, see Dennis Hart, “Creating the National Other: Opposing Images of Nationalism in South and North Korean Education,” *Korean Studies*, Vol. 23 (1999), 68-93.

⁷⁹ Park Kyung-mok interview.

hanging over a trapdoor in the floor, along with the lever used to control it. However, its information panel does not mention that post-colonial authorities continued to use the site for executing political prisoners.

4.3.3.1 Narrating colonial management

The exhibitions in the central prison building aim to demonstrate the prison's management during colonial rule. Information panels in Korean and English describe the different divisions of management and the forced labour schedule for colonial prisoners. A pie chart in the exhibition displays the ratio of working level, middle level, and high-level officers in Seodaemun Prison in 1937, but lacks English translations. Below the chart, a footnote-sized text, written in Korean only, acknowledges that the prison workforce included 198 Japanese and 145 Koreans. This is the only written acknowledgement of Korean warders in all prison exhibitions, which generally give the impression that all colonial staff were Japanese.

Another panel in Korean and English explains that prisoners underwent ideological training and were rewarded for conversion, with measurement tools used to limit food based on points obtained. However, the English text omits the statement that the reward system did not apply to independence activists. Despite evidence to the contrary, this statement suggests that independence fighters were not susceptible to conversion tactics. For instance, Kim Gwangseop, imprisoned from 1941 to 1944 for anti-Japanese activities, received the highest level of privileges after 11 months in the prison due to his submissive behaviour and official ideological conversion.⁸⁰

4.3.3.2 Spaces of post-colonial memory

The “labour building” in the prison yard's far northwest corner, used for prison labour during the colonial period, holds large exhibition halls dedicated to colonial independence

⁸⁰ Jin Woong Kang, “The prison and power,” 421.

activists and post-colonial democracy activists. All text is exclusively in Korean. In addition, there is a film screening room and a VR experience room that was closed during fieldwork due to the COVID-19 pandemic (hereafter, the pandemic). The walls of the exhibition hall entitled *Minju jisa gieok gonggan* (“space for remembering patriotic democracy activists”) is covered in information panels describing well-known and lesser-known events of Korea’s democratisation from the perspective of democracy activists. In contrast to exhibitions in the cells of prison building no. 11, this exhibition chronologically narrates events of post-colonial oppression and the democratisation movement. The explanations are forthright, for example explicitly stating that student and activist Bak Jong-cheol was arrested illegally and died during torture in 1987, without attempting to obfuscate government responsibility. Based on fieldwork observations, this exhibition hall appears to be the least popular on the prison site.

On an elevated platform accessible by a staircase next to the “labour building” is the “leper’s building,” where infected prisoners were relocated to prevent contamination. Few visitors climb the stairs as the building is closed, but from the top, they can see the *gyeokbyeokjang*, a fan-shaped panoptical exercise space for prisoners. In 2011, it was reconstructed to resemble its colonial appearance.⁸¹ Large photographs, visible only from the “leper’s building,” show the original *gyeokbyeokjang* during and after colonial rule. These pictures reveal that the space was at least tripled in size and a modern two-story watchtower was built in the centre by post-colonial authorities, allowing for more divided spaces for prisoners without providing more space for individual prisoners than in the colonial structure. The scarcely noticed pictures narrate a story dissonant to those in other parts of the museum which imply the colonial surveillance and incarceration rates were uniquely extreme. The reconstructed *gyeokbyeokjang* has a peculiar appearance that attracts many visitors, but there are no post-colonial photographs or narratives by the structure itself.

In front of the execution chamber lies a tall poplar tree that has not been removed after falling during a typhoon in 2020. The tree is preserved due its significance as prisoners would cling to it and cry when they realised that they were being taken to the gallows.

⁸¹ “Gyeokbyeokjang”, information panel outside the gyeokbyeokjang in Seodaemun Prison.

Observations at the site and participation in official tours indicated that the tree is well-known but widely misunderstood as a symbol of colonial suffering despite having been planted by post-colonial prison staff. A nearby but often overlooked information panel clearly states that the tree is believed to have been planted in the late 1950s and that it was named the “wailing poplar” or “poplar of sorrow” by prison guards in the 1970s.

4.3.3.3 Commemoration of female victims and masculine nationality

The Women’s Prison is a small prison building within Seodaemun Prison with a ground floor of eight cells and a basement inaccessible for visitors. The building was demolished in 1979 and restored in 2011 based on discovered original blueprints.⁸² Notably, this restoration happened three years after the planned construction of a memorial hall for “comfort women” was cancelled due to public protests that these women had not contributed to the independence movement. Exhibitions inside the Woman’s Prison revolve around female independence activists, especially Yu Gwansun who died in the prison and is the most celebrated female national hero in the country.

The information panel outside correctly states that “[t]here is a legend that the well-respected freedom fighter Yu Gwansun was imprisoned in [the Woman’s Prison’s basement], but there is no evidence”. However, few visitors stop to read the outside information panel, and several adults were observed hushing their accompanying children and informing them that “this is where Yu Gwansun died”. One of the cells feature a statue of Yu Gwansun illuminated by a 3D projector which visualises her facial features before and after torture at the prison. Another cell with portraits of many female independence activists has been made into a photo zone (“Independence Activists and Me”) with mirrors on all walls, resulting in faces of visitors and female independence activists appearing together in pictures taken there. In Korea, there is a dearth of officially designated spaces for commemorating female victims of unjust colonial rule. Yu Gwansun and the other women who are memorialised here are deemed deserving of such recognition owing to their demonstrated unwavering nationalism in the face of violent

⁸² Seodaemun Prison History Hall, *The Place of Independence*, 130.

colonial oppression. As such forms of bravery and sacrifice are typically associated with masculinity, arguably, the prison museum can still be described as a space of “masculine nationality”.⁸³

4.3.3.4 Independence Activist of This Month

Prison cells in building no. 10 are used for exhibits dedicated to individuals selected as “Independence Activist of This Month” by the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs. The Ministry have selected between one to four historical independence activists each month since January 1992 to highlight memories of individual anti-colonialists.⁸⁴ The selected activists are commemorated in various ways, including through promotion on the websites of the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs, and through these exhibitions in Seodaemun Prison cells. At the time of writing, 463 activists have been selected, and although not all have exhibitions in the prison, in recent years new permanent exhibitions have been set up each month as activists are designated by the government. This system exemplifies a cooperation between the central government and Seodaemun Prison in which official memory of individual independence activists are expanded by the government and introduced to public memory at Seodaemun Prison by its curators. Although guided tours do not allow time for exploring these stories and many visitors prioritise the main exhibitions, a significant number of visitors spend time examining the many individual stories and marginalised memories presented in the cells of building no. 10.

Naturally, the large majority of historical individuals selected as “Independence Activist of This Month” are Koreans, but 13 foreign activists and supporters of Korean independence have also been bestowed this title.⁸⁵ Japanese supporters of the Korean independence movement were selected for the first time in May 2023. These were Kaneko Fumiko and Fuse Tatsuji. Kaneko was an anarchist that was arrested for planning to

⁸³ Arai, “When Is a Prison like a Folk Art Museum.”

⁸⁴ See the online archive of the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs. <https://e-gonghun.mpva.go.kr/user/IndepCrusaderList.do?goToCode=20003>

⁸⁵ Ibid.

assassinate the Japanese emperor with her well-known Korean activist husband Pak Yol. Fuse was a lawyer who publicly supported the Korean independence movement and acted as the defence lawyer of Kaneko and Pak Yol. In 2004, Fuse was posthumously honoured with the Korean *Aejokjang* (Independence Medal) of the Order of Merit for National Foundation.⁸⁶

Since May 2023, a dedicated cell within Seodaemun Prison has been permanently devoted to showcasing their narratives, celebrating their contributions alongside those of Korean national heroes. It is unprecedented that Japanese activists are highlighted with large information panels and photographs in the prison museum, and highly noteworthy that it was the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs, an agency of the central government, that inadvertently enabled this valuable pioneering exhibition which challenges dichotomous imaginations of Koreans and Japanese evoked by the main exhibitions. The selection of Kaneko and Fuse as independence activists for remembrance in 2023 coincides with the centenary of their arrest, two days after the 1923 Great Kantō earthquake—a time of heightened anti-Korean sentiment fuelled by false rumours of looting and sabotage by Koreans, leading to widespread violence against them by Japanese police and vigilantes.⁸⁷ The official commemoration of Japanese activists in Seodaemun Prison History Hall implies potential for further incorporation of marginalised memories of anti-colonial Japanese individuals into its exhibitions.

4.3.3.5 Nationalism and military pride in the Museum Store

Seodaemun Prison's museum store, located in kitchen barracks reconstructed in 2010, strongly reconfirms the official nationalistic function of the heritage site. Other than Korean national flags and items with national symbols, the store sells a plethora of nationalistic souvenirs unrelated to the prison including models of the Liancourt Rocks,⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Korean Culture and Information Service, "Human Rights Lawyer 'Who Listened to His Own Conscience': Tatsuji Fuse", *Korea*, September 2009.
<https://www.kocis.go.kr/eng/webzine/201909/sub05.html>

⁸⁷ Mikiso Hane, "Introduction", *The Prison Memoirs of a Japanese Woman* by Kaneko Fumiko, English translation by Jean Inglis (Armonk and London: M. E. Sharpe 1991), pp. vii-xviii.

⁸⁸ Disputed territory between Korea and Japan, known as "Dokdo" in Korea and "Takeshima" in Japan.

helicopters, battleships, and tanks modelled after those of the ROK armed forces.⁸⁹ The models are simple and suitable for children. While military-themed toys are common in Korean museum stores, it is incongruous to display merchandise commemorating military pride within a historical site dedicated to the memory of individuals who suffered from unjust political imprisonment, torture, and execution. This incongruity is compounded when considering the fact that much of the suffering at the site was inflicted by Korean military dictatorships. As such, the promotion of military-themed items within this context has the potential to be perceived as highly insensitive and offensive. However, the shop is popular with Korean visitors, many of whom buy Korean flags for their children. The lack of surprise exhibited by Korean visitors in response to the store's product selection implies that many view the heritage site as a space for national pride and that the store is expected to offer related items.⁹⁰

4.3.4 Irreconcilable official functions of Seodaemun Prison

The above examination of Seodaemun Prison's curatorial narratives reveals a duality of co-existing but conflicting colonial and post-colonial official memories. The two sets of narratives are irreconcilable because they serve conflicting purposes, namely 1) the celebration of independence from imperial Japan for the enhancement of a patriotic national identity and 2) the commemoration of political activists who fought against colonial authorities and subsequent Korean military governments which adapted the colonial security laws and penal system to violently suppress public opposition. Equal commemoration of colonial and post-colonial victims would complicate implications of imperial Japan as Korea's nemesis and undermine the perceived triumph over colonial systems of oppression.

⁸⁹ These are presented as models related to "Korean culture" along with models of heritage sites such as the Independence Gate and Gyeongbokgung.

⁹⁰ When revisiting the museum store in June 2023, the selection of items for sale had been significantly reduced to make space for new information panels relevant to the reconstructed kitchen-building the store is located in. However, the military-themed toys remained, suggesting they are popular.

To remedy this conflict, a joint cohesive narrative with the potential to strengthen Korean national identity could be developed based on the struggle against oppression. Such a narrative could highlight a prolonged national revolution that started on March 1st, 1919, and was linked to the democracy movement, and arguably even the “Candlelight Revolution” of 2016-2017.⁹¹ However, such a narrative necessitates the othering of both colonial and post-colonial governments as antagonistic forces that espoused values and beliefs that contradicted those of the *Minjung*, the pro-democratic Korean people. If post-colonial Korean governments were to be vilified in this way, it would negate the current antithetical depictions of virtuous Koreans who endured hardship due to imperial Japan’s perceived unique level of moral deficiency.

Director Park, valuing historical accuracy over the potential for enhancing national identity, contends that Seodaemun Prison ought to present a unified and continuous narrative of the colonial and post-colonial eras, rather than partitioning them into distinct and optional narratives that visitors can choose to engage with or not. He states that such a transformation of official narratives is an ongoing but slow and gradual process, partly because, in his view, Koreans have not been taught the full truth about the dictatorships of Rhee Syngman, Park Chung-hee and Chun Doo-hwan.⁹² As a significant portion of Korea’s population still celebrate selective memories of the military dictatorships for their contributions to Korea’s economic development (and perceived effort to defeat communist threats), a complete overhaul of Seodaemun Prison’s official narratives would undoubtedly cause major controversy. Regardless of political stance, the alignment of Japanese and Korean governments as related antagonists could potentially pose a threat to the national identity of any Korean that defines their “Koreanness” by way of contrasting it with their perception of the Japanese. In addition, it is improbable that conservative Korean administrations, such as the one currently in power at the time of writing, would endorse official narratives that denounce their predecessors at official heritage sites utilised to foster and enhance national identity.

⁹¹ Youngseo Baik, “The 1919 Independence Movement in Korea and Interconnected East Asia: The Incremental Unfolding of a Revolution.” *The Asia-Pacific Journal / Japan Focus* vol 19 (2021), issue 21 no. 3 <https://apjjf.org/2021/21/Baik.html>

⁹² Another reason stated by Director Park is that relevant post-colonial data is still in a process of collection and interpretation.

4.4 Official tours of Seodaemun Prison and alternative perspectives

Official tours of Seodaemun Prison by volunteer guiding docents at no additional cost are conducted three times a day in Korean, while tours in English, Japanese and Chinese can be reserved for specific days of the week.⁹³ Every Sunday, the Korean Youth Corps (Hanguk Cheongnyeon Yeonhap, hereafter KYC), an NPO supporting social growth of young Koreans and world peace, conducts alternative official tours of the prison. The prison museum also arranges other irregular alternative tours, such as a series of “moonlight tours” in 2022 after official closing hours exclusively for adults. In addition, any private company, organisation or individual may arrange unofficial tours of the prison without the need for an official agreement with the museum management.⁹⁴ The narratives of the official audio guide reflect those on information panels on the site, but its format and online availability holds high potential for facilitating dark tourism (as further discussed in [section 6.2.3](#)).

4.4.1 Standard official tours

In contrast to the case study of Gyeongbokgung, where guides are employed as permanent staff members, the official guides at Seodaemun Prison operate on a voluntary basis. These prison museum guides are required to successfully complete an official training program before they can assume their roles, during which they commit to conducting tours a certain number of times per month for a minimum of one year. At Seodaemun Prison, the official guides are referred to as docents, reflecting the volunteering nature of their role.⁹⁵ Securing an adequate number of volunteer guides, particularly those proficient in foreign languages, remains an ongoing challenge for the management.⁹⁶

⁹³ See official webpage for guided tours: <https://sphh.sscmc.or.kr/reservation/docent.php>

⁹⁴ Park Kyung-mok interview; observation during tour by David Mason, 21 May 2022.

⁹⁵ I use the term “guides” instead of “docents” to prevent any potential confusion when discussing “official guides” in a broader context. Given that both volunteer docents and hired guides undergo formal training to convey official narratives, my utilisation of the term “official guides” in the discourse of the concluding chapter encompasses both volunteer docents and paid guides.

⁹⁶ Informal conversation with curator Kim Cheolhyeon on 10 June 2023.

Notably, during the course of fieldwork, significant disparities were noted in terms of historical knowledge and proficiency in foreign languages among the guides. These discrepancies are presumably challenging to mitigate, given the rigorous demands of the role, which is undertaken without compensation. At the time of writing 30 guides are volunteering at Seodaemun Prison.⁹⁷

During fieldwork in 2022 and while visiting Korea for additional data collection in 2023, I took part in three standard official tours of Seodaemun Prison, two conducted in Korean and the other in English.⁹⁸ Additionally, I had the opportunity to observe segments of other standard tours conducted in Korean during other visits during fieldwork. It is a limitation that I could not participate in a tour in Japanese, as tours in foreign languages are only conducted for groups that do not understand Korean, and I was unable to recruit a Japanese group for research participation due to the pandemic situation of 2022.

Regular Korean tours usually last between 60 to 90 minutes, and participants may be asked for preferences regarding length of tours. When visiting with two Korean research participants in June 2023, our guide suggested allotting 90 minutes for the tour. While we adhered to this recommendation and the tour ended up lasting about 100 minutes, the guide also noted it could be completed within an hour. When I visited for a Korean-language tour during the pandemic I was the only tour participant, and as I expressed deep interest in the prison museum and intention to collect data for this research, the guide offered an extended tour which ultimately lasted 140 minutes. The tours followed the exact same route and the focus and framing of nationalistic narratives were not noticeably different when I participated in the Korean-language tour together with Koreans.⁹⁹ The tour in English followed the same route as the Korean-language tour and had a duration of approximately 70 minutes.

According to Director Park, the tours and docents' training programmes are designed to provide identical narratives in all languages offered. However, considering how

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Korean tours on 21 April 2022 and 14 June 2023. English on 5 July 2022.

⁹⁹ As will be discussed further below, communist independence fighters were only discussed when I participated with other Koreans, but the reason is unlikely to be connected to the nationality of tour participants.

exhibitions reflect post-colonial Korean identity politics, it should not come as a surprise that docents guiding in English adjust narratives for foreign audiences. For example, Korean-language tour narratives encompass many of the individual independence activists introduced on the first floor of the administration building, while only the most iconic national heroes were mentioned by name in the tour in English. When the guide provided similar details to me on the extended Korean tour, I asked if they provide similar details in English to foreigners who do not speak Korean. The guide, who had official approval for conducting tours in English but had no actual experience of giving them yet,¹⁰⁰ stated that it would not be effective to provide the same level of detail about specific independence activists because most foreigners do not know about them, and added that “[most] foreigners are not very interested in Korean [colonial] history”.¹⁰¹

Participants of official tours start their journey from the former administration building, where they receive a detailed narration of historical events related to the core components of the prison’s main exhibition. This portion of the tour constitutes at least half of its duration. Afterward, visitors are guided through the central prison building, prison building no. 12, the execution building, the gyeokbyeokjang, and the women’s prison, in that sequential order.

Both the Korean and English official tours utilised the initial exhibition in the former administration building to provide an account of the events leading up to Korea’s colonial occupation by imperial Japan. The guides’ narratives encompassed Korea’s dependence on Russia following the first Sino-Japanese war, as well as the consequential assassination of Queen Myeongseong.¹⁰² The forced abdication of Emperor Gojong in 1907, following his unsuccessful attempts to garner Euro-American support, was appropriately presented as having paved the way for the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1907 and

¹⁰⁰ In the summer of 2022, I was the first foreigner to request a tour in English of Seodaemun Prison since the beginning of the pandemic.

¹⁰¹ The entrenched stereotypical perceptions of foreign visitors to Korea that are still held by some Korean tour guides, along with the cultural differences, may present a greater hurdle than the language barrier when it comes to enhancing the educational value of tours for non-Korean tourists. To illustrate, consider the conduct of the English-speaking Seodaemun Prison tour guide who, in a rhetorical fashion, humorously inquired whether any of the participants had ever been incarcerated, only to wait for everyone to deny, as apparently expected, before proceeding.

¹⁰² Both guides implied that the assassination was planned and executed by the Japanese government.

the construction of a colonial prison system, ultimately culminating in complete annexation in 1910.

Official tours portray the site as a Japanese prison for Korean independence activists, which is consistent with museum exhibits. Both Korean and English tours mention the imprisonment of members of the “righteous army” as Japan’s primary reason for constructing the prison, with the March 1st movement cited as the reason for subsequent expansions. During the English tour, a participant from the United States without knowledge of the “righteous army” expressed confusion about Japan’s intentions and the groups they intended to imprison but received no clear answer.

The fact that non-political prisoners were also incarcerated in the prison was referenced only on the Korean extended tour as the guide explained that political prisoners were excluded from forced prison labour to prevent ideological contamination of other prisoners. Only Korean colonial political prisoners were mentioned during this tour, and when the guide mentioned that “the prison hospital was mostly for the Japanese,” I asked for clarification about whether they meant Japanese prisoners, guards, or both. The guide appeared confused by my question and hesitated before stating that “the guards were Japanese,” thereby reinforcing a perceived division between colonial prisoners and guards based on nationality. Japanese prisoners were only mentioned once in the standard tours I participated in.¹⁰³ The guide pointed out the picture of Miyake Shikanosuke by the Gyeongseong Troika information panel, perhaps prompted by me having asked about Japanese prisoners earlier on the same tour. Interestingly, the guide added that Korean independence fighters could be executed for hiding political criminals, but that Miyake was not, due to the ethnically discriminatory nature of the colonial penal system. By the interrogation rooms in the basement, the same guide pointed out that Korean interpreters were present during the torture of Korean political prisoners. If naturally included in all tours, such narratives could shed light on lesser-known aspects of the prison’s colonial history that diminishes antithetical images of Koreans and Japanese while still emphasising the discriminatory nature of the colonial rule and penal system.

¹⁰³ Korean-language tour on 14 June 2023.

The personal interpretations and political views of volunteering guides appear to significantly affect certain aspects of their narrations. Most official guides avoid narratives of communist independence activists who were imprisoned in Seodaemun Prison. During the extended Korean tour in 2022, the guide explicitly stated that we would skip part of the first-floor exhibits “because they relate to communist independence activists.” However, a different guide on a visit in 2023 highlighted how Korean communists contributed to the independence movement and emphasised the interpretation that, in contrast to post-colonial Korean communists, their priority was independence from Japan while communist ideology was just one of the means perceived useful for opposing colonial rule. Memories of communist independence fighters are already included in official narratives on information panels, and it can be expected that they will be encompassed in narratives of official tours more frequently as training programmes are updated and new guides pass through it.¹⁰⁴

All tours focus almost exclusively on colonial history, and encompass nationalistic hero-narratives not directly relevant to Seodaemun Prison such as those of the violent attacks by An Jung-geun, Lee Bong-chang, and Yun Bong-gil against colonial authorities.¹⁰⁵ When I asked about post-colonial history, one guide simply stated it is not part of the tour. This was reiterated when passing the space of memory for democracy activists in the labour building. However, on the standard tour I joined in June 2023 together with Korean participants, the guide welcomed my interest in post-colonial history, and mentioned for example the Inhyeokdang incident in which eight students accused of threatening national security were executed less than a day after being sentenced despite lack of evidence

¹⁰⁴ The incorporation of specific communist independence fighters into the official commemoration of the prison museum might be attributed to the posthumous conferral of various national merit medals on numerous communist independence fighters following Korea’s shift from military dictatorships to democratisation. Nonetheless, the official acknowledgment of these independence fighters remains contentious, particularly under conservative administrations such as that of Yoon Suk Yeol, which have advocated for the revocation of decorations awarded to independence fighters who went on to endorse North Korean leader Kim Il Sung. See for example Park Su-yun, “‘Gajja dongnibyugongja’ seohun baktal chujin – Son Hyewon Kim Wonung buchun jaegomto [Push to revoke ‘false independence merit’ awards... Son Hye-won and Kim Won-ung’s father to be reconsidered]”, *Yonhap News*, 2 July 2023. <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20230702018400504>

¹⁰⁵ The guide of the English tour explained how these named independence activists are highly respected as national heroes by most of the Korea people. Although the depictions and explanations of these revered figures were expectedly subjective, the explanation for their incorporation into the prison museum’s narratives provided the non-Korea participants with a significant insight into official Korean memory of the colonial period.

during the presidency of Park Cheung-hee.¹⁰⁶ Informal conversations with the guides suggested that a lack of post-colonial memory in narratives stem from both the lack of specific training on the subject and the lack of expectations or emphasis from their management regarding the importance of presenting post-colonial history. The guide of the extended Korean tour also noted that incorporating post-colonial history into tours was challenging due to the divided views and opinions of visitors on the subject.

It is noteworthy that the official guides do not use any hostile language when describing Japanese crimes against the Korean people. While they do express a sense of tragedy, they do not convey any hatred or anger towards the Japanese to the tourists. Even during narration for the basement exhibition, which was described as the “torture rooms” on the English tour, I did not perceive any anti-Japanese sentiment in the guide’s expressions or choice of words. During the English tour, the guide deliberately mentioned that they can speak Japanese and have extensive experience guiding Japanese visitors to the prison. They emphasised that most Japanese visitors are “mild” and often apologise for the actions of their ancestors, apparently to counter potential anti-Japanese sentiment among tour participants who might have been shocked by the prison’s historical narratives.

The observations made above demonstrate that although official tours generally reflect the narratives presented in the exhibitions, the guides also provide additional context that can be both helpful or misleading in interpreting these narratives.¹⁰⁷ When I personally guided the Norwegian research participant based on information panels at the site, they perceived the narratives as nationalistic and anti-Japanese. In contrast, this was not initially the case for the Thai research participant who joined the official English tour. However, after the tour, when I informed them that the colonial prison had both Japanese and Korean guards and inmates, they initially reacted with disbelief before later criticising

¹⁰⁶ The incident occurred on 9 April 1975. See for example Annie I. Bang, “Acquitted 32 years after execution,” *The Korea Herald*, 5 April 2010.
<https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20070124000017>

¹⁰⁷ At the end of all standard tours that I participated in, the guides stated that Yu Gwansun had been imprisoned and died in the women’s prison basement, despite the official information panel stating that this is a myth lacking evidence. Likewise, during all the standard tours conducted by volunteer guides, there was either an implied or direct misrepresentation that the aforementioned “wailing poplar” tree was grasped by colonial prisoners prior to their executions. This misrepresentation contrasts with the information panel’s clarification that the tree was planted after the colonial period.

the museum and tour guide for selective narration that they in retrospect perceived as biased and nationalistic.¹⁰⁸

4.4.2 KYC tours

Tours of Seodaemun Prison organised by the non-profit organization KYC (Korean Youth Corps) are an exemplar of educational dark tourism. Of all tours I participated in during fieldwork across my different case studies, this Seodaemun Prison tour is the most ideal for demonstrating the potential educational benefits of dark tourism at sites of memory due to frequent comparisons of the past and present.¹⁰⁹ KYC tours do not emphasise national pride, and instead offer an educational experience that enables visitors to reinterpret the present by engaging with dark aspects of modern history.¹¹⁰ The one-hour KYC tours, which are conducted exclusively in Korean at no additional cost twice every Sunday afternoon, are led by knowledgeable volunteer guides who have attended training and seminars at KYC facilities. The KYC tour program at Seodaemun Prison has been developed in official cooperation with the prison museum and is promoted on its official websites. Therefore, Director Park considers the KYC tours as part of the prison museum's official program.¹¹¹ However, the framing of KYC narratives greatly contrasts with those of the official narratives moulded directly and unilaterally by Seodaemun Prison.¹¹²

The primary objective of the popular KYC tours is to encourage visitors to contemplate the value of human rights and freedom.¹¹³ When asked about the differences between the

¹⁰⁸ The research participant first stated that they could not understand how some Korean people could have condoned the brutal treatment of Korean prisoners described to us. Only after discussing reasons for why parts of the colonised Korean population did not actively fight against colonial authorities, was I able to convincingly explain how a significant number of Koreans accepted official positions supporting imperial Japan.

¹⁰⁹ This educational tour is not promoted or officially described as a form of dark tourism.

¹¹⁰ Ide Akira, *Dāku tsūrizumu kakuchō - Kindai no sai-kōchiku* [Dark tourism expansion: Reconstruction of modern history], (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 2018).

¹¹¹ Park Kyung-mok Interview.

¹¹² I participated in a KYC tour of Seodaemun Prison on 17 April 2022.

¹¹³ Seodaemun Prison History Hall, "(Yeoksagwan) Seoul KYC pyeonghwa gillajabi mojim annae [(History Hall) Seoul KYC peace guide information]," official website, last accessed 17 April 2023. https://sphh.sscmc.or.kr/bbs/board.php?bo_table=notice&wr_id=3335&page=21

KYC tours and the regular tours of Seodaemun Prison, a KYC tour guide explained that it is difficult to articulate without coming across as critical of the official narratives. However, the guide clarified that KYC tours strive to offer a perspective that represents the viewpoint of Korean citizens rather than that of the state. Although the KYC guides and Director Park maintain that the tours are suitable for Koreans of any age, it appears that the narratives are tailored for young students. During my observations, I noticed that the majority of participants (averaging around 25-30 people) were families with younger children. The guides made conscious efforts to engage with the youngest participants throughout the tours.

KYC tours aim to foster critical reflection on the relationship between colonial and post-colonial authoritarian regimes and their contemporary exercise of governmental power over individuals by utilising the prison museum as a space for nuanced understanding of the past and present. During the tour, the guide explains that both non-political and political criminals were incarcerated in the prison and introduces the 1925 colonial Peace Preservation Law, prompting young tour participants to consider whether it is just to imprison individuals for their political opinions and activities. The question, which appeared rhetorical in terms of Japanese injustice, was met with unanimous disapproval from the participants. The guide then points out that a large number of Koreans were imprisoned under similar post-colonial laws and that certain political activities remain illegal.

When explaining the concept of the panopticon and the purposes of surveillance, the guide highlights how the current level of surveillance in Korea is among the highest globally, owing to the extensive number of CCTV cameras and the widespread use of traceable credit card payments. After elucidating the mechanics of the gallows trapdoor in the execution building, the participants were asked whether they support capital punishment, eliciting spontaneous disapproval from the young participants. The guide then revealed that capital punishment continued in Korea after liberation and that polls have shown that the majority of Korean people still support the continuation of capital punishment, visibly shocking many young participants. The execution building serves as the final stop on the KYC tour, and participants are encouraged to contemplate the type

of society they want to live in as the tour concludes.

4.4.3 Alternative official interpretations – The Moonlight Tour

Seodaemun Prison occasionally offers alternative tours for limited time periods, such as the “Moonlight Tours” conducted only for adults after closing time once a month from June to October 2022. I participated in the first tour (29 June), which was guided by Director Park. The tours, which accommodated 30 persons for the price of the entrance ticket, were booked full soon after being announced. Director Park’s Moonlight Tour, like the KYC tour, prioritised historical accuracy over celebratory accounts and aimed to inspire participants to reimagine the prison’s colonial and, to a lesser extent, post-colonial history. Director Park’s Moonlight Tour is an example of how educational dark tourism may be meaningfully and effectively facilitated by official stakeholders.

The tour started with a 20-minute lecture introducing the prison’s history as well as Foucault’s theory of surveillance, emphasising the prison’s function as part of a system of disciplinary power and control enforced through monitoring.¹¹⁴ Director Park compared the panopticon to contemporary surveillance systems, aligning it with the themes of the KYC tour while tailoring it to a mature audience. Similarly, colonial laws applied to independence activists were compared to the Korean post-colonial National Security Act. The tour followed the regular route, but included areas usually inaccessible to visitors, such as the higher floors of prison buildings. Notably, visitors could enter the former education hall on the first floor of the central prison building, where they learned about its use for ideological re-education by both colonial and post-colonial managements. Participants were provided with opportunities to empathize with the experiences of former prisoners, such as being confined together in a small cell long enough to experience rising heat and deteriorating air quality.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ See Michael Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 2nd ed. translated by Alan Sheridan (NY: Random House Vintage Books, 1995).

¹¹⁵ Director Park entered a cell and instructed assistant staff to lock it shut after it had been crammed with about 20 participants. During a several minute-long monologue, Director Park explained that when colonial managers pushed the prison’s capacity, 17 to 23 prisoners were crammed in each cell. Contrastingly, on the standard tour in English, the guide stated that the Japanese locked 50 Koreans in

Director Park explicitly pointed out the rarely acknowledged fact that a significant number of prison warders during the colonial period were Korean, despite the senior management being Japanese. He expressed his viewpoint that colonial Korean prison staff should not automatically be categorised as “pro-Japanese” (“*chinilpa*”). Director Park emphasised the need to take into account that Koreans were in need of stable jobs and that Korean employees of the prison had been motivated by the opportunity to become civil servants rather than a will to support Japanese interests in Korea.

During the tour, Director Park described the basement cells as “interrogation rooms from a Japanese perspective, and torture rooms from a Korean perspective.” He initiated a role-play scenario by firmly grabbing a volunteer participant’s wrist and threatening to insert sticks under their fingernails unless they revealed where their friends lived. The participant responded that they would not endure even three seconds of such torture, which elicited laughter from other participants.¹¹⁶ Another participant was locked in a standing torture coffin for several minutes. Unlike in the official extended Korean tour, where the guide narrated an incident of independence activists who succumbed to torture and were spurned by their compatriots waiting for their turn, Director Park's tour allowed participants to imagine the impact such torture would have had on themselves without facing threats to their identity. They were not coerced into a particular conclusion, and some identified most with colonial subjects who gave into torture. Several Korean participants acknowledged their own inability to endure such torture, thus invalidating the notion that the endurance of Japanese torture is a defining feature of “Koreanness.” The tour narratives emphasised that classifications of victims and perpetrators are debatable and not restricted to nationalistic boundaries.

In addition to promoted irregular tours like this “moonlight tour” by Director Park, irregular tours of the prison museum by its curators are also possible to arrange for specific occasions. At the time of writing, three curators are employed at the prison museum. I participated in such a tour by curators Kim Cholhyeon and Yi Seungyun

each cell, but this would not have been physically possible based on the experience of the Moonlight Tour.

¹¹⁶ The response may have been experienced as especially humorous by some Korean participants as it unexpectedly contrasted the idealised representations of Koreans under Japanese rule that have been perpetuated by national identity politics.

arranged for foreign participants of an academic conference in Seoul in June 2023. The curators spoke mainly in Korean which was translated to English by an interpreter connected to the conference. On this tour participants asked questions throughout, to the extent that the focus of tour narratives was guided significantly by participants. The curators, having studied the prison's history extensively beyond official narratives, were able to answer most questions and did not hesitate to provide extensive answers to potentially challenging questions such as those regarding Japanese prisoners during the colonial period and post-colonial Korean political prisoners.

The views and interpretations of curators did not appear to significantly differ from the relatively liberal interpretations of Director Park. For example, in the context of marginalised memories of democracy activists, curator Yi Seungyun pointed out that the infamous “wailing poplar” tree outside the execution chamber that prisoners would cling to and cry before being hung was, contrary to popular belief, not yet planted during the colonial period and is thus a reminder of the plights of unjustly executed post-colonial prisoners. She also confirmed that pro-democratic graffiti in prison cells had been painted over and expressed agreement that it would be valuable to make them visible again. The special tour by curators for academic visitors demonstrated another official opportunity for meaningful dark tourism, allowing for a balanced exploration of objective narratives that hold significant educational potential.

4.5 Perceptions of Seodaemun Prison's official narratives.

When crafting narratives for heritage site visitors, management must carefully balance the interpretation of historical memory that official stakeholders consider essential with the historical memory that resonates with visitors, as highlighted in the previous chapter on Gyeongbokgung. The official narratives of Seodaemun Prison are adjusted and translated for international visitors, but as we have seen in the previous discussions on nationalistic framing, these narratives have primarily been shaped with a Korean audience in mind. Therefore, the following section will examine the perspectives of Korean, anglophone, and Japanese visitors on the official narratives presented at the prison

museum. The perspectives of Chinese and other national/cultural groups have not been examined due to limitations of time, space, and relevant language proficiency.

4.5.1 Korean visitors

Seodaemun Prison is a highly popular site of memory in Korea, having welcomed over one million visitors in 2019 (about one fifth of Gyeongbokgung's visitor number for the same year).¹¹⁷ Only a small fraction of visitors were non-Korean. At most, 8% were foreign visitors, a low ratio compared to Gyeongbokgung's 2019 ratio of 27.5%.¹¹⁸ Visitor satisfaction is high, evident from Naver's visitor rating of 4.48 out of 5.¹¹⁹ Visitors leaving Korean reviews on Naver voted that the most appealing aspects of the prison museum are that 1) visits are valuable ("*yuikaeyo*"), 2) exhibitions are well organised, 3) explanations are good, and 4) it is a good place to come with children.¹²⁰

Observations at the site corresponded with the above data. Many Korean visitors discussed the contents of exhibitions as they proceeded, and I could not hear anyone criticise excessively nationalistic narratives. During each visit, a significant number of children carrying Korean national flags like those available for purchase in the museum store were observed, alongside guardians who appeared to be reciting information from exhibit panels with a tone and emphasis that suggested a deep regard for the nationalistic content as essential lessons for the children to grasp. This is encouraged by the prison museum, evident from the aforementioned official workbooks for young students. The popularity of the prison museum as a destination for school trips further indicates the Korean public's acceptance of its role in facilitating the nationalistic indoctrination of young Koreans.

National pride appears to be an important aspect of Seodaemun Prison's narratives to many of its Korean visitors, but, for example, the popularity of the KYC tours reveals

¹¹⁷ Park Kyung-mok Interview.

¹¹⁸ Park Kyung-mok Interview.

¹¹⁹ As of October 2021, based on 1,219 ratings. Naver is Korea's most popular online search engine. <https://pcmap.place.naver.com/place/12384776/review/visitor?shouldKeywordUnfold=true&from=map&fromPanelNum=1&ts=1679505798040>

¹²⁰ Ibid. The number of votes for each category was 1): 752, 2): 379, 3): 337, and 4): 221.

divided opinions and intentions behind visits. A survey from 2020 identifying motivations for visiting the prison museum in Korean tourists with prior dark tourism experience revealed that the most common motivations were based on a desire for educational exploration (“*tamguseong*”), engaging with history (“*yeoksaseong*”), and unusual experiences and self-reflection (“*Italgwa jaaseongchal*”), in descending order of prevalence.¹²¹ Research on the motivations behind dark tourism in the United States have revealed that, alongside the desire for education and entertainment, the desire for the enhancement of national pride and the co-construction of identity are common amongst visitors to national sites of tragedy.¹²² The survey conducted by myself at Seodaemun Prison demonstrated that most respondents sometimes visited sites related to Korean death and tragedy to 1) learn about history (90.1%), 2) pay respect and commemorate victims (84.6%), and for the purpose of accompanying friends and/or family (61.5%).¹²³

4.5.2 Anglophone Visitors

Seodaemun Prison has received a relatively modest number of anglophone¹²⁴ visitors annually, with attendance not exceeding a few tens of thousands at most.¹²⁵ However, the prison museum appears to be regarded as a valuable and educational destination by most anglophone visitors.¹²⁶ On TripAdvisor.com, Seodaemun Prison is rated 4.5 out of 5, based on 388 visitor reviews.¹²⁷ Many English reviews on the site recommend visiting

¹²¹ The online survey targeted Koreans over the age of 15 with other dark tourism experiences within 3 years prior to visiting Seodaemun Prison, and resulted in 347 complete questionnaires. Kim Ju-Yeon and Choi Hyun-Joo, “Dakeu tueoriyeum bangmundonggiga jinjeongseong, gamjeong, manjong min taedobyeonhwaechichineunyeonghyang-seodaemunhyeongmusoyeoksagwaneul jungsimuro”[The Influence of Dark Tourism Visitors’ Motivation, Authenticity, Emotion, Satisfaction and Attitude Change: Focus on Seodaemun Prison History Hall], *Hanguk kontencheu hakoe nonmunji* 21, 2021 (3), 194-204.

¹²² Julie S. Tinson, Michael A. J. Saren & Bridget E. Roth, “Exploring the role of dark tourism in the creation of national identity of young Americans,” *Journal of Marketing Management*, 2015, 31:7-8, 856-880.

¹²³ See [Appendix VI Survey and Data Analysis](#).

¹²⁴ Within the context of this chapter, “anglophone visitors” refers to all visitors who are more proficient in English than any of the other languages represented in the prison museum (Korean, Japanese, Chinese, German).

¹²⁵ The exact number is unknown, but according to Director Park, over half of the foreign visitors are Japanese. The highest number of foreign visitors in recent years were 60,000 to 80,000 in 2019. The number is estimated considering that the remaining foreign visitors were not exclusively anglophone.

¹²⁶ Informal conversations with anglophone visitors at the site and others who have visited in the recent past reflected the mainly positive reviews on sites such as TripAdvisor.com.

¹²⁷ As of 23 March 2023. Although not all reviews are in English, the high rating on the most popular

for a learning experience, mostly citing Japanese colonialism, but also acknowledging post-colonial history to some extent. This research was limited by the fact that fieldwork was conducted during a period when international tourism was heavily impacted by the pandemic. However, online reviews provided supplementary insights to complement the limited observations of non-Korean tourists.

The nationalistic framing of history is often mentioned by anglophone visitors, but appears to not commonly be perceived as detrimental to their experience. English TripAdvisor reviews rating the museum highly state, for example, that it presents a “[v]ery interesting history with a clear anti Japan sentiment coming across through the historical story being told” and that “[t]his is one attraction that helps explain why South Koreans are very nationalistic and very proud of their independence.”¹²⁸ Incontestably, a segment of English-speaking tourists esteem the site, in part, as a window through which to apprehend Korean nationalism and patriotism. Under this perspective, native Korean visitors, such as families brandishing national flags, are assimilated into the panorama of the foreign tourist gaze, potentially impeding the intended function of the commemoration of victims of colonial and post-colonial authorities and the visualisation of their memories. Foreigners observing Korean national pride at this site of memory may also allude to a voyeuristic aspect of dark tourism presumably unwelcomed by the management and the domestic population.

The seemingly most frequent negative comments revolve around the lack of English translations for part of the exhibitions, and the commonly high number of young students at the site who appear uninterested in its history. For example, one visitor stated that it was “difficult to be affected by the torture cell displays when you are surrounded by screaming kids whose teachers do not control them.”¹²⁹ Some perceived and noted it as

international travel site indicates high visitor satisfaction.
https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g294197-d1440196-Reviews-Seodaemun_Prison_History_Hall-Seoul.html

¹²⁸ sbrighton1 on 25 oct 2019 and Lottelli on 16 June 2019.

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g294197-d1440196-Reviews-Seodaemun_Prison_History_Hall-Seoul.html

¹²⁹ TripAdvisor review by AmyL566, 15 November 2019.

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g294197-d1440196-Reviews-Seodaemun_Prison_History_Hall-Seoul.html

inappropriate for children to talk loudly and create disturbances out of consideration for the dignity of the victims being commemorated at the site.

4.5.3 Japanese visitors

Seodaemun Prison has been recognised by Japan as an important site of memory. In October 2000, just half a year after becoming Prime Minister of Japan,¹³⁰ Koizumi Junichirō of the LDP, officially visited the prison museum at Seodaemun and praised its exhibitions for their educational value, reflecting on the suffering of the Korean people under imperial Japan.¹³¹ In 2015 former prime minister Hatoyama Yukio of the DPJ visited Seodaemun Prison and knelt down to express a “heartfelt” apology for imperial Japan’s treatment of Korean independence activists.¹³² At the same time, the prison museum’s narratives are often targeted by Japan’s *netouyo* (right-wing online community) and described as fabricated propaganda.¹³³

Japanese visitors amount to over half of the total number of foreign visitors to Seodaemun Prison.¹³⁴ This may be unsurprising due to the site’s high relevance to Japanese history, or surprising due to the potential perception of narratives as anti-Japanese. Japanese tourists visit both on guided group tours and as individual travellers, and some Japanese high schools have included visits to the prison museum in school trips to Korea. Some Japanese visitors, especially those of older generations, shed tears and express how they

¹³⁰ Notably, by this time, Koizumi had been criticised for officially visiting Yasukuni Shrine which commemorates Japanese war criminals and others for their contribution to Japanese wars.

¹³¹ Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Official statement on Prime Minister Koizumi’s visit to Seodaemun Prison, 15, October 2000.
https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/kaidan/s_koi/korea0110/sankou1.html

¹³² Park Kyung-mok Interview; Park Jongshik, “(poto) Seodaemun hyeongmusoeseo mureum kkureun hatoyama jeon chongni [(Photographs) Former prime minister Hatoyama kneeling down at Seodaemun Prison]”. *Hankyoreh*, 12 August 2015.

https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/704155.html?_ga=2.63277295.1960695726.1679758074-185448939.1679758074

¹³³ For a recent example, see ThaiRakNomad, “(Kanki) sōru no sodemun keimusho mae de kyokujitsu hata wo keru hannichi gekidan ‘arigatō doitsu! Ukuraina mo ganbare” [Anti-Japanese performing group kicking the Rising sun flag – ‘Thank you Germany! Support for Ukraine’]. YouTube video, 17 August 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtIRgWkZp0Q>

¹³⁴ Park Kyung-mok Interview.

were previously unaware of the history presented at the site.¹³⁵

According to Ide Akira, the official acknowledgement and commemoration of post-colonial victims, albeit limited, serves to enhance the overall credibility of historical accounts. Moreover, Ide states it mitigates the likelihood of the site being perceived as anti-Japanese, especially in the eyes of Japanese visitors.¹³⁶ As noted, Japanese translations are limited in the prison museum. In the basement of the former administration building, where some of the Korean texts are most easily perceivable as anti-Japanese, only one information panel summarising the colonial use of the space contains a Japanese translation. On this information panel, the perpetrators that tortured independence activists are in Korean and Japanese referred to simply and aptly as “imperialists (*jegukjuuijadeul/ teikokushugishatachi*)”.¹³⁷ Presumably, more Japanese visitors would experience Seodaemun Prison as anti-Japanese if all information panels discussed above contained direct Japanese translations.

Japanese-speaking visitors have on Konest.com rated Seodaemun Prison 4.2 out of 5 stars.¹³⁸ The comments on the website reveal that common reasons for visiting the prison museum is to learn about Korean history, to learn about Japanese history marginalised in Japan, and, divergently, because the site has been used as a filming location for Korean TV dramas.¹³⁹ Many visitors describe the presented history as “heavy (*omoi*)”, and note that it made them contemplate on related issues (“*ironna imi de kangaesaserareru basho*”).¹⁴⁰ While several comments positively highlight the dual presentation of colonial and post-colonial history, most discuss the former. Multiple commenters recommend visiting for a better understanding of why Koreans may have a negative perception of Japan and its government. One visitor commented that they expected anti-Japanese sentiment but instead experienced hospitality, to which another user responded that it

¹³⁵ Park Kyung-mok Interview.

¹³⁶ Ide Akira, “Dāku Tsūrizumu: kanashimi no kioku wo meguru tabi [Dark Tourism: Travel revolving around memories of sadness]”, (Tokyo: Gentōsha shinsho, 2018), 195-97; Ide Akira interview.

¹³⁷ “Underground Torture Chamber”. Information panel at Seodaemun Prison.

¹³⁸ Based on 29 ratings, as of 23 March 2023.

¹³⁹ Konest.com, Kuchikomi [user comments], Sodemun hyonmuso yossaguan.

https://www.konest.com/contents/spot_mise_kuchi.html?id=488&et=t1&el=GNEIMC&cp=1

¹⁴⁰ Example cited from Konest.com post by “☆04”, 5 February 2017.

https://www.konest.com/contents/spot_mise_kuchi.html?id=488&et=t1&el=GNEIMC&cp=1

made them want to visit the prison museum on their next trip to Korea.¹⁴¹

Only a few comments criticised perceived historical inaccuracies of exhibitions, one stating the museum is an “anti-Japanese propaganda facility”, and that because Japan “observed international law” it would not have brutally tortured prisoners.¹⁴² This comment received four Japanese responses from other users arguing that the original poster is ignorant of Japanese history and that imperial Japan’s state-violence affected Japanese anti-imperialists as well. The most frequent criticism was that Japanese translations are insufficient, and one visitor recommended other Japanese visitors to “look up the history online before visiting.”¹⁴³

Some Japanese visitors to Korea are reluctant to visit Seodaemun Prison due to perceptions that their presence may be offensive to Koreans commemorating victims of Japanese imperialism. For instance, I spoke to a Japanese short-term language student in Seoul who had recently visited Seodaemun Prison, and said that they needed to gather courage before the visit.¹⁴⁴ Expecting that Korean visitors may get upset by Japanese presence, the Japanese student had deliberately visited the museum alone and refrained from speaking at all in order for Korean visitors not to notice the student’s nationality. They did not consider going on a guided tour as it would expose them as Japanese. The student said they also needed to convince their parents in Japan that it was safe before visiting, as the Japanese parents considered visiting a Korean site of colonial memory potentially dangerous. The student had chosen to study in Korea due to an interest in the country’s popular culture but had garnered interest in the difficult past of Japan and Korea during their stay. At Seodaemun, they were not critical of narratives and found the visit valuable and educational, albeit accompanied by a degree of nervousness.

4.6 Summary of Findings

This chapter has in the context of dark tourism examined Seodaemun Prison History Hall

¹⁴¹ Konest.com, comment by uni-shiokara, 11 April 2018.

¹⁴² Konest.com, comment by Rikutan, 5 November 2018.

¹⁴³ Konest.com, comment by uni-shiokara, 11 April 2018.

¹⁴⁴ I met the Japanese student in Gyeongbokgung in June 2023.

as an example of a Korean heritage site that highlights official memories predominantly of the colonial period. As with the previous chapter, implications of these findings are discussed in the final chapter, [Chapter 6](#).

Shifts in the temporal scope and narratives encompassed within the prison museum's official exhibitions are intrinsically linked to the fluctuating trajectory of Korean memory politics which is subject to constant remoulding under opposing Korean administrations. While originally symbolising only Korean resistance to imperial Japan, the current museum also sheds some light on how post-colonial political prisoners endured colonial legacies under post-colonial Korean dictators. Analysis of the gradual introduction of post-colonial memory and perceptions of visitors—both domestic and international—reveal that enhanced visualisation of the persistent oppression of political activists across traumatic periods ruled by foreign colonisers and Korean dictators serves to mitigate nationalistic biases and renders marginalised memories of both eras more accessible to international audiences.

Under Director Park Kyung-mok's approximately two decades of management, Seodaemun Prison's exhibitions have evolved from excessively violent and sensational expressions to pursuits of objectivity and educationally meaningful representations of difficult history. While the prison museum was originally intended to direct attention away from post-colonial memories of human suffering under Korean dictatorships, relevant post-colonial history is gradually being integrated into official narratives. While these improvements have significantly diminished nationalistic biases and expressions of ethnic pride in official narratives, memories of Japanese prisoners and Korean warders are still heavily marginalised and post-colonial narratives are not highlighted in the main exhibition.

Furthermore, ethnic discrimination against Japanese people remains to some extent in Korean texts on information panels by the former interrogation rooms. The site is still actively used to foster patriotism in young Korean students through narratives of Japanese oppression and Korean resistance, which may reinforce an antithetical collective memory of a united Korean people against inherently antagonistic Japanese people. Moreover, while such simplistic dichotomy may enhance national pride in some Korean groups of

visitors, it contributes to the formation of a victim hierarchy in which colonised Korean patriots become the main, or only, focus for commemoration. One reason that the scope of exhibitions is expanded slowly and gradually is that some visitor groups, especially older generations of Koreans, expect narratives for enhancement of national identity and oppose narratives encompassing Korean pro-colonial collaborators and oppression of Koreans by fellow Korean leaders. Consequently, Seodaemun Prison remains a platform where a nationalistically biased collective memory persists and is, to an extent, passed on to younger generations.

Despite the raised issues, limited yet noteworthy opportunities exist for visitors to engage with marginalised colonial and post-colonial narratives embedded within the site's evolving official memory. Building no. 10 and no. 11, along with the labour building, host comprehensive exhibitions on colonial and post-colonial victims and events, at the time of writing encompassing narratives of two Japanese supporters of the Korean independence movement. Additionally, nuanced and objective narratives involving complex victims and perpetrators are actively integrated into irregular guided tours conducted by the museum director and curators. Weekly tours by KYC hold high educational value, particularly for younger participants, as they explore alternative perspectives on Korea's penal history, prompting contemplation on interconnected aspects of challenging pasts and contemporary societal issues. However, most of these exhibitions and tours are exclusively conducted in Korean. These official and semi-official tours of Seodaemun Prison which divert from national identity-enhancing narratives presented on certain information panels exemplify how dissonance can exist also within official memory at heritage sites.

The prison museum offers free guided tours by knowledgeable volunteering docents in Korean, English, Japanese, and Chinese, available to all visitors. The content of these standard tours generally aligns with information panels, mostly excluding memories that complicates the sites' primary official symbolism of Korean resistance against Japan's colonial occupation. Despite this selectivity, the narratives presented by official tour guides are educational and attempts to avoid fostering anti-Japanese sentiment among visitors. Moreover, tour narratives incorporate series of events leading up to Korea's

colonisation and include explanations of general colonial policies, making them useful for tourists with limited relevant historical knowledge to obtain a better understanding of how Korea was colonised and ruled by imperial Japan.

The prison museum is popular with both Korean and foreign visitors, including tens of thousands of annual Japanese visitors. While the narratives of Seodaemun Prison have been experienced as anti-Japanese by visitors of diverse nationalities, it does not appear to be a common occurrence that Japanese visitors to the prison museum experience identity threats or are otherwise offended by the official memory presented at the site. Conversely, some Japanese potential visitors anticipate anti-Japanese sentiment from other Korean visitors, and this perception may for some be a more significant deterrent to their visitation than (imbalanced) depictions of inhumane actions of historical Japanese colonisers found at the site.

Chapter 5 Marginalised memories of exploitation and forced labour on the islands of Takashima and Hashima

Takashima Coal Mine and Hashima Coal Mine are both component parts of the Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining (hereafter, the Meiji Industrial Sites) which were World Heritage inscribed in 2015. From 1939 to 1945, during the Asia-Pacific War, Koreans and others were forced to work under dangerous conditions in these mines and in other sites now inscribed as the Meiji Industrial Sites.

Dark tourism at Takashima and Hashima may potentially illuminate contradictions and connections in Japanese history, facilitating a deeper understanding of the dissonance in collective memories of colonialism and war across national borders and political spectrums. Japanese nationalist discourse often presents the Meiji period with nostalgia, emphasising Japan's modernisation and progress towards constitutionalism while memories of subsequent militarism and wartime aggression are severed.¹ As challenging memories fade away, nostalgia can reinforce the notion of an uninterrupted Japanese national identity that has been preserved and carried forward since the Meiji era. Based on collective memories attached to such identity, Japanese nationalists commonly deny Japanese war crimes by asserting that such allegations contradict the inherent nature of the Japanese people. However, when examining the interconnected histories of modern Japanese time periods, it becomes apparent that contemporary Japanese society is distinct from imperial Japan, and that the systematic human rights violations during wartime are linked to the Meiji-era systems of labour exploitation established by the elites who spearheaded Japan's industrialisation. For these reasons, Meiji-era as well as wartime history of Takashima and Hashima are examined below. Parts of this chapter have been published and other parts presented at conferences during the course of my Ph.D. programme.²

¹ Ryoko Nakano, "Mobilizing Meiji Nostalgia and Intentional Forgetting in Japan's World Heritage Promotion," *International Journal of Asian Studies* 18, 1 (January 2021): 27-44.

² Nikolai Johnsen, "Katō Kōko's Meiji Industrial Revolution - Forgetting forced labor to celebrate Japan's World Heritage Sites, Part 1", *The Asia Pacific Journal / Japan Focus*, vol. 19, issue 23, no. 1, Dec. 1 (2021); Johnsen, "Katō Kōko's Meiji Industrial Revolution..., Part 2", vol. 19, issue 24, no. 5, Dec. 15

The first part of this chapter examines the modern history of Takashima and Hashima, focusing on working conditions and forms of management since the Meiji-era in order to contextualise their history of wartime forced labour. This part is an abbreviated version of the historical background provided in [Appendix V](#). The second part analyses memory politics relevant to wartime history of the islands and the dissonance between Korean and Japanese collective memory of wartime victims. The third and fourth parts focus on Hashima and Takashima as sites of tourism and explore memories of wartime forced labour visible for tourists to the islands. Part five examines other nearby sites of colonial memory that can further visualise marginalised memories of Hashima and Takashima through combined visits. The sixth and final part summarises findings, while, as with previous chapters, implications of findings are further discussed in the final and concluding [Chapter 6](#).

5.1 Historical background

Mitsubishi had purchased both Takashima and Hashima islands during the Meiji period, and the islands' coal mines were operated as two branches of the same mine, namely "Takashima Coal Mine". Therefore, the historical background and official history of the two islands are examined together in this chapter. Unless otherwise specified, within this thesis "Takashima Coal Mine" refers to the mine and its branches on Takashima Island only, excluding Hashima.

Takashima is a small island with a 6km perimeter located about 18km from Nagasaki port. It has been inhabited for over 800 years.³ Like Hashima, Takashima currently belongs to

(2021); Johnsen, "The Sado Gold Mine and Japan's 'History War' Versus the Memory of Korean Forced Laborers," vol. 20, issue 5, no. 1, 1 March (2022); Johnsen, "Revealing the History of Korean Colonised Victims of Forced Labour – Educational Dark Tourism at the World Heritage Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution" (paper presented at the 10th Annual Korea University Graduate Student Conference: Continuities, Discontinuities, and Interstices in Korean and East Asian History, Seoul, 26 May 2023); Johnsen, "Industrial heritage and foreign forced labour: UNESCO World Heritage as a global arena for Japan's historical revisionism," (Paper presented at Industrial Heritage in Japan and the Fading Voices of Victims: Memories, Human Rights, and Solidarity, Seoul, 8 June 2023).

³ Mori Shūzō, "Takashima tankō ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu: sekitan hakken kara Mitsubishi no shoyū made [A study of Takashima Coal Mine: From the discovery of coal to Mitsubishi ownership]", *Hōsei shigaku* 26 (1974): 94-106; Nagasaki City Hall, *Kaku chiku no rekishi gaikyō to keikan gaikyō (Takashima) [Overview of the history and landscape of each district (Takashima)]* (2021).

Nagasaki City (since 2005). In the 1960s, more than 20,000 people lived on the island, but the population dropped rapidly after Mitsubishi closed the Takashima coal mine in 1986.⁴ In 2020 the population of Takashima was 359 people.⁵ Takashima Coal Mine is often referred to in singular form, but it consists of separate entrances and mining tunnels of which 11 were operational at some point between 1869 and 1945.⁶ Similarly, Hashima Coal Mine consists of a network of undersea mining tunnels.

Hashima Island is located about 3km from Takashima Island. It is best known by its nickname, “Battleship Island (Gunkanjima/Gunhamdo).” It is sometimes referred to as “Gunkanjima” also in English. The nickname originates from Hashima’s resemblance at the time to the Japanese Battleship Tosa which was built at the Nagasaki Mitsubishi Shipyard in 1920. The small island with a perimeter of 1.2km was completely abandoned after Mitsubishi closed its coal mines in 1974.

5.1.1 The pioneering mechanisation of the Takashima Coal Mine

According to local legend, the first discovery of coal on Kyushu is attributed to Takashima. It is said to have been discovered around the turn from the 17th to the 18th century by a man whose name, “Goheita”, is still used in local dialect as the word for “coal” (and as the name of Takashima’s only hotel).⁷ Commercial coal extraction commenced on the island soon after, and records show that Takashima and its mine had been owned and managed by daimyō (feudal lords) of the Saga Domain (Saga-han, a.k.a. Hizen-han) since 1804.

The Saga Domain had successfully fought against the shogunate and welcomed foreign technology and business partners from overseas. In 1868, the year of the Meiji Restoration,

<https://www.city.nagasaki.lg.jp/sumai/660000/667000/p004155.html> (accessed 5 August 2021).

⁴ Kimura Shisei, “Komonzu toshite no sangyō isan: Nagasaki shi takashima machi ni okeru gunkanjima katsuyō wo jirei toshite [Industrial Heritage as Social Commons: A Case Study on the Industrial Tourism of “Gunkanjima” in Nagasaki City],” *Kyōto shakaigaku nenpō: KJS* 15 (2007): 141 – 168 (Recited citation from “Gunkanjima jissoku chōsa shiryōshū 1984” by Akui and Saga.)

⁵ Love Local Japan, Takashima Navi (2021), <http://takashima.nagasaki.jp/takashimanavi/top.html> (accessed 5 August 2021)

⁶ Kimura, “Industrial Heritage as Social Commons”.

⁷ Ibid.

European coal mining technology was implemented for the first time in Japan in Takashima's Hokkei Pit with the assistance of Scotsman Thomas Blake Glover. Glover accumulated wealth as an arms dealer, and became the manager and co-owner of Takashima.⁸ However, coal extraction was obstructed by riots and frequent mining accidents due to gas leaks, explosions, and flooding. Debts and salaries could not be paid, and the mine was bought from the Saga Domain and Glover at a fraction of its value by the Meiji government in 1874.⁹ The mechanisation process remained partial, and the managers continued to rely on the exploitation of low-skilled manual labour for coal extraction, including prison labour.¹⁰

The struggling mines were eventually purchased by Mitsubishi in 1881, along with the British machinery and equipment that the Japanese court had deemed could not be reclaimed by Glover and his investors.¹¹ Glover, who had experienced a significant loss of wealth, accepted a position within Mitsubishi as a servant and advisor at the Takashima mines.¹² By the end of the nineteenth century, Takashima Coal Mine had become one of the two most successful in Japan, employing hundreds of labourers.¹³

In the case of Hashima, coal mining activities by fishermen began as early as 1810. Due to the challenges of mining in undersea tunnels, ownership of the island changed hands multiple times before Mitsubishi purchased it in 1890. Building upon the experience and technology gained from Takashima, Mitsubishi operated Hashima Coal Mine and achieved financial success until its closure in 1974. By 1897, Hashima surpassed Takashima in terms of coal extraction, becoming the most significant branch of

⁸ Olive Checkland and Sydney Checkland, "British and Japanese Economic Interaction Under the Early Meiji: The Takashima Coal Mine 1868-88", *Business History* 26, 2, (1984): 139-155; John McMaster, "The Takashima Mine: British Capital and Japanese Industrialization," *The Business History Review* 37, 3 (1963): 217-239.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Miura Toyohiko, "Rōdōkan shiron (VI) – 20-seiki shotō no nippon no rōdōkan [A Review of Attitudes Towards Labour (VI) -Attitudes towards labour at the beginning of the 20th century in Japan]", *Rōdō kagaku* 70,7 (1994): 326.

¹¹ Himeno Junichi, "Shoki Takashima tankō no nichi-ei gōben kaisha to o-yatoi gaikokujin no yakuwari sairon - Sekai isan 'Meiji Nippon no sangyō kakumei' no bunseki shikaku [Reconsidering the Role of 'Employed Foreigners' in the Joint Venture between Japan and Britain in Early Takashima Colliery: An analytical view into the World Heritage of 'Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution']", *Nagasaki Gaidai ronsō* 21 (2017).

¹² Checkland and Checkland, "British and Japanese", 150.

¹³ The other was Mitsui's Miike Coal Mine. See Murakushi Nisaburō, "Coal Mining", *The Developing Economies* 17,4 (1979): 461-2.

Mitsubishi's Takashima mining complex.¹⁴ Initially covering only about 0.02 km² in 1890, Hashima underwent six artificial expansions between 1897 and 1907, increasing its size threefold.¹⁵

5.1.2 Adapting systems of violent and discriminatory labour management

As mechanisation advanced during the Meiji era, necessitating more labour for deep mining and increased coal output, new management systems emerged that drew upon violent and discriminatory labour practices prevalent in Japan. These systems, rooted in practices from the Edo period involving prison labour and forced labour of marginalised groups, persisted and evolved. Rather than moving away from such practices, the Meiji-era systems relied on deceptive coercion, debt bondage, and violent punishments to exploit vulnerable workers for coal extraction.

Takashima's joint European and Japanese management set a precedent for coal mining practices in the 20th century, predating Mitsubishi's involvement. Mainland recruits were trained under European overseers, who lived in luxurious accommodations on the island or in mainland Nagasaki.¹⁶ Language and cultural barriers complicated training, resulting in accidents and injuries.¹⁷ Low-skilled workers in the Saga Domain and Glover's Takashima Coal Mine faced dire conditions under the "bunkhouse system" (*naya seido*). Like *takobeya* labour in Hokkaido, it entailed bunkhouse foremen confining contracted workers in basic barracks or sheds with bunkbeds and providing rations and equipment needed for survival which costs were subtracted from their already miniscule salaries.¹⁸

¹⁴ Kimura Shisei "'Gunkanjima' wo meguru heritēji tsūrizumu no genjō to kadai [Developing industrial heritage tourism in Japan: A case study of 'Gunkanjima']", *Shakai jōhō* 19,2 (2010): 226.

¹⁵ Atsuko Hashimoto and David J. Telfer, "Transformation of Gunkanjima (Battleship Island): from a coalmine island to a modern industrial heritage tourism site in Japan," *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 12, 2, (7 April 2016): 107-124.

¹⁶ Checkland and Checkland, "British and Japanese"; Himeno, "Reconsidering the Role"; Ōyama Shikitarō, "Takashima tankō ni miru meiji zenki no oyakata seido no jittai [The actual conditions of the oyakata seido/ naya seido/ bunkhouse system at the Takashima mine in the early Meiji era]", *Ritsumeikan Keizaigaku* 4, 2 (1955): 178-221.

¹⁷ Himeno, "Reconsidering the Role", 7.

¹⁸ Buritanika kokusai daihyakkajiten, Naya-seido [Bunkhouse system], Kotobanku online database (n.d.). <https://kotobank.jp/word/%E7%B4%8D%E5%B1%8B%E5%88%B6%E5%BA%A6-108547> (accessed 5 August 2021)

Contracted labourers worked day- or nightshifts six days a week with frequent accidents.¹⁹ Ranking below the foremen were recruiters who satisfied the continuously increasing demand for low-skilled low-paid miners by convincing impoverished people to sign “no leave” contracts for dangerous mining labour.²⁰ This system of recruitment and labour, common for coal mines during the Meiji era, is known for high death rates and similarities to traditional prison labour. The viewpoint that these bunkhouse foremen of the Takashima Coal Mine and elsewhere had been violent capitalists akin to leaders of organised crime became prevalent in Japanese society in the 1930s.²¹

5.1.3 Inhumane treatment of labourers in the evolving bunkhouse system

After Mitsubishi Corporation bought the Takashima Coal Mine in 1881, and added the Hashima branch in 1890, it quickly became its largest and most profitable business.²² However, this success was marred by rampant labour exploitation, leading to national outcry over the coal mines’ practices. Investigative journalist Matsuoka Kōichi’s exposé in 1888 shed light on inhumane and fatal working conditions, sparking a heated public debate that ultimately forced Mitsubishi to improve the working conditions.²³

Matsuoka’s undercover article detailed around 3000 miners enduring constant supervision and physical abuse by overseers armed with wooden poles. They toiled 12-hour shifts in stifling tunnels. The controversial bunkhouse system subjected low-skilled labourers to confinement, inadequate accommodations, and wages deducted for survival necessities.

The Nagasaki Labour Union published research findings in 1972 which revealed that under Mitsubishi’s management during the Meiji era, attempted escapees were subjected to inhumane torture. A sometimes-fatal punishment involved hanging labourers upside

¹⁹ Himeno, “Reconsidering the Role”.

²⁰ Checkland and Checkland, “British and Japanese”.

²¹ Murakushi, “Coal Mining”, 478.

²² Mitsubishi Corporation, *Our Roots – A history of rising to the challenge – Yanosuke Plays Pivotal Role in Purchase of Takashima Coal Mine* (n.d.). <https://www.mitsubishicorp.com/jp/en/mclibrary/roots/vol11/> (accessed 5 August 2021)

²³ Ōyama, “The actual conditions”, 183-6; Miura, “Attitudes Towards Labour”.

down over a small fire until they screamed, followed by gagging and the insertion of firewood into their rectums.²⁴ Coal miner Yamamoto Sakubei's famous collection of paintings and diaries, UNESCO inscribed as Memory of the World in 2011, includes depictions of similar cruel torture of rule-breakers by their overseers.

Although the bunkhouse system was officially ended in 1897, it continued in a less brutal but similar form on Takashima and Hashima until 1941, when labour conscription and wartime foreign forced labour became the primary means of coal extraction.²⁵ After the end of the Meiji era in 1912, Mitsubishi constructed company houses of much higher standards than the bunkhouses on both islands.²⁶ Until the start of the Asia-Pacific War, the need for violent punishments diminished as highly increased wages motivated miners to willingly enter into working contracts, despite the awareness of the prevalent occurrence of fatal accidents.²⁷ During this period, high-earning miners were still considered low-class citizens by the general Japanese society.²⁸ Work in the mines continued to be extremely dangerous, and it made international news when a large explosion killed 307 workers in Takashima Coal Mine's Kakise shaft in 1906.²⁹

After the bunkhouse system was officially abolished, a modified management system was implemented and referred to as the "hamba-system". The term refers workers' group accommodation, "hamba", literally "food place". Hamba-foremen still controlled the food, wages, and punishments of labourers such as physical torture when deemed necessary. Testimonies indicate that also in the 1930s, Japanese labourers were recruited and sent to Hashima with advance debts for their stay in the bunkhouses (naya/hamba) and were beaten by the foremen in designated torture rooms of concrete. Rule-breakers

²⁴ Nagasaki rōdō kumiai undōshi hensan iinkai. Nagasaki rōdō kumiai undōshi monogatari. Online edition (1972): Chapter 2. <http://ntikurou.server-shared.com/story.htm> (accessed 5 August 2021).

²⁵ Nishihara Jun & Saitō Hiroshi, "Sangyō no risutorakucharingu-ki ni okeru tankō heizan to san-kaisō tankō rōdōsha no kisū [Closure of the coal mine during industrial restructuring and reactions of the three-tiered coal mine labourers]", *Jinbun chiri* 54, 2 (2002): 111; Ōyama, "The actual conditions", 216-8.

²⁶ Kimura, "Industrial Heritage", 152-3.

²⁷ Murakushi, "Coal Mining".

²⁸ Nishihara and Saitō, "Closure of the coal mine", 111-2.

²⁹ New York Times, "250 JAPANESE KILLED.: Explosion in the Takashima Coal Mine Near Nagasaki". 29 March 1906, The New York Times; Takeuchi Yasuto, Mitsubishi Takashima tankō e no Chōsenjin kyōsei renkō [Korean forced mobilisation to Mitsubishi's Takashima coal mine]. *Zainichi chōsenjinshi kenkyū* 33, (2003): 21-50. Accessed at <http://www.pacohama.sakura.ne.jp/kyosei/takasima.html> (5 August 2021)

were also assigned particularly dangerous working locations in the mines as a form of punishment.³⁰ While distinctions between bunkhouse and hamba systems are debated in Japan, my use of “bunkhouse system” encompasses the hamba-system. Note that the accommodation of wartime foreign forced labourers was referred to as “hamba,” but that living conditions and treatment by bunkhouse foremen during wartime were more akin to those of the Meiji era than the pre-war hamba-system.

5.1.4 Pre-war experimentation with Korean labour on Takashima and Hashima

Takashima and Hashima coal mines became unique points of reference for the wartime Japanese government when it started to forcefully mobilise Korean labourers in September 1939, in accordance with the National Mobilization Law.³¹ Mitsubishi already had decades of experience using Korean labour to increase coal extraction in their mines on these islands, and thus Mitsubishi’s reports were valuable to officials for making the mobilisation of Koreans and their labour more effective, as many other companies found it difficult to manage their new Korean labour forces.³² A 1940 Takashima report advised recruiting Koreans from Korea, preferably those with no prior mining experience to avoid “seditious tendencies,” and noted that Korean labourers proved useful for challenging tasks disliked by Japanese labourers.³³

Since Japan’s colonial occupation of Korea in 1910, Mitsubishi had systematically mobilised Korean labourers, who constituted around 10 percent of the total workforce on

³⁰ Ueno 1960, as cited by Itō Daiki, “Nagasaki gunkanjima ni okeru dāku tsūrizumu: ‘manazashi’ no kōchiku ni chakumoku shite [Dark tourism in Gunkanjima, Nagasaki: Focusing on the construction of the tourist gaze]”, *Hyōgo chiri* 63 (2018): 62.

³¹ Nagano Susumu and Kim Min-Young, “Senzen, Nippon sekitan sangyō ni okeru ‘Chōsenjin rōdōsha inyū’ no keika - 1940-nen (Shōwa 15 nen) ‘Chikuho sekitan kōgyōkai’ no shiryō wo chūshin toshite [The pre-war process of introducing Korean labourers to Japan’s coal industry - focus on 1940 documents from ‘Chikuho coal mining association’]”, *Saga daigaku keizai ronshū* 24, 4 (1991): 75-109; Takazane Yasunori, “Nagasaki to Chōsenjin kyōsei renkō : chōsa kenkyū no seika to kadai [Nagasaki and the forced mobilisation of Koreans: results and issues of the investigative research]”, *Ōhara shakai mondai kenkyūjo zasshi* 687(2016): 1-14; Takeuchi Yasuto, Mitsubishi kōgyō takashima tankō - Hashima tankō e no kyōsei renkō [Forced mobilisation to Mitsubishi Heavy Industry’s Takashima and Hashima Coal Mines]. Edited text based on lecture from 9 July 2017. Available online at http://www.eks.c.u-tokyo.ac.jp/event_back/170709/170709_takeuchi.pdf (accessed 5 August 2021).

³² Nagano and Kim, “The pre-war process”.

³³ Coal Mining Industry Association report from 1940 (Shōwa 15-nen sekitan kōgyōkai dai 2-gō A-a-11-147), as cited by Nagano and Kim, “The pre-war process”, 86.

Takashima and Hashima by 1918.³⁴ Pre-war Korean miners at Mitsubishi's coal islands enjoyed certain privileges and could attain promotions and comfortable housing, but faced discrimination, dangerous tasks, and deceitful salary promises.³⁵

Mitsubishi's pre-war Korean coal miners are not generally considered to have been forced labourers by either Korea or Japan. Within this thesis, only wartime labourers are defined as *forced labourers*. However, it is also important to note that some victims of colonial exploitation consider also pre-war Korean coal miners in Japan to have been forced labourers. Ku Yon-chol, whose father worked in the Hashima Coal Mine since the early 1930s firmly asserts that his father was a forced labourer from the outset, arguing that Japan's discriminatory and illegal colonial rule robbed impoverished farmers like his father of other opportunities and forced them to accept dangerous work in Japan.³⁶

5.1.5 Wartime foreign forced labour

During the Asia-Pacific War, increased demand for labour driven by Japan's war efforts, coupled with the conscription of Japanese labourers as soldiers, amplified the necessity for increased workforce. The National General Labour Mobilization Law of 1938 was amended in 1939, permitting Japanese companies to enlist Korean labourers with the assistance of colonial police and authorities starting from September of that year. Takeuchi Yasuto, a prominent researcher on Japanese colonial forced labour issues, estimates that approximately 800,000 Koreans were mobilised for forced labour in Japan during wartime.³⁷ Concurrently, Chinese soldiers and civilians and Allied POWs were also subjected to forced labour in Japanese facilities, including at several sites included in the Meiji Industrial Sites, yet no POWs worked on Takashima or Hashima. About 4,000

³⁴ Nagano and Kim, "The pre-war process", 86, 90; Shibata Hirotohi, "'Kioku' no mujintō Gunkanjima - Haikō no shima Nagasaki-ken Hashima [The deserted island of memories, Battleship Island - The abandoned mining island in Nagasaki Prefecture, Hashima]", *Senshūdaigaku shakai kagaku kenkyūjo geppō* No. 566-567 (2010): 69; Takeuchi, Korean forced mobilisation to Mitsubishi's Takashima.

³⁵ Takeuchi, Korean forced mobilisation to Mitsubishi's Takashima; Nagano and Kim, "The pre-war process", 86, 90.

³⁶ Ku Yon-chol interview.

³⁷ Takeuchi Yasuto, *Meiji Nippon no sangyō kakumei isan / kyōsei rōdō Q&A* [Meiji Japan's heritage of the industrial revolution / Forced labor Q&A] (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 2018).

Koreans were forced to work on the two islands during wartime, of which at least 1,000 worked on Hashima.³⁸

409 Chinese forced labourers were sent to Takashima and Hashima in 1944, out of which 30 did not survive.³⁹ Mitsubishi issued an apology and provided compensation after the Nagasaki District Court officially recognised Chinese victims of forced labour in 2007.⁴⁰

The practice of Korean wartime forced labour under colonial Japan evolved through three phases: recruitment (1939-1942), official mediation (1942-1944), and conscription (1944-1945).⁴¹ During the euphemistically entitled “recruitment phase”, Koreans could legally decline recruitment, but with threats and pressure from authoritarian colonial police, declining was usually unthinkable.⁴² Amid the official mediation phase, the Korean Labour Association facilitated labourer recruitment for Japanese enterprises. Police and local authorities collaborated to fulfil labour quotas, enforcing participation as necessary. The third phase, “conscription,” involved Japanese government authorities selecting Koreans for labour, with supervision by Korean military police and instances of physical violence against dissenting individuals.⁴³

Survivor testimonies compiled by Japanese and Korean community researchers, provide firsthand accounts of the coercion and hardships experienced by Korean forced labourers.⁴⁴ These accounts underscore the distressing conditions and abuses endured by

³⁸ Takazane, “Nagasaki and the forced mobilisation”, 13; Takeuchi, Takashima and Hashima Coal Mines; Takeuchi, *Q&A*, 86-88.

³⁹ Takeuchi, *Q&A*, 88-89, 102-3.

⁴⁰ Uematsu Seiji, “‘Shakai-shi rōdō-shi’ ga ketsuraku shite iru Sangyō isan jōhō sentā tenji” [“Industrial Heritage Information Centre exhibition lacking ‘social history and labor history’”], *Shūkan Kinyōbi Online*, 5 November 2020. <http://www.kinyobi.co.jp/kinyobinews/2020/11/05/news-82/>; Julian Ryall, “South Korea court ruling on Mitsubishi reopens old wounds with Japan”. Deutsche Welle (DW) 10 August 2017. <https://www.dw.com/en/south-korea-court-ruling-on-mitsubishi-reopens-old-wounds-with-japan/a-40044146> (accessed 14 March 2021).

⁴¹ David Palmer, “Foreign Forced Labor at Mitsubishi’s Nagasaki and Hiroshima Shipyards: Big Business, Militarized Government, and the Absence of Shipbuilding Workers’ Rights in World War II,” Marcel van der Linden and Magaly Rodríguez García, eds, *On Coerced Labor: Work and Compulsion after Chattel Slavery* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 169-77; Takazane, “Nagasaki and the forced mobilisation”; Tonomura Masaru, *Chōsenjin kyōsei renkō* [Forced mobilization of Koreans], (Tokyo: Iwanami shinsho, 2012); William Underwood, “Names, Bones and Unpaid Wages (1): Reparations for Korean Forced Labor in Japan,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal / Japan Focus* vol. 4 issue 9, 4 September 2006.

⁴² Tonomura, *Forced Mobilisation*, 81.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 112-16; Palmer, “Foreign Forced Labor,” 170.

⁴⁴ For example, Nagasaki zainichi Chōsenjin no jinken wo mamoru kai, *Gunkanjima ni mimi wo sumaseba: Hashima ni kyōseirenkō sareta Chōsenjin Chūgokuin no kiroku* [If you listen carefully to

these labourers throughout their time on the islands, paralleling aspects of Meiji era working conditions. Forced labourers worked 12 to 16 hours a day in dangerous undersea tunnels without adequate rations and protective gear. Violent punishments were common, and salaries not paid as promised.⁴⁵

Koreans who were forcibly mobilised under the National General Labour Mobilisation Law during wartime were subjected to even harsher abuses than those who were already living on the island and forced to continue working. Ku Yon-chol reports enduring ethnic discrimination, but notes that him and his family were able to continue living in the Hashima family apartments they resided in before the mobilisation law was implemented. In contrast, Koreans who arrived during the war were confined in extremely cramped group accommodations and were unable to obtain permission to leave the island.

While only men worked in Mitsubishi's coal mines on Takashima and Hashima, illiterate and impoverished or otherwise vulnerable Japanese and Korean women were coerced and deprived of freedom in order to serve as sex slaves for labourers on the islands.⁴⁶ "Comfort stations" for the Japanese army are well-known, but several coal mine owners including Mitsubishi on Hashima and Takashima created lesser-known "special comfort stations (Tokubetsu ianjo)" with "comfort women" for Japanese and Korean labourers in order to "encourage increased production and reduce escapes" during wartime.⁴⁷ Korean "comfort women" on Hashima and Takashima were segregated and confined in brothels or wartime "special comfort stations" for Korean labourers, with no hope of escape. This operation started before other forms of wartime forced labour, as indicated by the account of an 18-year-old Korean "barmaid (shakufu)" who committed suicide on Hashima by drinking cresol in 1937.⁴⁸ Cresol was commonly used as a disinfectant in Japanese

Gunkanjima: Records of Korean and Chinese forced into labor at Hashima] (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 2016),

⁴⁵ Takazane, "Nagasaki and the forced mobilisation", 8.

⁴⁶ Whether or not all women confined in Japanese "comfort stations" or "brothels" during wartime can be classified as victims of sexual slavery is disputed. Takeuchi Yasuto, for example, argues that the deceptive and coercive nature of recruitment and subsequent loss of freedom of movement cannot be described as voluntary sex work. However, it should be noted that even some members of Nagasaki's Korean community do not believe all Korean women providing sex for money on the islands during wartime were coerced or otherwise forced to do so (Kang Seong Choon, Mindan Interview).

⁴⁷ Takeuchi Yasuto, *Chōsa: Chōsenjin kyōsei rōdō – Tankō shu* [Korean Forced Labour Investigation: Coal Mines Volume] (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha: 2013), 265-67.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

“comfort stations,” and drinking it was a well-known way of resistance through suicide among Korean “comfort women”.⁴⁹

5.1.6 Mitsubishi’s withdrawal and relocation of cremated remains

Following Japan’s defeat in the war, most foreign workers departed the islands, making way for Japanese ex-soldiers and repatriates from lost territories.⁵⁰ Around 1960, Hashima accommodated nearly 5,300 inhabitants, yielding a population density reportedly nine times that of Tokyo during the same period.⁵¹ Despite overpopulation challenges, Hashima’s residents experienced a high standard of living, driven by generous salaries that offset the perilous work environment, which remained fraught with accidents.

Transitioning from coal to oil demand led Mitsubishi to close Hashima’s mines in 1974, causing swift and complete abandonment. Unclaimed human remains from Hashima, initially enshrined there, were transferred to an ossuary on Takashima named the Senninzuka (Thousand-person tomb).⁵² It was made in 1920 and already contained a mix of unnamed cremated human bones.⁵³ As the international coal market contracted, the Takashima mines endured catastrophic explosions even after the war, culminating in their closure in 1986.⁵⁴ As permanent Mitsubishi employees vacated, Takashima’s population dwindled significantly.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Yoshimi Yoshiaki and Yang Ching-ja, “Zainichi no moto Nippon-gun ‘ianfu’ no kaiso – Son Shindo-san no shōgen” [“Recollections of Korean former military ‘comfort woman’ residing in Japan - Song Sinto’s testimony”], *Chūō daigaku ronshū* no. 40, Feb. 2019.

⁵⁰ Hashimoto and Telfer, “Transformation”.

⁵¹ Nagasaki-ken Kankō Renmei, Gunkanjima [Battleship Island] (n.d.). <https://www.nagasaki-tabinet.com/guide/51797> (accessed 14 March 2021).

⁵² Kim Hyo Soon, “Remains of Unidentified Korean Conscripted Laborers Remain at Takashima Island”. Part of “Remembering and Redressing the Forced Mobilization of Korean Laborers by Imperial Japan” by Kim Hyo Soon and Kil Yun Hyung, *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 7-3-10 (2010); Takazane, “Nagasaki and the forced mobilisation”.

⁵³ Nagasaki rōdō kumiai undōshi hensan iinkai, “undōshi monogatari”, Chapter 3.

⁵⁴ Sankei News, “‘Sekai isan’ kankoku, Gunkanjima Takashima wo iku – ‘Kankoku no hanpatsu, rifujinda’ - Jimoto jūmin kara ikari no koe [Warned against travel to ‘World Heritage’ Battleship Island and Takashima – ‘Korean opposition is irrational’ – Furious voices of former residents]. 13 May 2015, *Sankei News*. <https://www.sankei.com/article/20150513-A5KEEX3M5ZPYZE7MWTFHRRGRDI/> (accessed 5 July 2021)

⁵⁵ Nishihara and Saitō, “Closure of the coal mine”.

By the 1970s when human remains from Hashima were added to the Senninzuka mix of cremated remains, the Senninzuka was already unknown to most of Takashima's locals.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, in 1988, Mitsubishi made the peculiar decision to relocate these remains yet again, this time to the nearby Takashima Konshōji Temple (a.k.a. Kinshōji Temple, based on a common reading of its Japanese characters⁵⁷). Local footage broadcast by the Nagasaki Broadcasting Company in the 1970s showed that the urns from Hashima were labelled with the names of both Korean and Japanese labourers when they were first interred in the Senninzuka ossuary. However, when the remains were moved to the Konshōji temple, the original urns were emptied, and the contents were placed in 115 cup-sized jars, only a few of which were labelled and only with Japanese names.⁵⁸ The Senninzuka ossuary was subsequently sealed with concrete.

Families of Korean labourers whose remains have been lost, as well as related associations, have found the relocation of the remains suspicious. Mitsubishi has responded by stating that the remains are of unknown origin, but that the company assumes (without providing any explanation) that the remains moved did not include those of Korean labourers. Mitsubishi claims that the sole reason for moving the remains to the temple was a desire to observe local customs.⁵⁹ The sealed Senninzuka ossuary may still contain remains of Korean labourers, if not all were put into unnamed urns in Konshōji temple.

In 1988, the same year Mitsubishi sealed the Senninzuka ossuary, the company erected a memorial for deceased miners by Takashima's Shinto shrine. The memorial denied the memory of forced labour by stating that Japanese, Korean and Chinese labourers "transcended race and nationality to share one heart in tending the flame of coal mining and sharing joy and sorrow together [...]"⁶⁰. The inscription infuriated Korean survivors, and when Mitsubishi refused to alter it despite protests from numerous Japanese civil groups, the plaque with the engraved text was smashed to pieces. Mitsubishi then replaced

⁵⁶ Nagasaki rōdō kumiai undōshi hensan iinkai, "undōshi monogatari", Chapter 3.

⁵⁷ 金松寺

⁵⁸ Kim Hyo Soon, "Remains".

⁵⁹ Takazane, "Nagasaki and the forced mobilisation".

⁶⁰ Translation from Kim Hyo Soon, "Remains".

the text with a flower relief.⁶¹

Bereaved Korean families and Korean and Japanese associations have previously pushed for Mitsubishi to investigate the remains and reveal details of their origin, but the company has refused. In 1992, Mitsubishi stated that such an investigation on human remains may harm the dignity of the spirits.⁶² The denial of access to family members' remains has caused personal trauma and perpetuates intergenerational transfer of the collective trauma of Japanese colonialism to younger generations of Koreans.⁶³

5.2 Collective memory of Takashima and Hashima - World Heritage inscription and the official forgetting of foreign forced labour

Japan's official memory of Takashima and Hashima has been deliberately shaped and refined over time, as part of the country's efforts to prepare for and respond to the World Heritage inscription of the Meiji Industrial Sites in 2015. While a thorough examination of this intricate process cannot be accommodated within the confines of this thesis, it can be found in my two-part article titled "Katō Kōko's Meiji Industrial Revolution – Forgetting Forced Labor to Celebrate Japan's World Heritage Sites," which has been partially utilised as the basis for this chapter.⁶⁴

5.2.1 The Outstanding Universal Value of Takashima and Hashima

In 2001, Mitsubishi Materials transferred ownership of the decrepit Hashima to the local Takashima government.⁶⁵ Since the closure of the Takashima mines, the Takashima community has been in dire need of opportunities to create new industries and jobs, which Hashima could have provided as a tourism site under Takashima's ownership. Although

⁶¹ A picture of the original plaque and text can be found for example in Takeuchi, Q&A, 95.

⁶² Kim Hyo Soon, "Remains"; Takazane, "Nagasaki and the forced mobilisation".

⁶³ Takazane, "Nagasaki and the forced mobilisation".

⁶⁴ Johnsen, "Katō Kōko's Meiji Industrial Revolution" Part 1 and 2.

⁶⁵ Mitsubishi Materials, *History of Mitsubishi* (2021).

<http://carbide.mmc.co.jp/magazine/article/vol07/16242> (accessed 24 March 2021).

plans to make Takashima a base for Hashima tourism were discussed and created, they were not implemented due to unsolvable issues related to dissonant memories of wartime foreign forced labour.⁶⁶ Following the merger of Takashima's government with that of Nagasaki City in 2005, Nagasaki City assumed ownership of Hashima.

Local efforts to World Heritage inscribe Hashima were already underway before plans for a serial nomination materialised. In 1999, former Japanese post-war residents of Hashima led by Sakamoto Dōtoku had launched a campaign to inscribe the island as a World Heritage site, in order to facilitate remembrance of the post-war Hashima community and protect the island from illegal visitors and natural deterioration.⁶⁷ Hashima island was not opened for tourism until 2009, but it had been rediscovered in the 1980s and since featured in Japanese popular entertainment for its atmospheric landscape of urban ruins.⁶⁸ Hashima since became known as an iconic abandoned island also outside Japan, especially after featuring in the James Bond movie *Skyfall* in 2012 as the antagonist's secret base.⁶⁹

Sakamoto's efforts to have Hashima listed as a World Heritage site were unsuccessful because the island failed to meet UNESCO's requirement of demonstrating Outstanding Universal Value (hereafter, OUV). OUV is defined as "cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity."⁷⁰ Arguably, Hashima could demonstrate OUV if its colonial history and wartime foreign forced labour was acknowledged, but powerful politicians and many former Japanese Hashima residents oppose historical narratives of Japan as a wartime perpetrator.

The Meiji Industrial Sites were successfully World Heritage inscribed in 2015 due to the

⁶⁶ Kimura, "Industrial Heritage as Social Commons".

⁶⁷ Ide Interview. Several Japanese former residents wished for Hashima to be preserved as a site of memory of its former (post-war) community and opposed romanticisation of its ruinous scenery and urban exploration detrimental to its fragile buildings.

⁶⁸ See for example Japanese movies "Jun" (1980), "The Kamikaze Adventurer" (1981), "Dioxin from Fish!!" (1991), and "Attack on Titan" (2015), as well as music videos including B'z's "My Lonely Town" (2009), and internationally popular Japanese video game "Forbidden Siren 2" (2006).

⁶⁹ Joshua Synenko, "Geolocating popular memory: Recorded images of Hashima Island after *Skyfall*." *Popular Communication* 16(2), 8 November 2017: 141-153.

⁷⁰ Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (WHC.19/01 - 10 July 2019), Paragraph 49. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/compendium/100>

persistent efforts of Katō Kōko, an urban renewal expert intrinsically linked to Japan’s ruling party, the Liberal Democratic party (LDP). Since 2005, Katō worked with elite Kyushu businessmen and politicians as well as with the central government to facilitate a serial inscription of multiple industrial sites that together could satisfy the requirement for OUV, without presenting colonial and wartime history. Ultimately, 23 component sites relevant to Japan’s Meiji era industrialisation were recognised to demonstrate “the first successful transfer of Western industrialism to a non-Western country.”⁷¹ Katō claims that this transfer was “complete” in 1910, excluding the colonial occupation of Korea from the narrative.⁷² Eight of the inscribed component sites have a history of wartime foreign forced labour that was not acknowledged in Katō’s recommendations for World Heritage inscription (see Table 2 below).

Table 2 – Meiji Industrial Site components with a history of wartime Korean forced labour

| Site Component | Location | Owner |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Hashima Coal Mine | Hashima Island, Nagasaki | City of Nagasaki (previously Mitsubishi Materials Corporation) |
| Takashima Coal Mine | Takashima Island, Nagasaki | |
| Mitsubishi No.3 Dry Dock* | Nagasaki Shipyard | Mitsubishi Heavy Industries |
| Mitsubishi Giant Cantilever Crane* | | |
| Mitsubishi Former Pattern Shop | | |
| Miike Coal Mine and Miike Port | Ōmuta and Arao | Nippon Coke and Engineering |
| The Imperial Steel Works* | Kita-Kyushu (Yahata) | Nippon Steel Corporation |
| Hashino Iron Mining and Smelting Site | Kamaishi | City of Kamaishi (previously Nippon Steel Corporation) |

*- Sites still in operation

⁷¹ World Heritage Committee, WHC.15 /39.COM /19, Decisions adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 39th Session, Bonn, Germany, 28 June - 8 July 2015, 222.

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/39COM>

⁷² Visitors to Katō’s Industrial Heritage Information Centre in Tokyo are informed that the “transfer of Western industrialisation” to Japan was complete when “the world first acknowledged Japan as an industrial nation” at the Japan-British Exhibition held in London in 1910. However, upon asking the official guide (trained by Katō), it was confirmed that there are no known existing records of anyone associated with the London exhibition expressing any form of such acknowledgement (11 July 2022).

Both Hashima and Takashima coal mines were natural inclusions in the serial nomination of the Meiji Industrial Sites, but for different reasons. Economic benefits serve as a significant motivation for many countries seeking World Heritage site listings. The inscription of sites can lead to enhanced economic gains through increased tourism, job creation, and improved infrastructure.⁷³ Precedents in Japan linking World Heritage inscriptions to increased tourism is not limited to the country's many listed temples and shrines, but also include the "Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape" inscribed in 2007.⁷⁴ Hashima's popularity due to its unique and iconic visual appearance spoke to its tourism potential as a World Heritage site. Unsurprisingly, tourist numbers rose steadily as the World Heritage inscription process proceeded, before dramatically increasing after successful inscription in 2015.⁷⁵

It was natural to include Takashima coal mine in the inscription because its history as Japan's first mechanised mine justifies the inscription of Hashima as a significant site of memory of Meiji-era industrialisation. As the pioneering Takashima is the most significant of the two islands to a narrative of Meiji-era coal mine mechanisation, it would not be justifiable to only inscribe Hashima coal mine with this historical focus. However, no Meiji-era buildings remain on Takashima and what remains of the World Heritage inscribed Hokkei pit is nothing but a sealed hole in the ground. There is not much to preserve or display at the Hokkei Pit, and the mine's history as the first in Japan with a British water pump is insufficient for enticing mainstream tourism. Hashima's coal mine is also sealed and visually unimpressive from the outside, but unlike the inhabited Takashima, it is surrounded by iconic and picturesque—to some even sublime—ruins which are included in virtually all promotion of the World Heritage site.

⁷³ UNESCO, "Socio-economic Impacts of World Heritage Listing" (n.d.).
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/socio-economic-impacts/> (accessed 23 June 2023).

⁷⁴ Ide Akira, *Higeki no sekai isan – Dāku tsūrizumu kara mita sekai* [World Heritage of tragedy: The world seen through dark tourism] (Tokyo: Bunshun shinsho, 2021), 75-79.

⁷⁵ David Palmer, "Gunkanjima / Battleship Island, Nagasaki: World Heritage Historical Site or Urban Ruins Tourist Attraction?" *The Asia-Pacific Journal / Japan Focus*, vol. 16, issue 1, no. 4, Jan. 1, 2018.

5.2.2 Behind the memory politics of the Meiji Industrial Sites

In July 2015, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and Korea ultimately accepted the World Heritage inscription of the Meiji Industrial Sites on the condition that Japan acknowledged that “a large number of Koreans and others [...] were brought against their will and forced to work under harsh conditions in the 1940s at some of the sites.”⁷⁶ Japan stated it was “prepared to incorporate appropriate measures into [an] interpretive strategy to remember the victims such as the establishment of [an] information center.”⁷⁷ Immediately after, Kishida Fumio, who served as Foreign Minister of Japan at the time, held an extraordinary press conference stating that the phrase “forced to work” did not mean “forced labour.”⁷⁸ Japan ratified the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) Forced Labour Convention of 1930, but argues that Koreans under colonial rule were legally conscripted as Japanese nationals and that POW’s forced to work were not forced labourers due to POW labour being legal in wartime. Chinese forced labourers are ignored in these defensive claims, and so is the ILO which asserted in 1999 that “the massive conscription of labour to work for private industry in Japan under such deplorable conditions was a violation of the [1930 Forced Labour] Convention.”⁷⁹

The National Congress of Industrial Heritage, founded by Katō Kōko in 2013, was, after the successful inscription in 2015, tasked by the government with gathering information on the history of foreign labourers at the Meiji Industrial Sites for the promised information centre. However, its chairman, Kojima Yorihiro, was in 2015 also on the board of directors of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.⁸⁰ Furthermore, a number of significant members within the National Congress of Industrial Heritage had previously held leadership positions within the corporate conglomerates culpable of wartime forced labour.⁸¹ Acknowledging victims could lead to defamation and lawsuits. On the other hand, successfully producing and presenting celebratory stories of these companies’

⁷⁶ WHC.15 /39.COM /INF.19, pp. 222.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Extraordinary Press Conference by Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, 5 July 2015. https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/kaiken/kaiken4e_000181.html

⁷⁹ ILO, Observation (CEACR) - adopted 1998, published 87th ILC session (1999). https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO::P13100_COMMENT_ID:2172187

⁸⁰ Johnsen, “Katō Kōko’s Meiji Industrial Revolution..., Part 2.”

⁸¹ Ibid.

contributions to Japan’s “miraculous” modernisation could greatly boost their public relations. Comparing Table 2 above with Table 3 below indicates potential conflicts of interest among members. Unsurprisingly, the National Congress of Industrial Heritage has not acknowledged any evidence of wartime forced labour or ethnic discrimination at the Meiji Industrial Sites.⁸²

Table 3 – NCIH members with potential conflicts of interests

| Role within the NCIH | Name | Previous roles in conflict with revealing forced labor history |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Chairman | Kojima Yorihiro | Started Mitsubishi Corporation career in 1965, becoming company President (2004–2010), Chairman (2010–2016), Advisor to the Board of Directors (2016–2020); Board of Directors for Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (2010–2016) |
| Honorary Chairman | Imai Takashi | Military student at the Imperial Japanese Naval Academy during wartime. Started Nippon Steel Corporation career in 1952, and became company President (1993–98), Chairman (1998–2003), and Honorary Chief Board Advisor (2003–n.d.) |
| Director (1 of 16) | Ījima Shirō | Head of Nagasaki Shipyard as the Director of Ship and Marine headquarter of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (n.d.–2010), Direct assistant to company President (2010–n.d.) |
| Director (1 of 16) | Yagi Jūjirō | Started Nippon Steel Corporation career in 1965, and served as company Vice President and Director of Engineering (2003–2005) |
| Councilor on Board of Trustees | Marukawa Hiroyuki | Former Nippon Steel Corporation employee. Head of Nippon Steels’ public relations center in 2008 |
| Advisor | Hayashida Hiroshi | Advisor to Nippon Steel Engineering (subsidiary of Nippon Steel Corporation) in 2015 |

The Industrial Heritage Information Centre opened in Tokyo in June 2020, with Katō Kōko as its executive director. Katō Kōko has been funded by the Japanese government, after its denial of wartime forced labour, to collect evidence of the wartime working conditions of foreign labourers and to present the “full story” of the Meiji Industrial Sites in the information centre as required by UNESCO. Katō Kōko had served as Special Advisor to the Cabinet in charge of industrial heritage inscription and tourism promotion

⁸² Cabinet Secretariat of Japan, State of Conservation Report - Sites of Japan’s Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding, and Coal Mining (Japan) (ID: 1484), 30 January 2023

when preparing the centre (2015-2019).⁸³ Not only does the centre not exhibit any evidence of forced labour, it also actively attempts to distort history by claiming that discrimination did not occur because Japanese and Koreans worked together as “family”. The centre presents celebratory narratives of Meiji-Japan’s technological advancement, while distorting the experiences of labourers, including those of Japanese low-skilled labourers.

Although wartime foreign forced labour occurred at eight of the 23 Meiji Industrial Sites, Hashima, being a popular tourism site, has received the most attention from both revisionists and their critics. One of the information centre’s three exhibition zones is dedicated to Japanese memory of wartime Hashima, or rather, to Japanese denial of foreign victims of the island. The information centre’s Hashima zone features large portraits and edited video interviews of former Japanese Hashima residents selected by Katō Kōko. Based on their own childhood memories, these elderly former residents deny that forced labour and ethnic discrimination occurred on the island. The testimonies of foreign victims or Japanese who were adults during wartime are not featured. The “testimonies” denying forced labour history are also featured on a revisionist website edited by Katō named “the Truth of Gunkanjima” which is funded by the Japanese government through the National Congress of Industrial Heritage.⁸⁴

On my visit to the Industrial Heritage Information Centre on 11 July 2022, the Chief Guide who himself is a former Hashima resident, Nakamura Yōichi, introduced Hashima as an island victimised by fabricated Korean accusations. One of his arguments was that Korean labourers had access to “brothels” managed by Koreans, and could thus not have been forced labourers. He claimed that because the boss of the Korean “brothel” was a Korean, the women could not have been victims of sexual slavery. Nakamura suggested that testimonies of Korean labourers may have been edited after their death, falsely claiming that there were no Koreans with personal memories of forced labour at Hashima still alive at the time. Nakamura named Ku Yon-chol as a false witness of forced labour,

⁸³ Nihon Keizai Shimbun, “Naikaku kanbō san’yo ni Katō-shi ninmei sangyō isan tōroku ni muke [Katō appointed as Special Advisor to the Cabinet – Towards Industrial heritage inscription]”, 2 July 2015.

⁸⁴ National Congress of Industrial Heritage, The Truth of Gunkanjima, homepage. <https://www.gunkanjima-truth.com/l/en-US/> (accessed 25 June 2023).

stating that Ku's father would not have sent for his family to live on Hashima if Koreans were abused. In order to justify the denial of Ku's testimonies, Nakamura falsely claimed that wartime Hashima was no different from pre-war Hashima. Nakamura further claimed that the centre had sent "countless letters" to Ku to establish a dialogue about his experience. Shortly after this I directly confronted Ku Yon-chol with these claims. He was not aware that his name was being abused and stated that he has not received a single letter from anyone related to the Tokyo information centre.⁸⁵ A video attempting to defame Ku and deny his memories is featured on the "Truth of Gunkanjima" website, clearly signalling that Katō and the National Congress of Industrial Heritage have no desire for genuine dialogue with Ku Yon-chol.⁸⁶

Inquiring about the nature of Chinese wartime labour on the island, Nakamura ignored official court rulings and stated that the Chinese labour was "too light (karui)" to be considered forced labour. Katō Kōko, who personally trained the guides, has never attempted dialogue with victims and has consistently implied to Japanese media that the forced labour history of the Meiji Industrial Sites has been fabricated by Koreans.⁸⁷

After inspecting the Industrial Heritage Information Centre in June 2020, UNESCO expressed "strong regrets" over Japan's failure to honour the agreement of acknowledging foreign victims forced to work at the industrial World Heritage sites. Japan was given a deadline of December 2022 to rectify its historical distortions, but it responded in January 2023 that "[i]t has endeavoured to base its interpretation on objective facts, such as by properly exhibiting primary sources of clear provenance and testimonies verified to have a degree of credibility."⁸⁸ In other words, Japan insisted that the memory of selected former Hashima residents refutes forced labour history at the Meiji Industrial Sites while testimonies of foreign victims are deemed to have no "degree

⁸⁵ See Nikolai Johnsen, "Coming to terms with Korean forced-labor history." *Korea JoongAng Daily*, 14 October 2022. <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2022/10/14/national/diplomacy/hashima-korea-japan/20221014164953231.html> (last accessed 10 March 2023).

⁸⁶ National Congress of Industrial Heritage, "Video Message 'Who is Yeon Cheol Koo?'" <https://www.gunkanjima-truth.com/l/en-US/article/Video-Message-%E2%80%9CWho-is-Yeon-Cheol-Koo-%E2%80%9D>

⁸⁷ Johnsen, "Katō Kōko's Meiji Industrial Revolution, Part 1"; "Part 2".

⁸⁸ Cabinet Secretariat of Japan, State of Conservation Report - Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding, and Coal Mining (Japan) (ID: 1484), 30 January 2023, p. 3. (https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/sangyousekaiisan/seikaiisan_houkoku/221130.html)

of credibility”. I asked several official guides at the Industrial Heritage Information Centre in June 2023 about changes or additions to narratives of foreign labourers after UNESCO’s warning and deadline the year before, but they were not aware of any relevant adjustments having been made.

5.2.3 Korean collective memory of wartime forced labour in Japan, Official demands for compensation, and fluctuating Korea-Japan relations

Refer to [Appendix V.II.III](#) and [V.II.IV](#) for a more comprehensive discussion of how dissonant collective memories of wartime labour mobilisation have affected Korea-Japan relations.

The documentation of vernacular memories of wartime Korean forced labour began in the 1960s, with ongoing efforts by researchers and activists in Japan and Korea.⁸⁹ Legal battles brought Korean forced labour history to public attention in the 1990s, yielding high court acknowledgment but limited compensation because the 1965 Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea held that all matters of war compensation had been resolved.⁹⁰

Mitsubishi Materials’ apologies and compensation deals with Chinese plaintiffs ensued, while Korean victims’ recognition remained elusive. Amid mounting tensions, Japan’s export restrictions in 2019 triggered a nationwide “Boycott Japan” movement in South Korea, impacting trade and amplifying collective memory of imperial Japan and its forced labour programme.⁹¹

The recent memory politics of Korean governments have been inconsistent. President Mun Jae-in of the Democratic Party of Korea (2017-2022) vehemently opposed Japanese claims that all matters pertaining to wartime forced labour had been resolved. However, both his right-wing predecessor, Park Geun-hye, and successor, Yoon Suk Yeol, were

⁸⁹ See for example Kim Hyo Soon, “Remains”; Erik Ropers, “Testimonies as Evidence in the History of *kyōsei renkō*”, *Japanese Studies*, 30,2 (2010): 263-282.

⁹⁰ Miki Y. Ishikida. *Toward Peace: War Responsibility, Postwar Compensation, and Peace Movements and Education in Japan*, E-book (Lincoln: iUniverse, 2005), 38-9.

⁹¹ See Appendix V.II [Korean collective memory of wartime forced labour in Japan](#)

willing to overlook the victims' plight to improve Korea-Japanese relations and economic cooperation. In 2015, two years before her impeachment, Park Geun-hye controversially reached an agreement with then-Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzō to “finally and irreversibly” resolve the “comfort women” issue.⁹² The official agreement re-traumatized survivors, whose opinions were ignored, and was subsequently nullified by Mun Jae-in.⁹³ In March 2023, ahead of the first Korea-Japan summit in 12 years, Yoon Suk Yeol's government announced a “solution” to the forced labour issue in the form of “voluntary” contributions from Korean companies to Korean victims.⁹⁴

President Yoon's “solution,” which once again disregarded the victims' voices and was opposed by a significant portion of the Korean public, was welcomed by Japan which reinstated Korea to its “whitelist” of preferred trading nations. However, diverse groups within the Korean and Japanese public continue to support the victims in their fight for Japanese recognition and a genuine apology.⁹⁵ A prominent and recent example is the creation of a temporary exhibition named “The Story of Victims Behind the Wartime Industrial Heritage” at the official War Memorial of Korea (June to September 2023), which revealed the extent of foreign forced labour at the Meiji Industrial Sites and the Sado Mines⁹⁶ and displayed video recordings of victim testimonies. The exhibition material was created with the cooperation of researchers, private museums and NGOs from Korea, Japan, and the United States.⁹⁷

⁹² Jack Kim and Ju-min Park, “South Korea, Japan agree to irreversibly end 'comfort women' row,” *Reuters*, 28 December 2015. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-southkorea-comfortwomen-idUSKBN0UB0EC20151228> (accessed 25 June 2023).

⁹³ See Miki Dezaki and Momoko Hata. *Shusenjo: Comfort Women and Japan's War on History* (United States: No Man Productions LLC 2019), Film.

⁹⁴ The Hankyoreh, “Yoon's ‘solution’ to forced labor issue is historically regressive,” Editorial, 7 March 2023. https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/english_editorials/1082559.html (accessed 25 June 2023).

⁹⁵ Al Jazeera, “South Korea restores Japan to trade white list amid warming ties,” 24 April 2023. <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2023/4/24/south-korea-restores-japan-to-trade-white-list-amid-warming-ties> (accessed 25 June 2023).

⁹⁶ See Johnsen, “The Sado Gold Mine”.

⁹⁷ Visited on 10 June 2023.

5.2.4 Hashima as a symbol of Korean forced labour and colonial suffering

Despite Hashima's approximately 1,000 Korean forced labourers constituting only a fraction of the estimated 800,000 Koreans forced to work in Japan during wartime, media-focus on Hashima as a controversial heritage site popular with tourists have made the island the most representative site of Korean forced labour in contemporary Korean collective memory. The Korean search Engine Naver returns more than one thousand Korean news articles published since 2010 that include both keywords "Hashima" and "Jiokseom" (Hell Island), which indicates how firmly Hashima is established in Korean collective memory as a site of colonial suffering. However, not all depictions accurately reflect historical facts, which can create opportunities for historical denialists to cast doubt on the personal memories of victims. This complicates efforts to research and raise awareness about related historical events, as well-researched facts may appear as understatement of Japanese war crimes when compared to the deeply rooted Korean collective memory, which is partly based on misleading information and a mix of fact and fiction.

While the general history of wartime forced labour in Japan is well-known in Korea, specific sites other than Hashima are not. However, Takashima and its Senninzuka tomb has also been made known to the Korean public through the highly popular entertainment TV program *Muhan Dojeon* (Infinite Challenge). On the episode aired 15 September 2015, Seo Kyoung-Duk and Korean reggae singer Haha visited both Hashima and Takashima Island, revealing to the Korean audience how Mitsubishi's Senninzuka had been concealed by vegetation and forgotten. After the episode aired, Seo Kyoung-Duk was contacted by a large number of Korean viewers who wanted to travel to the Senninzuka to commemorate Korean victims of forced labour. As a result, he returned to Takashima with volunteers who cleared the hidden path of vegetation and created a YouTube video with detailed instructions on how to reach it.⁹⁸ Although the *Muhan Dojeon* episode successfully highlighted the existence of Takashima and its forgotten tomb, it has been criticised for presenting an overly simplistic and dichotomous

⁹⁸ Seo Kyoung-Duk Interview; Shidae Cheongnyeon, "Takashima Gongyangtap [Takashima memorial]". YouTube video posted 19 October 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMleKRMcxYw> (last accessed 11 March 2023)

relationship between suffering Korean forced labourers confined underground and Japanese perpetrators enjoying a pleasant and comfortable lifestyle on the islands.⁹⁹

Hashima became known to the Korean public earlier than Takashima. In 1991, The Pacific War Victims Association (of Korea) requested and obtained official lists from the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of approximately 100,000 Koreans who worked in Japan between 1925-1945, which was matched with discovered cremation details of 122 Koreans that died on Hashima during this period.¹⁰⁰ The same year, the *Hasima hangugin huisaengja yujokhoe* (Association for bereaved families of Korean Hashima victims) was formed in Korea and a group of Korean family members of Hashima victims visited and embarked on the island.¹⁰¹ In 1992, it was publicised in Korean news media that a total of 500 Koreans had been estimated to have worked on Hashima between 1925-1945¹⁰²—a very low estimate that misleadingly implied an extremely high death rate when presented together with records of 122 Korean deaths.

In 2003, Korean author Han Susan published his popular five-volume fact-based fiction novel *Kkamagwi* about Koreans forced to work on Hashima during the Asia-Pacific War.¹⁰³ The author, who worked with human rights activists in Nagasaki including Oka Masaharu to collect data, holds that all descriptions of abuse endured by Koreans in the book are based on historical facts.¹⁰⁴ *Kkamagwi*, which resurrected “Hell Island” as a

⁹⁹ Yoojin Choi, “Industrial miracle or Hell Island? Gunkanjima, television, and nationalism in South Korea and Japan”, *Popular Culture and the Transformation of Japan–Korea Relations*, Edited by Rumi Sakamoto and Stephen Epstein (Routledge E-book, 2020): chapter 9.

¹⁰⁰ Yonhap, “Ilje Hashima tangwang jingyong samangja myeongdan cheot gonggae [Name list of conscripted workers at Hashima coal mine that died under Japanese colonial rule made public for the first time]”, *Yonhap News*, 30 October 1991.

<https://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=102&oid=001&aid=0003514950> (accessed 29 April 2021).

¹⁰¹ Kimura, “Industrial Heritage as Social Commons”, 149.

¹⁰² Mun Yeongsik, “Hanguk jingyongsamangja yugajok, Il-e yugolbanhwan jeonggu [Families of Koreans who died during conscripted labour requests Japan to return their remains]”, *Yonhap News*, 18 February 1992,

<https://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=104&oid=001&aid=0003584998> (accessed 29 April 2021).

¹⁰³ The novel’s shortened Japanese edition released as “Gunkanjima” in 2009 was also well-received in Japan selling 40,000 copies. See Shin Junbong, “‘Pongnyeok nanmuhan Gunhamdoneun Ilbon gungukju-ui apjuktoen gonggan-ieotta’ [The extremely violent Battleship Island was a space of compressed Japanese militarism]”, *JoongAng Ilbo*, 13 August 2017. <https://news.joins.com/article/21840245> (accessed 29 April 2021).

¹⁰⁴ Han Susan, Interview with Han Susan by Kim Gwangil, *The Chosun Ilbo*, 10 June 2003. https://www.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2003/06/10/2003061070302.html (accessed 29 April 2021).

familiar name for Hashima in Korea, maintained public attention and was adapted for a theatrical play of the same name in 2016.¹⁰⁵

According to the Korean government, seven Korean Hashima survivors were reported to be alive in 2015.¹⁰⁶ Among these survivors, Bak Jungu, Choe Jangseop, Kim Hyeongseok, and Yi Inu have been extensively featured in Korean media over the past decade. Their testimonies, covered by Korean media, have made their memories on Hashima of forced labour, discrimination, and severe abuse domestically well-known.

Although Korean news reports regarding forced labour on Hashima and other sites are generally reliable, occasional erroneous representations by Korean sources portray wartime Hashima as resembling a Nazi death camp rather than acknowledging its wartime history of utilising foreign forced labour in support of Japan's wartime efforts. A significant example is the frequent misquoting of the official 2012 Korean investigative report based on Hashima cremation records. The original report states that out of the 122 Korean deaths recorded between 1925 and 1945, 27 deaths could be confirmed to be that of Korean victims of forced labour.¹⁰⁷ Not all Korean workers on Hashima since 1925 can be said to have been mobilised against their will, as the pre-war recruitment of Korean labourers for Hashima may not always have been dependant on elements of coercion. Two of the Korean survivor testimonies analysed in the report describe voluntary employment on Hashima turned into forced labour in the final years of the war by forced contract renewals.¹⁰⁸ Out of the recorded 122 deaths, an additional 27 (22.1%) were that of Korean children under the age of five, which included stillborn babies.¹⁰⁹ However, many of Korea's major news outlets such as Yonhap News, KBS News, JoongAng Ilbo, the Kukmin Ilbo, and the Seoul Shinmun have, citing this investigation, erroneously reported that 122 Korean forced labourers or conscripted labourers died on Hashima

¹⁰⁵ Seo Seungjin, "Jingyongui han... Han Susan soseol 'Kkamagwi' mudae [the han of conscripted labour... Han Susan's novel 'Kkamagwi' adapted for the theatrical stage]", *Kookmin Ilbo*, 3 November 2016. <http://m.kmib.co.kr/view.asp?arcid=0923637531> (accessed 29 April 2021).

¹⁰⁶ Yun Yongmin, "Geullojeongsindae simin moim, 3~7il il gangjejingyong chiyok tapsa [Women's labour force citizen meeting, forced conscription survey in Japan from 3rd to 7th]", *News 1*, 1 June 2015. <https://www.news1.kr/articles/?2258449> (accessed 4 May 2021).

¹⁰⁷ Yun Jihyeon, *Basic Investigation through Death Records*, 279.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 356-357.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 319.

between 1925 and 1945.¹¹⁰ The 122 Korean deaths have also been erroneously reported to have all occurred in the wartime period from 1943-1945 by trusted news sources such as (the inconsistent) KBS News, Busan Ilbo, News 1 Korea, Herald Gyeongje and Asia Gyeongje.¹¹¹

Entertainment media that mix facts with fiction to induce emotional responses from their audiences for a stronger impact may also feed Korean collective memory with historically inaccurate images. A prominent example is the 2017 feature film *Gunhamdo* (The Battleship Island) directed by Ryoo Seung-wan and starring renowned Korean actors Hwang Jung-min, So Ji-sub, Song Joong-ki and Lee Jung-hyun. The movie, which was seen by over 3 million Koreans within four days of its cinematic release, depicts large numbers of Korean forced labourers on Hashima dying gruesome deaths in accidents and at the hands of Japanese overseers. In the film's climax, Korean forced labourers

¹¹⁰ See for example Choi Young-yun, "Oegyo-bu 'Il Gunham-do jeon-si 'ganghan yugam' jeondal... si-jeong jokku' [Ministry of Foreign Affairs – 'Japan's Battleship Island exhibition brings out 'strong negative feelings' ... calls for correction]", *KBS News*, 24 July 2020. <http://news.kbs.co.kr/news/view.do?ncd=4478458&ref=A>; Seo Seung-uk, "Ddo Han dwittongsu jin Il... Gunkam-do jeon-sihamyeo 'Joseon-in chabyeol daeu eopseotda' [Japan backstabbed Korea yet again... Claims 'there was no discrimination against Koreans' in Battleship Island exhibition]", *JoongAng Ilbo*, 14 June 2020. <https://news.joins.com/article/23801019>; Jo Gyeong-gi, "'Mudo' ye-go-pyeone teung-janghan Hashima-seom 'jiok-seom' euro pullyeo... Ilche-gangjeom-gi han-guk-in nodong-ryeok sut'al changso [Hashima Island appearing in the Infinite Challenge trailer is called 'Hell Island' ... A place of labour exploitation of Koreans during Japanese occupation]", *Kookmin Ilbo*, 30 August 2015. <http://news.kmib.co.kr/article/view.asp?arcid=0009803648&code=61181111&cp=nv>; Kim Jeong-eun, "'Il gamok-seom' han-in samangja 122myeong [122 Koreans died on 'Japanese prison island']". *Seoul Shinmun*, 5 October 2012. <http://www.seoul.co.kr/news/newsView.php?id=20121005011010>; Yonhap, "'Ilje 'gamok-seom' Hashima gangje-dongwon shiltae-bogoseo gonggae [Investigation report of forced labour on Japanese colonial 'prison island' Hashima made public]", *Yonhap News*, 4 October 2012. <https://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=100&oid=001&aid=0005849196> (all accessed 29 April 2021).

¹¹¹ See for example Hwang Hyeon-taek, "'Il Abe, ibeonen 'Gunham-do jeonshi-gwan' bangmun... 'Joseon-in chabyeol pibang mullichyeoya' [This time Japan's Abe visited the 'Battleship Island exhibition hall' ... 'We must eradicate defamation regarding discrimination of Koreans']", *KBS News*, 23 October 2020. <http://news.kbs.co.kr/news/view.do?ncd=5032249&ref=A>; Kang Jong-gyu, "'Milmul sseolmul – 'Jiok-seom' [High and low tides – 'Hell Island']", *Busan Ilbo*, 5 October 2012. <http://www.busan.com/view/busan/view.php?code=20121005000092>; Jang Yong-seok, "'Il 'Gunham-do' taepung pihae... Geonmul gidung muneojyeo [Japan's "Battleship Island" damaged by typhoon... Building pillars collapse]", *News 1 Korea*, 10 September 2020. <https://www.news1.kr/articles/24054698>; Yi Chang-ho, "'Yi Chang-ho kallom_ Ilbon 'Gunham-do' reul tonghae bon ilbon-ui wiseon [Yi Chang-ho Column_ Japan's hypocrisy seen through Japanese 'Battleship Island']", *Herald Gyeongje*, 22 June 2020. <http://news.heraldcorp.com/view.php?ud=20200622000303>; Yi Sang-guk, "'Gunham-do jiokdo paektu-chekeu' - Chukgu-jang 2bae myeonjeok Gunkam-doeseo joseon-in 122myeong ttejugeum ['Battleship Island Hell Island fact check' - Mass death of 122 Koreans on Battleship Island which is the size of two football fields]", *Asia Gyeongje*, 29 July 2017. <http://www.asiae.co.kr/news/view.htm?idxno=2017072915395766581> (all accessed 29 April 2021).

collectively tear apart a large imperial Japanese Rising Sun flag for use as ropes for their fictional mass escape from the island. The film utilises nationalistic narratives and imagery with high potential to affect the emotions and collective memory of its audience, contributing to the reconstruction of “Hashima as a place for Koreans to commemorate the forced labour victims and shame the Japanese [...]”.¹¹² *Gunhamdo* was sold to 155 countries, and in order to “promote historical awareness,” special screenings were arranged in Seoul and Paris for UNESCO members, international diplomats and related stakeholders.¹¹³ However, hopes for this nationalistic blend of fact and fiction to raise global awareness of Korean forced labour history appear largely unfulfilled.

5.3 Hashima tourism and memories of forced labour

Hashima is popular with tourists not because it officially represents Meiji Era industrial modernisation or because of its coal mine which is listed as World Heritage. Few visitors are particularly interested in the island’s wartime history. Instead, it attracts visitors with its distinct visual allure, stemming from the concentration of abandoned and deteriorating buildings from the Taishō and Shōwa Eras.¹¹⁴ Most people in Japan are not aware of the specific OUV of the Meiji Industrial Sites and are led to believe that the whole of Hashima Island and its unique landscape is officially recognised as World Heritage.¹¹⁵ By presenting the official history of Hashima in the Tokyo Industrial Heritage Information Centre in Tokyo, Hashima is left in its popularised condition as the ever deteriorating “Battleship Island.” In this way, it can continue as a tourism playground, void of explanatory signs that might deter tourists enticed by the visual appeal of a picturesque ghost island reclaimed by nature.

¹¹² Deborah Dixon, “From Becoming-Geology to Geology-Becoming: Hashima as Geopolitics”, *Political Geology*, edited by Adam Bobbette and Amy Donovan (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 159; Ryoko Nakano, “Heritage Soft Power in East Asia’s Memory Contests: Promoting and Objecting to Dissonant Heritage in UNESCO”, *Journal of Contemporary Eastern Asia* 17, 1 (2018): 60.

¹¹³ Kim Hui-seon, “‘Gunham-do’ Pariseo Yuneseuko oegyogwan shisahoe... ‘gukchejeok gwanshim chokgu’ [Special Paris screening of ‘the Battleship Island’ for UNESCO and diplomats... ‘Seeking interest internationally’]”, *Yonhap News*, 31 July 2017. <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20170731057500005?input=1195m> (accessed 29 April 2021).

¹¹⁴ Palmer, “Gunkanjima.”

¹¹⁵ Kim Young-hwan interview; Kang Seong Choon in Mindan interview.

Visitors interested in the official narratives of Hashima may travel from Nagasaki about 1,000km to the Tokyo information centre, or explore official webpages and pamphlets. Train stations, tourist information counters, and ticket offices near Meiji Industrial Site components provide official 22-page information pamphlets written by Katō Kōko.¹¹⁶ These free pamphlets are abbreviated versions of the 72-page booklet given to visitors of the Tokyo information centre, which contains descriptions of World Heritage inscribed sites identical to those on the official website of the Meiji Industrial Sites.¹¹⁷ Descriptions of Hashima and Takashima celebrates technological advances and Mitsubishi's success on the islands, with no mention of any labourers from any time period.

The sole legal means of visiting Hashima as a tourist is by joining a tour organised by one of the five private companies authorised to disembark on the island, namely Yamasa Shipping, Gunkanjima Cruise, Seaman Company, the Gunkanjima Concierge Company, and Dai-7 Ebisumaru.¹¹⁸ These are exclusively in Japanese, with the exception of Yamasa Shipping which offers Chinese and English-speaking guides on specific days. The promotional materials of the companies refer to Hashima as “Battleship Island” or alternatively in Japanese as “Gunkanjima”, as the island's actual name is not widely recognised.

The Gunkanjima Concierge Company provides a booklet of the guides' narrations translated to English and their tours are popular for including entry to the Gunkanjima Digital Museum in Nagasaki. It is the only company recommended for Hashima tours on Lonely Planet's websites.¹¹⁹ None of the Hashima tour companies acknowledge the wartime history of foreign forced labour. Instead, they focus on popular nostalgic post-colonial narratives from the time when the island was most densely populated and labourers were highly paid, only mentioning the Meiji Era industrialisation as historical

¹¹⁶ The backside of the pamphlet state that it was “Directed and Written by Koko Kato.” See Katō Kōko, Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution, information pamphlet (n.d.).

¹¹⁷ Katō Kōko, Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution, website.
<http://www.japansmeijiindustrialrevolution.com/en/> (accessed 25 June 2024).

¹¹⁸ The first four are well-known tour companies for Hashima while the latter, Dai-7 Ebisumaru is a lesser known organiser of fishing trips and visits to Hashima for smaller groups at higher prices. See homepage <http://www.7ebisumaru.com/cruise/>

¹¹⁹ Lonely Planet, “Gunkanjima”, webpage.
<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/japan/kyushu/nagasaki/attractions/gunkanjima/a/poi-sig/1555019/356734> (accessed 25 June 2023).

context on the way to the island.¹²⁰

I have, previous to conducting research, participated in a tour of Hashima by the Seaman Company in 2013, embarking and exploring the short tour route on which tourists are allowed to walk. Due to visa-related issues stemming from Japan's reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, my time for fieldwork in Japan was limited to one month, of which eight days were spent in Nagasaki. As a result, I participated in only one tour to Hashima, this time by the Gunkanjima Concierge Company which also operates the "Gunkanjima Digital Museum" in Nagasaki. Due to rough seas on my day of participation (25 July 2022) the ferry could not dock on Hashima, and instead continued to circle closely around the island while the guide provided the narration intended for the walking route. Given that the accessible areas of Hashima are the same across all tour providers and the tour route has remained unchanged since my initial visit, along with the omission of any discussion on the island's history of forced labour by the tour companies, these limitations did not have a substantial impact on the gathering of relevant data. I was able to obtain the full audio recording of another Gunkanjima Concierge Company tour from the same year in which the ferry successfully docked on the island,¹²¹ and I examined an English translation of the guide's manuscript which was handed to me as a foreign tour participant. However, a significant limitation was that tourist visas to Japan were suspended during my fieldwork and I was unable to observe and communicate with any foreign tourists to Hashima while in Nagasaki.

5.3.1 Gunkanjima Digital Museum

Admission to the Gunkanjima Digital Museum is included in tours to Hashima offered by the Gunkanjima Concierge Company, both of which are owned by the Nagasaki-based Universal Workers Co.. Although this museum is operated privately, it is discussed here as it is a popular museum endorsed by the Japanese government for reflecting official narratives. The appendix of the 2020 interpretation strategy report for the Meiji Industrial

¹²⁰ Ide Interview; Kang Seong Choon in Mindan interview.

¹²¹ The recording was made by a tour participant.

Sites by the Cabinet of Japan stated that the museum's digital content is "extremely reliable" for conveying "key messages."¹²² The Gunkanjima Digital Museum website links to the website of Katō's National Congress of Industrial Heritage, and an exhibition on the museum's top floor specifically celebrates Katō and her efforts to facilitate the World Heritage inscription of the Meiji Industrial Sites. Pamphlets created with the support of the National Congress of Industrial Heritage claiming Hashima's forced labour history has been fabricated by Koreans are part of this exhibition.¹²³ An adjacent screen features a video interview with the Chief Guide of the Tokyo Industrial Heritage Information Centre, Nakamura Yōichi. The executive director of the museum, Kuon Yuko, has known Katō since 2000 and describes herself as a "fan" of Katō, complimenting her persistence to facilitate World Heritage status for the Meiji Industrial Sites despite widespread opposition.¹²⁴ Due to the museum's endorsement by the government of Japan and its cooperation with Katō, the museum's narratives may be considered as semi-official.¹²⁵

The Gunkanjima Digital Museum is technologically well-made, featuring four floors of immersive and interactive digital experiences that offer interpretations of life on Hashima, both during and after wartime. Visitors can view digital versions of Hashima's ruins from all angles through interactive screens and by using virtual reality. Most exhibitions feature English text and selectable narration in English. The museum presents Hashima as a nostalgic site of memory worthy of celebration, while glossing over and revising difficult history.

During the introductory video of Hashima which plays every 30 minutes in the first exhibition space, a human guide narrates that Japanese and Koreans worked together as family on Hashima during wartime. When I inquired to this guide about the historical sources for this claim, I was informed that they come from testimonies of former residents.

¹²² Cabinet of Japan, Interpretation strategy Appendix 1, 30 November 2020, 58-59.

https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/sangyousekaiisan/seikaiisan_houkoku/pdf/201130/siryou_jp02.pdf

¹²³ A digital version is accessible through the "Truth of Gunkanjima" website. <https://www.gunkanjima-truth.com/l/en-US/library/Brochures-issued-by-Hashima-Islanders-for-Historical-Truths-Vol-1>

¹²⁴ Interview with Kuon Yuko by Maruyama Akane, 12 May 2020, Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution webpage. <http://www.japansmeijiindustrialrevolution.com/en/people/202005122146.html> (accessed 25 June 2023).

¹²⁵ Seo Kyoung-Duk interview.

The guide implied that memories of forced labour have been fabricated by Ku Yon-chol, and that no other evidence exists. The guide then brought up the “comfort women” issue in a similar way to the chief guide of Tokyo’s information centre, claiming that Japan could not have been responsible because the women were recruited by other Koreans, and compared “comfort women” of imperial Japan to post-war Korean sex workers serving US army personnel in Korea.

Legitimising wartime special “comfort women” as regular sex workers appears to be on the agenda of the museum. It does not differentiate between life on the island before, during, and after the war. A digital information panel describing “fun for adults” on Hashima states that “women, enjoyed shopping, fashion and mindless chatting” while “there was a licensed red light district as an entertainment place for adult men” (original text as it appears in English). A video exhibition specifically about “*yūjo*” (a euphemism for “female sex workers”), exclusively in Japanese, presents the women as “beauties of Hashima” worthy of remembrance and emphasises that both *yūjo* and their male clients in the Korean “brothel” on Hashima were Koreans.

The museum and the Gunkanjima Concierge Company have created a Hashima mascot (*yuru-kyara*) which features heavily in the museum’s promotional materials as well in its digital exhibitions and gift store. The mascot, named Ganshō-kun,¹²⁶ is a rock reef with a human face wearing Hashima with its concrete buildings as a hat. One of the museum’s most promoted attractions is an elaborate MR (Mixed Reality) game in which participants collect digital artifacts and mine for digital coal in the museum with Ganshō-kun, made visible by a head-mounted wireless “holographic” computer display.¹²⁷ Participants move around a partial replica of Hashima while competing to collect the highest amount of coal and battling cartoon-like enemies representing water leaks and smoke. Rather than reflecting actual life and working conditions on the island, the MR game, like the mascot and the museum itself, makes light of the exploitation of coal miners and foreign forced labourers to provide a pleasant and entertaining tourism experience.

¹²⁶ The name “Ganshō-kun” is loosely translatable as “Mr. Rock Reef” or “Rock Reef Boy”.

¹²⁷ I tested the game when visiting the museum on the day of my Hashima tour on 25 July 2022.

5.3.2 Ferry to Hashima

Four of the five Hashima tour companies offer two tours a day on ferries with capacities ranging from 120 to 220 passengers.¹²⁸ It is not uncommon for tours to be cancelled due to bad weather, and fairly common that ferries circle the island rather than docking for disembarkation due to high waves. However, on most days about 1,000 visitors may disembark on Hashima. From the time that tourism to the island started in 2009 until the COVID-19 pandemic heavily affected tourism in 2019, over 1.8 million people visited Hashima on these ferries.¹²⁹ All four larger companies depart from Nagasaki City, following a similar route to Hashima. Except for Gunkanjima Cruise, which briefly embarks on Takashima for 30 minutes en-route to Hashima, the ferries take about 30-45 minutes to reach Hashima.

As the ferry leaves Nagasaki Port and moves along Nagasaki Bay for about 15 minutes before reaching open seas, passengers get clear views of several of the other World Heritage inscribed Meiji Industrial Site components. On my tour with the Gunkanjima Concierge Company, the guide continuously introduced these as we passed by, commenting that the “Battleship Island” tour could in fact be called a Nagasaki World Heritage Tour. The first World Heritage site visible is Glover’s residence in Glover Garden, prompting the guide to introduce Glover as the first foreigner to work with Mitsubishi to mechanise its coal mines. After passing the historical trade post of Dejima, the ferry passes the World Heritage listed Mitsubishi Giant Cantilever Crane, the Mitsubishi Senshokaku Guest House, and the Mitsubishi No.3 Dry Dock. While the World Heritage status and impressive technological specs of the sites are emphasised, there is no mention of the wartime foreign forced labour history of the Giant Cantilever crane and the No.3 Dry Dock.

Although the wartime history of forced labour is ignored, other wartime history is mentioned on tours of the Gunkanjima Concierge Company. For example, it is mentioned

¹²⁸ Excluding the much smaller Dai-7 Ebisumaru.

¹²⁹ Calculated from Nagasaki City Statistical Yearbook 2020 available on Nagasaki City’s official websites. <https://www.city.nagasaki.lg.jp/syokai/750000/754000/p036349.html>

that the No.3 Dry Dock survived wartime air raids. More noteworthy is the fact that the guide celebrates Mitsubishi's Nagasaki shipyard as the site of Battleship Musashi's construction. The guide, showing pictures of the Battleship Musashi before it was sunk during World War II, boasts that it was the largest battleship in the world together with its sister ship, Battleship Yamato. It is highly inappropriate to include any celebratory narratives of war on a tour to an infamous site of wartime forced labour, and narratives of these battleships may be considered especially insensitive as they are well-known icons of admiration by Japanese nationalists and revisionists. It is possible that the Gunkanjima Concierge Company is aware of this issue, as the extensive narration of Musashi's war capabilities is excluded from the English translation of the guide's manuscript.¹³⁰

5.3.3 Sightseeing on Hashima and selective memories

Arriving on Hashima, if the weather permits docking, tour participants follow their guide on the clearly marked and highly limited sightseeing path. The less than 300 meters long walking route which only covers the southern part of the island incorporates three observation stops, allowing participants to move slowly and spend approximately 45 minutes on land to take pictures and listen to their guide's narrations. All buildings remaining on the island were built post-Meiji, except parts of a Meiji-era brick wall, visible from the walking path. The sealed entrance to the coal mine is obscured by ruins, but stairs leading to the former entrance are visible.

The guide's narration is focussed on the post-war use of visible buildings and former residents' post-war memories of life on the concrete island. The buildings used to accommodate Korean forced labourers are not visible from anywhere accessible to visitors.¹³¹ The final observation point is adjacent to the former location of bunkhouses for Chinese forced labourers, and for many participants the highlight of the tour, the

¹³⁰ The booklet with the tour guide's full manuscript translated to English is handed to foreign tour participants when boarding the ferry to Hashima and recollected upon return to Nagasaki terminal.

¹³¹ Ku Yon-chol interview. While access to most parts of the island is barred for safety, Ku Yon-chol interprets it as a strategy to deliberately obscure sites of difficult memory. Ku experienced extreme disappointment when he returned to Hashima in 2016 but was not allowed to walk to his former home on the island.

derelict Building no. 30.¹³² This seven-story concrete apartment building from 1916 is celebrated as Japan's first high-rise apartment building. Chinese forced labourers and their segregated accommodation are not mentioned.

The Gunkanjima Concierge Company tours incorporate some wartime history when on the island.¹³³ The largest apartment building on the island, No. 65, was built during wartime with large quantities of concrete and iron. The guide clarifies that this was unique because iron, essential for producing arms, was scarce during wartime and was collected by the military from households and temples, and churches. However, wartime life on the island is not narrated apart from a brief mention of air raids.

The guide states that in the 84 years Hashima Coal Mine was in operation, there were 215 workers who died in accidents. Post-war working conditions, the only working conditions mentioned, are described as harsh with temperatures around 37°C and humidity at 95%. However, the guide filters the memories of post-war coal miners' hardships through a celebratory narrative of industrial development and masculine heroism, rather than allowing critical reflection on the conditions and treatment of labourers. For example, the guide's manuscript states that after a full day of working in such conditions, the miners emerged "smiley but [with] black face[es] that even their family could not recogni[se]".¹³⁴ About the response to fatal accidents, the guide's manuscript states the following:

"Usually coal miners were rough and fighting but whenever they faced the death of their colleagues, they talked in soft voices with gentle expressions especially when putting bodies in the coffin. The workers kept speaking to the dead in the shaft because people said that the soul of the dead in the shaft remained inside the mine and might cause more trouble. [...] When the body came up to the surface, it was carried through a wall of fellow workers. They said 'You are back now.' 'Your family is with us now to see you.' Then, the coffin was handed over to the family. It was a moving moment."

Foreign labourers are mentioned with limited context following the above narration. The

¹³² Kang Seong Choon in Mindan interview.

¹³³ Although the tour I participated in by this company was unable to embark on Hashima, the English translation of the guide's manuscript includes the narration for after embarkment.

¹³⁴ The Gunkanjima Concierge Company, English guidebook (n.d.).

context is limited to the extent that, unless tour participants have pre-existing knowledge, they cannot know who, when or why there were foreign labourers on the island. The guide's manuscript states as follows:

“The workers who lost their lives include those foreign labourers [who] contributed to the development of modern Japan. They supported the foundation of Japan. Please give a thought to those who lost their lives here including the foreign labourers while staying on the island.”

This narration allows The Gunkanjima Concierge Company to claim that foreign victims are remembered, without providing any reference to wartime forced labour and its intended purpose to support imperial Japan's warfare and aggressive colonial expansion. The foreign victims were forced to aid imperial Japan in attacking and/or oppressing their nations by producing coal for warfare, but their history is distorted to commemorate them as courageous supporters of Japan. During the colonial period, Japan denied the national identity of Koreans and treated them as second-class Japanese nationals.¹³⁵ This commemoration of foreign victims on the tour functions as a form of revisionism that perpetuates revictimization by denying the true nature of forced labourers as oppressed victims of imperial Japan.¹³⁶

Virtually all aspects of life on Hashima are presented through a frame of masculine nostalgia, seemingly attempting to enforce a positive collective memory of the island's history in tour participants. On some tours, the guide mentions “brothels” amongst the former entertainment facilities on the island, but wartime realities and general female perspectives are distorted. Talking about general life on the island, the guide's narrative states that Hashima “was said to be the heaven to all women because the majority of the population was men. There were many fights and quarrels between men because of women.”

About the island's jail, the guide's manuscript states that “[i]t is said that no one

¹³⁵ See for example Mark E. Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea 1910-1945* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2009)

¹³⁶ This form of commemoration as revisionism is comparable to that of the Yasukuni shrine where soldiers who died serving imperial Japan, including Koreans conscripted against their will, are enshrined and commemorated as war heroes.

committed a crime to be put into the jail. However, drunks were sent there to spend the night to sober up.” About the coal mine’s closure in 1974, the manuscript states that it was a “win-win” situation for both Mitsubishi and its employees because coal extraction was no longer efficient but “the workers were skilful and employable at other sites.” Furthermore, it states that even after the mine’s closure, the “local people in Nagasaki were still proudly talking about Hashima coal mine.” However, even former Hashima residents denying its forced labour history have described disappointment to realise the local people of Nagasaki believed the island to be a prison colony and still referred to it as “Hell Island” after its abandonment.¹³⁷

When time and circumstances permit, the ferry makes a complete circle around Hashima before returning to mainland Nagasaki. During this tour, the guide highlights the most popular spots and angles for “Battleship Island” photography. Passengers are able to get clear views of the island’s north and west sides, which are not visible from the walking path. Views include buildings containing basements that accommodated Korean forced labourers and the adjacent former “red-light district” where “special comfort stations” stood during wartime.¹³⁸ The ferry also passes close by Nakanoshima Island, a small island near Hashima where those who died in Hashima’s coal mines were cremated, including Korean forced labourers whose remains are assumed to have been moved to Takashima’s Senninzuka ossuary and Konshōji temple.

5.3.4 Behind the memory politics of the Gunkanjima Concierge Company

Hashima tour companies like the Gunkanjima Concierge Company are aware of the criticism directed at Japan for not acknowledging the history of forced labour on the island. These companies are faced with a difficult predicament since they cannot explicitly acknowledge or deny the victims of wartime forced labour. If they were to

¹³⁷ National Congress of Industrial Heritage, “Ms. Harue Kobayashi and Ms. Kiyoko Adachi, both former residents of Hashima Island,” Edited video interview on the Truth of Gunkanjima website, 28 May 2021. <https://www.gunkanjima-truth.com/l/en-US/article/Ms-Harue-Kobayashi-and-Ms-Kiyoko-Adachi-both-former-residents-of-Hashima-Island>

¹³⁸ The buildings, described as “brothels” in the Tokyo Industrial Heritage Information Centre and the Gunkanjima Digital Museum, were wooden structures that have been destroyed by typhoons.

acknowledge foreign victims, they would go against the interests and political stance of the government, risking their lucrative permission to bring tourists to the World Heritage site. On the other hand, denying forced labour history could result in criticism from a significant portion of the Japanese population, as well as from international stakeholders, which could lead to controversy surrounding their tours. As a result, the companies attempt to “remember” abstract foreign labourers while “forgetting” their voices and historical context.

Upon reaching the mainland at the end of my tour by the Gunkanjima Concierge Company, I approached the guide to inquire about the absence of information regarding the situation of the “foreign labourers”. There is no time to ask questions either on the ferry or if one successfully disembarks on the island. Perhaps because I presented myself as a researcher from the United Kingdom, the guide answered diplomatically that because there are contradictory opinions and interpretations of wartime foreign labour history on the island, the Gunkanjima Concierge Company is awaiting further evidence before incorporating detailed narratives of foreign labourers into their tours. A Japanese participant on a different tour by the same company attempted to ask the same question in December 2022.¹³⁹ Immediately after the guide concluded their narration on Hashima, the Japanese tour participant attempted to raise a question but was abruptly interrupted before being able to complete the question. The participant managed to say, “I have a question. During wartime, about 1,000 Koreans and 200...”. However, the guide swiftly interjected, stating that the question would be addressed upon reaching Nagasaki terminal.

When embarking in Nagasaki, the tour participant was guided to the office of Kuon Ryūji, owner and CEO of Universal Workers, Co. which owns and operates both the Gunkanjima Concierge Company and the Gunkanjima Digital Museum. Kuon Ryūji is the husband of Kuon Yuko, the executive director of the museum. When the Japanese tour participant arrived at the CEO office, both Kuons were waiting for him. For a full hour, the Kuons made persistent efforts to persuade the Japanese participant that the history of forced labour was an outdated misinterpretation with no evidence to support it.

¹³⁹ The Japanese tour participant shared his experience in detail through a private email forum for activists and researchers.

Considering their disproportionate response to a Japanese tour participant interested in forced labour history and the contents of their digital museum, it is clear that the Kuons are not simply restricted by Japan's memory politics. Instead, they are actively and seemingly passionately attempting to mould the collective memory of Japanese visitors and invalidate the memories of foreign wartime victims.

Managers of other tour companies may or may not share similar agendas. Korean researcher and activist Kim Yeonghwan joined a different Hashima tour a few years prior and asked his guide if there were Koreans in Hashima's coal mine and what they were doing there. In response, the guide simply uttered meaningless filler words, unable to make a coherent sentence. It appeared to Kim Yeonghwan that the guide knew about Korean labourers but had been instructed not to speak about their history.¹⁴⁰

5.3.5 Tourist perceptions of Hashima's tourism narratives

Most tourists to Hashima appear uninterested in forced labour history and rate their experience there highly. On Jalan.net, one of Japan's most popular travel websites, the average user rating for Hashima is 4.4 out of 5 stars, based on 1,272 reviews.¹⁴¹ Most positive reviews on the website do not mention guides or historical narratives, but instead praise the visual impact of the island, several commenting that it truly looks like a battleship. Out of the 29 users who rated Hashima only one or two stars on the Japanese website, many complained about the walking route being too restricted or being unable to disembark on Hashima due to weather conditions. None of these mentioned anything about the island's wartime history.

In 2017, 102 Japanese tourists to Hashima were interviewed about their visitation motives as part of a field study on dark tourism.¹⁴² Not one single participating tourist said they

¹⁴⁰ Kim Yeonghwan Interview.

¹⁴¹ As of April 2023. See Jalan.net, "Hashima (Gunkanjima)", webpage. https://www.jalan.net/kankou/spt_42303ab2050121811/kuchikomi/page_2/?screenId=OUW2202&reviewRefineCompanion=all&reviewRefineMonth=all&resultSort=ra

¹⁴² Itō Daiki, "Nagasaki gunkanjima ni okeru dāku tsūrizumu: 'manazashi' no kōchiku ni chakumoku shite" ["Dark tourism on Battleship Island, Nagasaki: Focusing on the construction of the tourist gaze"]. *Hyōgo chiri* 63, 2018, 57-76.

had been motivated by the chance to learn about either Japan's modernisation and the history of the industrial revolution or wartime forced labour history. The most common motivations cited by the tourists were the perceived World Heritage status of the entire island (rather than just the coal mine), the island's scenery, and a general interest in visiting ruins. Some of the tourists were intrigued by their guide, who had been a former resident of Hashima and had experienced post-war hardships, but others found the narration distracting from the sightseeing and photography experience. The researcher concluded that there is a market for dark tourism in Japan that focuses on narratives of Japanese suffering on Hashima, but not for narratives that portray the Japanese as perpetrators.

There are no available statistics for the ratio of non-Japanese visitors to Hashima, but unsurprisingly due to its location in Nagasaki and the lack of promoted tours in English, only a small fraction of visitors appears to be foreign tourists. On Tripadvisor.com, Hashima has, at the time of writing, been rated by 350 users in other languages than Japanese, of which 194 are in English. The average rating of English reviews for Hashima is 4.2 out of 5.¹⁴³ Many English five-star reviews point out that the island is a unique sight, and that it featured in the James Bond film "Skyfall." There were 16 English poor reviews (one or two stars), of which the most common complaints are disappointment over the limited walking route and the lack of English guiding. In addition, three of the poor reviews pointed out that foreign forced labour history is omitted from the tour. Several positive reviews also pointed this out, as if the reviewers wanted to recommend a visit but not without prior knowledge of history denied by tour operators.

Very few Koreans visit Hashima, and major Korean tourism websites do not have webpages and reviews for such tours. TripAdvisor has ten Korean reviews, most of which are centred around forced labour history. A Korean four-star review from 2017 impactfully describes mixed emotions that visiting Koreans may feel:

¹⁴³ As of 29 April 2023. The majority of reviews for Hashima are by Japanese-speaking users. Therefore, the average rating of English reviews was calculated manually. See TripAdvisor, "Hashima Island", webpage. https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g298568-d1384788-Reviews-Hashima_Island-Nagasaki_Nagasaki_Prefecture_Kyushu.html

*“It appears that one cannot get near Hashima without the help of Japanese tour operators. However, if you visit the island as a Korean through a Japanese tour company, you will have to deal with the extreme contrast between the perception of Hashima among Japanese people and that of Koreans. Even so, visitation is so meaningful that it is worth enduring such difficulties.”*¹⁴⁴

Naturally, not all Koreans would share this opinion, but the results of the survey conducted for this thesis suggests that a significant ratio of potential Korean visitors would agree.¹⁴⁵ 63.2% of respondents agreed that they may consider a visit to Hashima despite its forced labour history being officially denied, as they can find other sources to learn more before visiting. On the other hand, 26% responded that they would not be interested in visiting Hashima even if the Japanese government acknowledged its wartime history of Korean forced labour. Although only a portion of the Korean population may find a visit to Hashima sufficiently valuable, many individuals in this group are still likely to consider it a worthwhile experience despite the unavoidable presence of historical denialism and celebratory narratives of those culpable of Korean forced labour.

5.4 Takashima tourism and memories of forced labour

I visited Takashima for three days over the weekend from 25 July 2022. The first day I was accompanied by Japanese peace activist and volunteer guide Kimura Hideto and Korean novelist Jin Hyeonseok. Kimura, a retired schoolteacher and volunteer helper at the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum (hereafter Oka Masaharu Museum), speaks English and Korean and has vast experience guiding foreigners to sites of wartime memory in Nagasaki and its vicinity. For three days prior to visiting Takashima, I travelled with Kimura to a series of relevant sites, including Sakidojima and Nomozaki peninsula.¹⁴⁶ Jin Hyeonseok is the author of the fact-based fictitious novel

¹⁴⁴ “Hyein R,” “Mosuni gadeukan ingoui sigan [A time of perseverance full of contradictions],” TripAdvisor user review of Hashima translated from Korean, posted 22 November 2017. https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g298568-d1384788-Reviews-or10-Hashima_Island-Nagasaki_Nagasaki_Prefecture_Kyushu.html

¹⁴⁵ See [Appendix VI Survey and Data Analysis](#).

¹⁴⁶ Sakidojima is another nearby island where Mitsubishi owned coal mines and used Korean forced labour during wartime. Nomozaki Peninsula is the closest part of the mainland to Hashima and Takashima

Takashima (2022) about Korean forced labourers on the island. Jin has visited Takashima a number of times and pinpointed the locations of former accommodation for forced labourers, “comfort stations”, and other sites of wartime memory based on available maps and records.

5.4.1 Current tourism on Takashima

In contrast to the case of Hashima, anyone can board a 30-minute shuttle ferry from Nagasaki to Takashima and explore the island freely. There are eight daily departures from Nagasaki Port Terminal to Takashima, and the ticket system is identical to that of most railways in Japan, not requiring advance reservations. The majority of passengers appear to be locals from Takashima stopping by Nagasaki City for grocery shopping, and locals from Nagasaki City on daytrips to Takashima’s beach and/or fishing spots. The public transport ferry ride provides the same views of Nagasaki Bay and its component Meiji Industrial Sites as the ferries taking tourists to Hashima.

Takashima and its history are not well-known in Japan, and only a small minority of Japanese would be able to identify the island on a national map. While the conflict between Japan, UNESCO, and Korea regarding the official interpretation of foreign wartime labour history of Hashima and the Meiji Industrial Sites have been publicly and widely discussed in the country, Takashima specifically has not received widespread attention. In Japanese media, the most significant mention of Korean forced labour on Takashima is perhaps in the book “A testament to my daughter Matsuzaka Keiko” by Matsuzaka Hideaki published in 1993.¹⁴⁷ Matsuzaka Keiko is a Japanese iconic actress whose Korean father escaped Takashima Coal Mine during wartime.¹⁴⁸

Apart from its World Heritage Site and potential for educational dark tourism, the

and was the primary destination for escape attempts from these two islands.

¹⁴⁷ Mindan Interview. Title translated from Japanese: “Musume Matsuzaka Keiko he no ‘yuigon.’”

¹⁴⁸ Matsuzaki Hideaki came to Japan during the colonial period as a 15-year-old and settled in the country using his Japanese name after escaping Takashima. He applied himself for advertised lucrative work on Takashima, using his Japanese name, but was abused by his “bunkhouse foreman” who never paid the promised salaries. He could hear the screams of labourers being tortured for escape attempts from inside his bunkhouse. See Takeuchi, Korean forced mobilisation to Mitsubishi’s Takashima.

subtropical Takashima Island can be an ideal tourism destination for both leisure and adventure. It has a well-developed sandy beach complete with showers and lifeguards, a popular fishing site, a hot-spring spa, a hotel, a small supermarket and a kiosk, and a few restaurants which open irregularly for a few hours a day. The island is home to the Japanese reggae group Rainbow Music, which runs the ferry terminal cafeteria and souvenir store and frequently arranges beach events and concerts adding flavour to the island's unique contemporary culture.

Takashima Island is home to about 360 people, as mentioned, in addition to a high number of healthy stray cats being cared for by dedicated locals. Whether strolling along the main roads or exploring abandoned streets overgrown with lush vegetation, visitors will frequently encounter groups of contented cats lounging in shaded areas.

Cars can be rented swiftly from the Takashima port, but healthy adventurers can easily explore the whole island by foot. There is also a bus circling the island which usually departs soon after ferry arrivals. The island's hotel, the four-story Goheita, was built when Takashima Coal Mine was still operational and most of its many rooms are now usually vacant. During my three-day stay in the Goheita, I saw two other groups of guests, both Japanese families. As the island is small and the ferry ride brief, most visitors do not require accommodation on the island unless they desire to enjoy the island's tranquillity for longer.

Takashima's visual appeal is dominated by the central Mt. Gongen (198m), covered in verdant foliage. A scattered series of abandoned concrete high-rise buildings, which were built post-war and previously inhabited by Japanese coal miners, punctuate the otherwise lush landscape. These structures create a mesmerising landscape of urban decay being overtaken by nature. While a few of the old concrete apartment buildings still have inhabited apartments, most are abandoned and reminiscent of Hashima with broken windows and personal items from former inhabitants visible inside. According to locals, the abandoned apartment buildings are visited by both Japanese and foreign urban explorers, some of whom are said to have covered several apartment rooms with graffiti art.

5.4.2 Sites of wartime memory on Takashima

5.4.2.1 Senninzuka and Konshōji

Our first stop on the Takashima fieldtrip was the most significant, the Takashima Senninzuka ossuary where cremated remains of Korean and Japanese Hashima labourers were interred after the closure of Hashima's mines. After dropping off my bags at the Goheita hotel a few minutes' walk from Takashima terminal, we caught the bus to Takashima cemetery, located near the summit of Mt. Gongen. It is also reachable by stairs, in which case it takes about 20 minutes to reach the cemetery. It is necessary to walk through the cemetery to reach the path to the Senninzuka. At first glance it appears like a regular Buddhist cemetery, but observing the symbols and baptismal names on many of the headstones reveals Takashima's long history of Christianity.

The once forgotten path from the cemetery to the Senninzuka is usually maintained by Oka Masaharu Museum staff, volunteers from the Korean Residents Union in Japan (hereafter, Mindan)¹⁴⁹, and visitors from Korea. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the path was again concealed and obstructed by thick vegetation in July 2022. Despite both Kimura and Jin having visited the Senninzuka several times prior, it took a significant amount of time to reidentify the path from the cemetery, then completely hidden by vegetation.

Official efforts to hide the Senninzuka become apparent after a few minutes of proceeding down the path from the cemetery between trees and bushes. The Nagasaki government has erected a small wooden fence on the path, declaring "no entry" in Japanese, Korean, and English. Signs by the fence signal unjustified claims of "danger" and the unproven assertion that all human remains have been removed from the Senninzuka. As the Senninzuka has become a symbol of the plight of wartime Korean forced labourers and their struggle for recognition, the signs placed by the government on this mountain path forgotten by most locals are a poignant reminder of the ways in which official forces attempt to suppress the memory of these labourers. However, peace activists and other

¹⁴⁹ See [Appendix I.VIII](#)

visitors who travel to Takashima to commemorate Korean victims at the Senninzuka are not deterred by the easily circumventable fence. Kimura, who has guided several groups to the Senninzuka despite access officially being denied, stated that the unlikely event of any trouble with authorities would only raise further awareness of the government's historical denialism.

The Senninzuka is located a few minutes further past the fence. It is a monolithic structure engraved with large Japanese characters for “memorial tower” or “stupa” on its front (“Kuyō-tō”). The stupa's left side has engraved in Japanese: “Erected by Takashima Coal Mine in April of year 9 of Taishō” (1920).¹⁵⁰ A smaller pillar on its side states that Mitsubishi moved the remains interred there to Konshōji temple for “eternal rest” on 1 April 1988.

Since it was featured on the Korean television program *Muhan Dojeon* in 2015, the Senninzuka is usually draped with a South Korean flag, replaced by Korean travellers when occasionally removed by the Nagasaki government. A newer sign by Nagasaki City adjacent to the Senninzuka states in Japanese, English, Korean, and Chinese that “anything left in this location shall be treated in accordance with the Lost Property Act.” Kimura interprets the sign as an official warning that the government intends to continue to discard Korean flags left to commemorate Korean victims. Before leaving, we cut down vegetation that had grown to cover the Senninzuka and a Korean flag remaining at the site. The Senninzuka constitutes an active battlefield of memory, offering a potentially impactful and enlightening dark tourism experience for visitors, including non-Asian tourists like myself. It presents opportunities for educational enrichment, commemoration, and emotional engagement.

It is common for visitors to the Senninzuka to also visit the nearby Konshōji temple, as at least parts of the remains from the Senninzuka ossuary have been moved there. The temple, which is usually open for visitors, is visible and easily accessible from the main road by the cemetery. The temple contains the remains and spirit tablets of many former

¹⁵⁰ As mentioned, the Senninzuka was erected before wartime and both the remains of Japanese and Korean labourers who died before and during wartime on Takashima and Hashima and whose families could not be found were interred in the Senninzuka ossuary together.

residents of the island, not limited to those of coal miners. All listed names are Japanese. Inside the temple in one corner are four cabinets with a sign stating it contains remains of people related to Mitsubishi's Takashima Coal Mine who died without relatives. While all other cabinets with remains can be opened, three of the four Mitsubishi cabinets have in the past few years been nailed shut. Kimura believes they have been sealed to prevent visitors from opening them for commemoration of Korean forced labourers, and to conceal the number of unnamed urns and the lack of named Korean remains. While cremated remains from the Senninzuka were placed in 115 small urns in 1988, the single Mitsubishi cabinet not nailed shut contains only three urns of which two have Japanese names and one is unnamed.

Raising awareness of the Senninzuka may apply pressure on the Japanese government to remove its unjustified fence and signs of danger on the path from Takashima cemetery. Although the discussed episode of *Muhan Dojeon* successfully raised significant awareness of the Senninzuka in Korea, its history and location are unknown to most in Japan, even within the Korean community of Nagasaki.¹⁵¹ However, it should be noted that raising awareness of the Senninzuka is not without risk to its preservation. The official fence was raised as a direct response to *Muhan Dojeon* and Seo Kyoung-Duk's subsequent efforts to make its location broadly known.¹⁵² It is not impossible that Japan may take further measures to erase the memory of Korean labourers and their remains if visitors to the Senninzuka increase. The Korean community is well aware of the example of the memorial to Korean forced labourers in Mori Park in Gunma Prefecture. The removal of the memorial was ordered in response to formal complaints from far-right activists who claimed that memorial ceremonies constituted illegal political gatherings.¹⁵³

5.4.2.2 World Heritage site of Takashima Coal Mine's Hokkei pit

The underwhelming site of the Hokkei Pit is easily discovered through the numerous signs placed throughout the island after the mine received its World Heritage designation as

¹⁵¹ Kang Seong Choon in Mindan interview.

¹⁵² Seo Kyoung-Duk Interview.

¹⁵³ Kim Cholsu in Chōsen Daigakkō interview.

part of the Meiji Industrial Sites. The World Heritage site can be found at the northern base of Mt. Gongen. No buildings have been preserved, but to preserve excavated remains of mining facilities for the future, the whole area has been covered with cement. As the cement prevents visitors from seeing any excavated foundation rubble, a large photograph of the ground before it was cemented has been superimposed on tiles in one corner of the wide and open area.

In the centre of the grey cemented space is a square hole covered with rusted metal bars. This is the remains of the Hokkei Pit, the first mechanised coal mining pit in Japan and one of the most important sites to the OUV of the Meiji Industrial Sites. However, peeking inside, the remains on the mine entrance has been sealed and flooded, with vegetation growing from its walls unable to properly emerge through the thick metal bars above.¹⁵⁴ Adjacent to the pit stands a stone pillar bearing the engraved name of the site in Japanese, accompanied by three information panels. However, evident neglect and damage seemingly caused by rain makes it challenging to read the panels.

At the entrance of the site, there is a slightly elevated pavilion with a roof that serves as a “viewing platform.” It has a few additional information panels and a miniature model of the Hokkei mining site at a 1:100 scale, depicting its appearance during an undated period in its operation. The miniature demonstrates six structures connected to a rail track leading to a nearby harbour (the former Haedomari Coal Shipping Port).

The first information panel one encounters in front of the Hokkei pit briefly describes the Meiji Industrial Sites in general, in Japanese and English. Almost identical information panels can be found also by the other component sites of the World Heritage inscription. The Japanese text states that Japan invited a wave of Western industrialisation from the 1850s to 1910 which transformed the country. Not part of the Japanese text, the adjacent English text adds that “This successful industrialization was achieved in just a little over 50 years without colonization, and on Japan’s own terms.” The text may intend to celebrate that Japan itself was not colonised, but it misleadingly appears to imply that Japan was industrialised without exploiting other countries. In actuality, Japan’s

¹⁵⁴ The Hokkei Pit was previously used as a well for some time after being closed for mining.

industrialisation was not “complete” in 1910, and its colonial occupation of Korea greatly contributed to imperial Japan’s industrial advancements.¹⁵⁵

Remaining information panels celebrate the recognised OUV of the Takashima Coal Mine, providing informational narratives in Japanese, English, and Korean. Only its history before being bought by Mitsubishi in 1881 is conveyed on the panels. Thus, there is no mention of how the Takashima Coal Mine became a national controversy in the late 1800s due to inhumane working conditions, and, unsurprisingly, no mention of wartime history. There is also no mention of how Japanese low-skilled miners were exploited as expendable labourers during the management of the Saga Domain and Glover. The only reference to the experiences of any labourers is the statement that, after mechanisation, coal transportation and draining of water from the mines became more efficient as it was originally done by hand. From the perspective of dark tourism, the information panels are only useful for obtaining basic information on the mine’s OUV and to confirm the absence of difficult history in official narratives.

I passed the World Heritage site multiple times during my three-day weekend stay on the island, but I was unable to observe a single visitor. Most who visit would be surprised that Japan has left one of its World Heritage sites to resemble a neglected construction yard.¹⁵⁶ For a regular tourist, about five minutes would be sufficient to examine everything the World Heritage site has to offer.

¹⁵⁵ See for example Samuel Pao-San Ho, “Colonialism and Development: Korea, Taiwan, and Kwantung”, *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*, edited by Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton University Press, 1984), 347-398. From the late Meiji period, Japan’s colonies supplied cheap rice, enabling a significant workforce shift from agriculture to industrial sectors within Japan. In the 1930s, marked by Japan’s military expansion, a strategy was designed to procure vital raw materials and supplies for Japan’s rapidly growing heavy industries, thus integrating colonial economic growth with Japan’s overarching industrial strategies.

¹⁵⁶ Kimura Hideto was shocked at the extent the site had been left to deteriorate and reported observed damages to information panels to the Takashima Community Centre (Takashima chīki sentā) the same day. Kim Yeonghwan stated in his interview that the extreme neglect of the Hokkei Pit visualises how World Heritage inscriptions are driven by capitalism, implying that money is spent at sites with greater tourism potential, such as Hashima.

5.4.2.3 Takashima Coal Museum

Takashima's coal museum is by far the island's most visited attraction due to the hordes of tourists that stop by on their 30-minute Takashima stay enroute to Hashima with the Gunkanjima Cruise company. It is open every day of the week from 9am to 5pm with free entry. The museum, located adjacent to the ferry port, is most popular for its large outdoor miniature of Hashima as it looked in the early 1970s. Tour groups appear to spend at least one third of their stay on the island listening to their guides' explanation of the miniature and taking pictures of it after. There are also original mining carts and other equipment scattered around the outside of the museum, but these do not appear popular with tour groups. Exploring the inside of the two-story museum, many visitors stay longest in the exhibition space related to Hashima on the top floor. On the guide's cue, tour participants hurry back to their ferry, potentially with no significant impression of Takashima and its history. On TripAdvisor.com, many reviews in both Japanese and English of Hashima tours mentioning the stopover refer to Takashima simply as "another island" with a coal museum.

It appears uncommon for visitors to Takashima, who are not part of the Hashima tour groups, to visit the coal museum. As I remained in the museum, observing a tour group departing, the museum staff appeared surprised to see an independent traveller and approached me to ensure I wasn't missing my ferry. Expressing relief upon realising I understood Japanese, the staff informed me they were about to leave and politely requested that I turn off the lights and air conditioning once I finished exploring. I complied with their request and left the museum unattended and unlocked after examining all the exhibitions. The next morning, before the arrival of tour groups, I returned to the museum to collect pamphlets. The museum remained dark and unattended, yet accessible and unlocked.¹⁵⁷ In Japan, only the most rural and least visited museums would be left open but unmanned.

The Takashima Coal Museum is surprisingly large (511m²) and of high quality considering its remote location with low potential for visitors before the World Heritage

¹⁵⁷ It is likely the staff returned to lock up the museum after closing hours and came back in the morning only briefly to unlock the doors.

inscription of the Meiji Industrial Sites. The museum was opened in 1988, two years after the mines' closure and the same year Mitsubishi sealed the Senninzuka ossuary.¹⁵⁸ The museum building was originally built in 1959 as the headquarters of the Mitsubishi Takashima Coal Mine Labour Union.

As expected, the museum does not contain direct criticisms of Mitsubishi and does not mention foreign labourers. English or Korean translations are also not available. Nevertheless, a visit to the museum can be highly valuable, as it showcases a plethora of pictures depicting post-war life on Takashima and Hashima, intricate miniatures of Takashima and its entire network of undersea mining tunnels, mining equipment, coal samples, and more. For Japanese speakers, the museum offers detailed summaries of various aspects of the islands' and coal mines' history, albeit excluding wartime history. Perhaps because the museum's latest major renewal was in 2004, before the plan to World Heritage inscribe the Meiji Industrial Sites became official, the museum's narratives are far more objective than those of the celebratory Tokyo Industrial Information Centre or the Gunkanjima Digital Museum.

5.4.2.4 Other sites of memory on Takashima

The Takashima Shrine and Mitsubishi memorial for deceased miners is located about 350 meters south of Konshōji Temple. The large memorial dominates the open yard in front of the shrine. With the knowledge that the flower relief on the memorial replaced a Mitsubishi plaque sabotaged for presenting foreign forced labourers as passionate willing coal miners, the memorial may represent another battlefield for opposing forces attempting to remember and forget. In addition, Takashima shrine holds a memorial from 1907 commemorating the 307 labourers who died due to a gas explosion in the Takashima mines the year before. Although these victims were contracted Japanese labourers, the memorial speaks to the dangerous working conditions in Mitsubishi's Takashima mines during the often-celebrated Meiji period. Furthermore, visitors may compare how a sign

¹⁵⁸ Nagasaki City, "Nagasaki shi takashima sekitan shiryōkan [Nagasaki City Takashima Coal Museum]", webpage. <https://www.city.nagasaki.lg.jp/kanko/820000/828000/p000836.html> (accessed 25 June 2023).

has been erected to explain the context and cause of death of the commemorated labourers of the 1907 explosion, while the 1988 memorial commemorating foreign labourers has no such explanatory sign.

The Mt. Gongen walking course, accessible from nearby the Takashima Shrine, passes buildings and paths constructed during the colonial period, both abandoned and some still in use. Maps available at the Oka Masaharu Museum, created by researchers based on victim testimonies and official records, suggest that one of the buildings by this path, now residential, was used as a “special comfort station” during wartime. The mountain course also passes the remains of the Takashima Mine Workers Club, an entertainment facility built in 1901 and demolished in 1990. An information panel, partly covered by vegetation, includes pictures of the building before its abandonment and subsequent demolition. Having examined the miniatures and pictures in the Takashima Coal Museum showing this area before being mostly overtaken by nature, tourists may imagine how the area appeared when the island was crowded with miners. If descending from Takashima Shrine, the Mt. Gongen path ends near the Goheita Hotel by the shore.

In addition to the clearly marked Mt. Gongen path, there are numerous other disused and abandoned paths around the mountain. For dark tourism enthusiasts who are accustomed to walking on unmaintained forest paths, exploring these paths may be highly rewarding. In addition to the high-rise concrete buildings, miners once resided in very simple wooden houses on the mountainside. Many of these structures remain in various states of decay along abandoned paths that have been eroded by the sub-tropical forest. Some of the buildings have partially or completely collapsed, providing glimpses into the abodes of the miners without the need to enter potentially dangerous derelict buildings. Everyday items from the past and mining equipment such as helmets and gloves can be seen among the debris of the collapsed structures. One may also visit the former locations of bunkhouses for Korean and Chinese forced labourers, but no visible traces of the buildings remain.

Although coal mine entrances spread around Takashima have been sealed, locating them while exploring the island allows for a more accurate idea of how coal miners moved around the island between accommodation, work sites and entertainment districts, and

makes clear that all parts of the island revolved around coal extraction. Some mine entrances and relevant information panels are difficult to locate as they have become concealed by vegetation, but most are accurately marked on Google maps.

The remains of the ventilation shaft of the Nanyō pit (1871-1892) and the Obama pit entrance (1874-1890) can be located in the mountainside very near Goheita Hotel. The New Nakayama inclined shaft entrance (1935) is located behind the Takasagoen home for the elderly. The (new) Futako vertical shaft entrance (1965-1986) is visible through a fenced area on the southern part of the island, directly north of the island's exercise ground. The older Futako inclined shaft entrance (1913-1986), where many foreign forced labourers worked during wartime, was located south of the exercise ground, but no traces of it can be seen through its fences. There are many large chunks of concrete debris from one or more destroyed buildings lying around this area, some possibly from the Futako Power station that powered the Futako shaft until it was destroyed in an American air raid on 31 July 1945.¹⁵⁹ In addition, the abandoned but not yet collapsed Kakise coal factory built over the Kakise shaft (1902-1986), where 307 miners died in 1906, can be seen from the west side of the island. A chain is strung across the road to signal that access to the factory and another adjacent memorial for deceased labourers erected in 1988 is forbidden.¹⁶⁰

The location of the Takashima residence of Thomas Glover is marked with an information panel and a bronze statue of Glover on the top of a hill on Takashima's northernmost point. No remains of his residence are visible, but an information panel on the site provides coloured pictures of excavated parts of the building and a map of the property as it was at the time Glover resided there. The information panel explains that the ruin of Glover's "second house" is related to the Takashima Coal Mine which is part of the World Heritage Meiji Industrial Sites. It further states that after Glover, the building was used as a Mitsubishi guesthouse before being demolished in 1948. Standing in this location on a hill with a picturesque ocean view, visitors may compare it to how coal miners lived to get a sense of the Meiji-era classism and ethnic hierarchy. With pre-existing knowledge,

¹⁵⁹ According to a map by Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum.

¹⁶⁰ Takeuchi, *Q&A*, 93.

visitors may also imagine the many other luxurious houses of other foreign Meiji-era managers that were once concentrated around this area and the feelings of low-skilled Japanese labourers such as those who rioted and destroyed several of these houses before being shot dead by British managers in 1872.¹⁶¹ The remaining houses of other foreign managers were burned down in an 1878 riot so violent that the mainland police refused to disembark on Takashima before returning the next morning with heavy weapons.¹⁶²

The descriptively named “A Hill with a View of Gunkanjima (Battleship Island/Hashima)” is located on the opposite side of the island, on its southernmost point. Hashima is clearly visible less than 3km away from the viewpoint and can be closely observed using the zoom function of a smartphone camera. The hill provides views of Hashima’s north side including building no. 66 and 67 where Korean forced labourers were accommodated during wartime, which is not visible from the tourist path on Hashima itself. Turning in the opposite direction, the viewpoint also provides good views of Takashima. Information panels provide post-war pictures of nearby townscapes and mining facilities now demolished and explain how land near the hill was reclaimed in 1935. The main information panel on the hill further states that Takashima and Hashima’s coal mines became World Heritage sites in 2015 and that opportunities to “utilize these cultural heritages to increase Takashima’s appeal are being sought out.” It is evident to visitors that such efforts have been largely unsuccessful.

5.4.3 Other nearby sites relevant to forced labour on Takashima and Hashima

Colonial memory is marginalised by the government on Hashima and Takashima, but those engaging in dark tourism on the islands may combine visitations with other nearby relevant sites of memory to better visualise diverse memories of wartime forced labour and colonialism. Conflicting official memory at other sites reveals competing intentions to remember and forget, also within the Japanese government. Vernacular memories of relevant groups are accessible at private museums and memorials, some of which coexist

¹⁶¹ Checkland and Checkland, “British and Japanese”, 147-8.

¹⁶² John McMaster, “The Takashima Mine”, 234.

with official memory. Combined visitations to such sites may potentially be suggested in guidebooks or travel blogs for independent travellers or be incorporated into group tours for example by NGO's or academics. Combining visits to Takashima and Hashima with these sites may be purposeful not only for visualising marginalised memories and multiple perspectives of difficult history, but also to highlight official and public efforts to remember foreign victims in Japan.

The Mindan Nagasaki branch regularly provides Nagasaki travel advice and has on occasion arranged tours to Hashima, Takashima, and other relevant sites for its Korean members in Japan and visitors from Korea.¹⁶³ Nagasaki Mindan advises anyone interested in these sites to combine visits with the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum. This private museum, founded in 1995, offers extensive exhibits on forced labour history based mainly on data collected by the Nagasaki Association to Protect the Human Rights of Korean Residents. This association was established in 1965 with Japanese former soldier turned protestant pastor Oka Masaharu as its main representative.¹⁶⁴ Between 1982 and 2015, this association published two books on Hashima forced labour and seven volumes of research on Korean victims of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki which includes testimonies of former Korean forced labourers.¹⁶⁵ The museum strives to highlight marginalised memories of Korean and other foreign forced labourers in various ways including public conferences. Ku Yon-chol was invited as a speaker at such a conference in 2016.¹⁶⁶ Korean visitors are often surprised both because many are unaware of the extent of Japanese war crimes and because the museum promotes information about it.¹⁶⁷ In addition to regular tourists (most of whom are Japanese and Korean), the Oka Masaharu Museum frequently welcomes Japanese students on school trips for discussions, essentially facilitating educational dark tourism.

¹⁶³ Kang Seong Choon in Mindan interview.

¹⁶⁴ Kuriyama Kiwamu, Achira Yōhei and Hidaka Shōko, “Heiwa hakubutsukan jissen e no shakai kyōiku teki apurōch [A socially educational approach to practices of peace museums],” *Ritsumeikan Heiwa Kenkyū* 15 (2014): 39.

¹⁶⁵ Tanaka Masataka, Shiryō shōkai: Nagasaki zainichi Chōsenjin no jinken wo mamoru kai “genbaku to chōsenjin” (dai 1-shū - dai 7-shū) [Introduction of historical materials: Nagasaki Association to Protect the Human Rights of Korean Residents “The atomic bomb and Koreans” (vol. 1-7)], (2016). Available online at <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/71799686.pdf> (accessed 29 April 2021).

¹⁶⁶ Ku Yon-chol interview.

¹⁶⁷ Kang Seong Choon in Mindan interview.

The Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Peace Museum, the most well-known museum in Nagasaki, is a natural stop for first-time visitors to the city. Visitors may be surprised to discover that, despite being owned and operated by the Nagasaki City government, official narratives of the museum contradict official narratives of the Meiji Industrial Sites by acknowledging imperial Japan as both perpetrator and victim. The museum provides a useful glimpse into the reality of the many Koreans who had moved or been forcefully mobilised to Nagasaki before perishing in the nuclear blast. A large information panel proclaims that 13,000 to 14,000 Koreans were exposed to the atomic bombing, in addition to approximately 200 Allied POW's. Another information panel in the museum, adjacent to a written testimony of a Korean forced labourer, clearly states that “[a] large number of non-Japanese people, especially Koreans who had been brought by force to work in munition factories, etc., were exposed to the Nagasaki atomic bombing.” Video testimonies exhibited include that of Korean forced labour and atomic bomb victim Yan Sakjo who states that he was mobilised by force along with about 550 others.¹⁶⁸

Both official and vernacular memories are accessible at the grounds of the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Peace Museum. Outside the museum are public memorials for Koreans and Allied POWs who died in the blast. One of the two memorials for Korean victims was established by Nagasaki Mindan, and the engraved text declares that about 35,000 Koreans lived in and around Nagasaki City in 1945 as “the number of Koreans mobilized against their will and forced to work as labourers, military and civilians attached to the military had increased.”¹⁶⁹ The memorial for victims of Fukuoka POW camp 14, erected by volunteers from Nagasaki and the Netherlands, states that 112 of the 339 POWs interned there did not survive. The camp housed Dutch, British, American and Australian POWs forced to work at the Nagasaki Mitsubishi Shipyards. The former location of the camp, currently under a highway west of Inoue Hospital in central Nagasaki, holds a small information panel set up by the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Peace Museum in 2005. The only fatalities of POWs mentioned on this official information panel are those of eight who

¹⁶⁸ The name Yan Sakjo, likely a Japanese form of a Korean name, is given here as romanised onsite.

¹⁶⁹ The inscription contrasts that of the Mindan-erected memorial in Hiroshima Peace Park which does not provide any reason for why many Koreans were living in the city at the time of the nuclear blast.

died due to the American atom bomb.

Foreign forced labourers worked in Mitsubishi's coal mines, shipyard factories and arms factories in various locations across Nagasaki and elsewhere. One of these was the Mitsubishi Sumiyoshi Tunnel Arms Factory. Six adjacent underground tunnels, each about 300 meters long, were built by Korean forced labourers towards the end of the war to hide and protect the arms factory. The inside of the tunnels was not significantly damaged by the nuclear blast and many Nagasaki residents sought shelter inside in the aftermath. The entrances are located by a parking lot about 2km north of the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Peace Museum. The museum manages this site which is currently owned by Nagasaki City. The tunnels are fenced and currently cannot be entered without prior arrangements with the museum, but anyone can examine the extensive information panels outside and peek into the tunnels through the fences. The information panels, containing information in Japanese, English, and Korean, explicitly state that Mitsubishi relied on "forcibly drafted" Korean labourers to produce weapons for the imperial army. The former locations of nearby bunkhouses for Korean forced labourers are marked on a map on one of the information panels.

Another comparable site of war memory is the Tateyama Air-raid shelter used as the defence headquarters of Nagasaki Prefecture during the Asia-Pacific War. The shelter, also consisting of a series of underground tunnels, is located directly adjacent to the Nagasaki Museum of History and Culture.¹⁷⁰ Visitors may enter the air-raid shelter free of charge and explore parts of its tunnels, in which information panels provide ambiguous official memory (in Japanese only). The primary panel explains that the black scorch marks on the tunnel walls were not a result of the nuclear blast, but rather of something being burned inside after the war's conclusion. For critical visitors, this may allude to how Japan burned large amounts of potentially incriminating documents in the immediate aftermath of the war.

The Glover Garden and the World Heritage inscribed primary home of Thomas Glover

¹⁷⁰ Many visitors to Nagasaki may find the museum educational and worthwhile as well, but it does not have any exhibits directly related to colonial or wartime history. It does, however, provide information on Edo Period Japan-Korea diplomatic relations and trade.

can be another significant destination for dark tourism despite the exclusively celebratory nature of their official narratives. The park is one of the most popular tourism destinations in Nagasaki, centrally located on the Minamiyamate hillside with clear views of Nagasaki Bay and the Mitsubishi Shipyard. Glover's spacious European-style bungalow complete with luxurious European furniture in this location is a testament to his great wealth and power obtained in Nagasaki before his poor management of the Takashima coal mine caused his bankruptcy. A Mitsubishi guesthouse for sailors built in 1896 at the shipyard has been relocated to the park and is open for visitors. To visitors aware of Mitsubishi's history of exploitation, the extravagant 2-story guesthouse visualises one extreme of Mitsubishi's history of hierarchical treatment of its various types of employees. From the guesthouse balcony, visitors can spot several World Heritage component sites with forced labour history. In clear view are the Mitsubishi Giant Cantilever Crane and the Dry Dock no. 3, which are closed for visitors. Partly obscured by other buildings is also the Mitsubishi Former Pattern Shop which was used as a Mitsubishi museum at the time of its World Heritage Inscription. The museum has been closed for maintenance since April 2020, with no estimated date for reopening at the time of writing in April 2023.¹⁷¹

The Nangoshimyō Kainansha Muen-botoke Tomb for those who drowned at sea with no relatives is located on Nomozaki peninsula at the closest point on the mainland to Hashima. Regularly visited by researchers and peace activists for commemorative purposes, the tomb still contains excavated but unidentified human remains. These remains are assumed to be those of Korean forced labourers who drowned during escape attempts from Hashima. Visitors may also stop by the nearby Gunkanjima Museum operated by Nagasaki City to examine local official narratives of Hashima, but wartime history is disregarded in this location.

The Japan-China Monument for Friendship and No War stands further north on Nomozaki Peninsula, in Kōyagi-machi. This monument was erected in 2021 as a result of a settlement reached between families of Chinese forced labourers and Mitsubishi

¹⁷¹ I have called the museum once a year since 2021 and asked for estimates of when it may reopen and have on each occasion been informed that no estimates exist. It appears clear that Mitsubishi is in no rush to share its World Heritage inscribed properties with the world as intended by the World Heritage Programme.

Materials.¹⁷² Engraved on the monument in Japanese and Chinese is the fact that 772 out of 3,765 Chinese forced labourers working for Mitsubishi Materials died during wartime, including 15 on Hashima and another 15 on Takashima. It further informs that Mitsubishi has acknowledged and deeply apologised for the violation of the human rights of these Chinese labourers. The inscription on the monument, acknowledged by Mitsubishi, is in stark contrast to the official narratives of the Meiji Industrial Sites denying that Chinese and other forced labour ever took place at these sites. For some visitors, the monument may also be seen as a symbol of how Mitsubishi continues to deny the memories of Korean wartime colonial subjects while having recognised those of captured Chinese citizens.

The Memorial for Fukuoka POW Camp #2 is located on the former camp grounds in Kōyagi-machi, currently belonging to Kōyagi Middle School. During the peak of the Asia-Pacific War, the camp housed about 1,500 Dutch, British, American, Australian and other Allied POWs forced to work at the nearby Kawanami Shipyard. The memorial narrates this history in Dutch, English and Japanese, stating that 73 POWs “perished as a result of the inhumane treatment” they were subjected to. The memorial was erected in 2015 by a public Nagasaki ad hoc committee. An adjacent information panel contains a QR code stated to give access to a “video tour on the history and location of Fukuoka-2”. Linking to online explanatory videos is an affordable and potentially highly effective way to visualise memories of the past for visitors to sites of memory with few remaining visible traces of relevant history. However, the video link appears to lack maintenance as it did not function at the time of my visit.

In addition to sites discussed above, there are a plethora of relevant Kyushu sites further away that could be purposefully included in educational dark tourism itineraries focusing on wartime forced labour and World Heritage. One highly significant area is that of the partly World Heritage inscribed Mitsui Miike Coal Mine, where Korean, Chinese and Allied POWs were forced to work.¹⁷³ Visiting the World Heritage inscribed Miyano-hara

¹⁷² Nagasaki Shimbun, “Nicchū yūkō to fusen chikau - nagasaki de ishibumi konryū isshūnen tsuitōshiki [Japan-China friendship and pledge of no war – Commemorative ceremony on the first anniversary of Nagasaki memorial]”, 15 November 2022.

<https://nordot.app/965090719303237632?c=39546741839462401> (accessed 25 June 2023).

¹⁷³ David Palmer, “Japan’s World Heritage Miike Coal Mine – Where prisoners-of-war worked ‘like

pit and Manda pit before visiting the Mikawa pit, which is not inscribed, clearly demonstrates how difficult memories are especially threatened at Japan's World Heritage sites.¹⁷⁴ While the Mikawa pit has information panels describing how POWs were forced to work there during wartime, no such official information is available at the World Heritage inscribed pits. When I visited the Miyanohara pit, a volunteer guide at the site denied all wartime forced labour history, while the volunteer guide at the Manda pit whispered while pointing at locations of POW camps, stating that wartime history is "taboo."

Another highly noteworthy site of relevance outside of Nagasaki is the Tagawa City Coal Mining Historical Museum in Fukuoka Prefecture which displays actual mining conditions on Kyushu before and after the war. Its top floor exhibit holds works of former wartime miner Yamamoto Sakubei, inscribed in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2011, which includes depictions of extreme working conditions and violent punishments.¹⁷⁵ The Yahata Imperial Steelworks, located in nearby Kita-Kyushu, is also a World Heritage site with highly significant foreign forced labour history, but its buildings are inaccessible and must be viewed from a distant viewing platform.¹⁷⁶

Finally, although it is nowhere near Nagasaki, it is worth mentioning that the Industrial Heritage Information Centre in Tokyo, which denies the memories of wartime victims, may also be a meaningful inclusion in itineraries encompassing sites of colonial memory. The centre can function as a dark tourism destination that effectively conveys the historical views of the Japanese right-wing, as inherited from former Prime Minister Abe Shinzō.¹⁷⁷ If visited after engaging with difficult colonial memories at other sites discussed above, the official denialism reflected at the information centre becomes exceedingly apparent, enabling visitors to experience firsthand the striking dissonance between official and unofficial Japanese memories.

slaves,"" *the Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 19(13), 1 July 2021.

¹⁷⁴ I visited all sites of the Miike Coal Mines mentioned within on 24 July 2022.

¹⁷⁵ I visited Tagawa and the museum on 8 July 2022.

¹⁷⁶ I visited Yahata and the viewing platform on 23 July 2022. In 2012, I visited the Higashida Daiichi Blast Furnace of the Yahata Steelworks, which is not part of the World Heritage Inscription. The blast furnace, built in 1901, had an outside exhibition space which was fenced off on my return visit in 2022.

¹⁷⁷ Ide Akira interview.

5.5 Summary of Findings

I have explored the existence of memories of wartime Korean forced labour on the Japanese coal mine islands of Hashima and Takashima, and analysed how tourism can be used to highlight these memories. The official memory politics of Japan's central government deny the memories of Korean victims of forced labour and sexual slavery, and these memory politics are evident at both Hashima and Takashima, where the former coal mines are both part of the World Heritage serial inscription for Japan's Meiji Industrial Sites. Despite the fact that the acknowledgement and visualisation of the memories of foreign victims forced to work at the sites was an unconditional requirement for the successful inscription in 2015, the Japanese government has clearly expressed its unwillingness to adhere to UNESCO's warnings and fulfil this requirement. Therefore, visitors to Hashima and Takashima have no access to marginalised forced labour memories through tours, information panels and other official sources of information at the islands.

However, there are significant opportunities for tourists to engage with difficult collective memories through public memory at the islands and at other relevant museums and memorials nearby. In comparison, public memory of Korean forced labour in the islands' coal mines are significantly more accessible on Takashima than Hashima, as Takashima is still inhabited and open for individual exploration. Exploration of Takashima also visualises the memory conflict between the Japanese government and Korean victims of forced labour and their descendants, particularly the Senninzuka ossuary draped in the South Korean national flag behind an official fence with warning signs set up by the local government. A comprehensive comparison of dark tourism potential for the two islands is provided in the subsequent chapter.

Japan officially denies the presence of memories associated with Korean and other foreign forced labour at relevant industrial World Heritage sites. This denial is not driven exclusively by broader implications of acknowledging war crimes for Japan and culpable

conglomerates.¹⁷⁸ The denial and ignorance of difficult memories at sites popular with tourism, such as Hashima, also serves the purpose of reinforcing the positive image of these sites as destinations for tourism. This portrayal emphasises the celebration of the historical progress of Japanese industry, while simultaneously overlooking the perspectives of historical labourers who endured inhumane working conditions. This approach may contribute to the shaping and enhancement of Japanese national identity, while it revictimizes and threatens the identity of victims through denial of the cause, extent, and significance of their suffering.

It is noteworthy that efforts for World Heritage inscription has had the opposite effect of that intended by UNESCO's World Heritage programme, as global perspectives and memories of pre-colonial and colonial violence have been erased.¹⁷⁹ This is evident when one compares the official narratives of the industrial World Heritage sites with those of other relevant sites not designated by UNESCO, such as the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, the former Mitsubishi Sumiyoshi Tunnel Arms Factory, and the Mikawa pit of the Miike Coal Mines. Had the Meiji Industrial Sites not been included in the World Heritage list, managers of the individual sites may have had greater freedom to highlight the plight of foreign forced labourers as urged by victims and their descendants.

Constructing narratives that extol the history of these industrial sites, intentionally erases from official memory not only their colonial era history, but also the pre-colonial history of systematic mistreatment of vulnerable labourers. Inhumane systems of labour management of the Meiji-era were revived during the Asia-Pacific War and inflicted on foreign forced labourers, but this important link is hidden for visitors, as further discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁷⁸ Such broader implications include potential impacts on legal cases against Japanese companies culpable of wartime Korean forced labour. See Appendix V.II.IV [Official demands for compensation and fluctuating Korea-Japan relations](#).

¹⁷⁹ The same phenomenon is clear in the case of the Sado Mines, which Japan is attempting to World Heritage inscribe at the time of writing. See Johnsen, "The Sado Gold Mine".

Chapter 6 Challenges and potential for dark tourism at sites of colonial memory in Korea and Japan

This concluding chapter explores diverse strategies to effectively facilitate dark tourism at sites in Korea and Japan, aiming to highlight marginalised memories of colonialism. The analysis is based on the case studies discussed, as well as observations from other relevant sites and data collected through stakeholder interviews and questionnaires. Rather than directly comparing Korea and Japan, the chapter identifies and discusses both mutual and unilateral challenges and potentials, resulting in a natural imbalance in the number of Korean and Japanese examples for certain points.

The first section examines the framing and presentation of dissonant colonial memory at heritage sites and museums, with the aim of mitigating potential identity threats to national ingroups and outgroups. The second section concentrates on visualising the value and possibilities for educational dark tourism in Korea and Japan for diverse potential tourists. The third section addresses negative perceptions of dark tourism and ways to prevent or mitigate their impacts on dark tourism opportunities. The fourth section discusses pragmatic and effective facilitation of guided dark tourism at sites of colonial memory in Korea and Japan, drawing from the case studies. The final section provides the concluding remarks for this study, summarising key findings and discussing practical implications and recommendations for future research across all chapters.

6.1 Balancing official narratives and mitigating identity threats

6.1.1 Reframing the Other- ideology over nationality

“The Japanese” are typically not depicted using derogatory terms in official historical narratives presented at Korean sites of colonial memory.¹ However, as reflected in my case studies, official Korean historical narratives often depict collective memories of simplified and dichotomous national groups, portraying Koreans as righteous and

¹ There are significant exceptions such as some of the Korean text in the “torture basement” in Seodaemun Prison. See section [4.3.2.3 The basement interrogation rooms](#).

innocent, and Japanese as violent and deceptive. Such generalised portrayals perpetuate historical misconceptions and can pose threats to national identities. Therefore, a shift from national categories to ideological categories in narratives discussing victims and perpetrators of colonialism would be more effective in accurately conveying colonial history to both domestic and international tourists.

Unsurprisingly, private peace museums in Japan providing narratives of Japanese colonialism and war crimes tend to avoid nationalistic approaches and refrain from distinguishing historical perpetrators and victims based on nationalities. For example, the Oka Masaharu Peace Museum introduces individual stories of Japanese who opposed imperial Japan's wars and colonialism. The Women's Active Museum of War and Peace in Tokyo recognises Japanese victims of sexual slavery under the "comfort women" system and displays victims' testimonies regardless of their nationality.² Although the majority of the Japanese public may feel uncomfortable with narratives of wartime Japanese perpetrators, such narratives do not necessarily pose threats to national identity when the criticism pertains to ideology rather than nationality. In contrast, most official Japanese museums related to the Asia Pacific War, including the iconic Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, do not acknowledge Japanese perpetrator history and instead depict the nation of Japan as a war victim of unique suffering due to the atomic bombings. Ideally, official peace museums in Japan should follow the aforementioned private museums and highlight diverse aspects and experiences of individuals involved in and affected by war and colonialism.³

Examining the official narratives of Gyeongbokgung in Korea, "the Japanese" are

² At the time of writing, only one Japanese victim has agreed for the museum to exhibit their written testimony on the condition of anonymity. In addition to potential sexual stigmatisation, Japanese victims of wartime systematic sexual slavery by the imperial army risk being publicly attacked by the right-wing if openly challenging official historical denialism.

³ European examples include the narratives of Danish colonialism in the National Museum of Denmark (visited 16 October 2023) which acknowledge how colonial greed caused a wide range of human tragedies when narrating the "encounter between the colonisers and the colonised" ("Danish Colonies", information panel). These narratives, while not avoiding ethnic identity markers, distinctly delineate between the government, colonists, and indigenous subjects. For instance, they highlight how "both Danes and Greenlanders" were subjected to "endless rules and regulations" enforced by "the state-owned" Royal Greenland Trade Department, which held dominance over the colonies in Greenland ("GreenLand," information panel). Moreover, perspectives of the colonised are included, along with examples illustrating exploitation by both colonial settlers and the Danish colonial government.

portrayed as Korea's national Other, collectively depicted as plotting against and inflicting suffering upon Koreans across centuries. Gyeongbokgung's official narratives portray the brutal and tragic Japanese assassination of an innocent beautiful Korean queen, evoking strong emotional reactions from visitors without providing sufficient and accurate historical context to understand the complex political dynamics behind the event and its impact on international relations. Similarly, in the case of Seodaemun Prison, official narratives focus on Korean patriots enduring torture and other abuse by "the Japanese". The contrasts in antithetical representations of Koreans and Japanese at the Korean case study sites are exacerbated by celebratory narratives of Korean royal culture and heroic Korean patriots. Official narratives at Gyeongbokgung do not mention Korean monarchs' oppression of their own citizens, Koreans collaborating with colonial aggressors, and Korean internal power struggles including many murders of royal family members. At Seodaemun Prison, stories of Korean warders and Japanese prisoners are marginalised and forgotten.

In Korean official narratives, few negative adjectives are used to describe "the Japanese", but the issue arises from the generalisation and framing of Japanese people as Korea's national Other, symbolising the opposite of Korean values. When historical backgrounds are oversimplified and national groups are generalised in nationalistic narratives, audiences may draw conclusions that "the Japanese" caused suffering based on perceived cultural or ethnic traits. Generalised negative depictions of the Japanese as Korea's national Other may have enhancing effects on Korean national identities, but they are detrimental to educational potentials and mutual acceptance of dissonant collective memories. Furthermore, such generalised negative depictions may not only alienate Japanese visitors, but can also reflect negatively on Korea in the eyes of bystanders. For example, a European tourist perceived the repeated mention of Japanese aggression in historical interpretations at Gyeongbokgung as suggesting "a Korean inferiority complex towards Japan" causing an "obsession" with vilifying the country.⁴ To foster more balanced perspectives, it is crucial to provide detailed accounts of the motivations of

⁴ Informal conversation in October 2022 in the United Kingdom with local repeat visitor to Korea. I had comparable personal perceptions of Gyeongbokgung's narratives after visiting for the first time in 2010 together with Japanese friends.

specific individuals, both Japanese and Korean, who supported and resisted colonial rule in Korea. By doing so, the portrayal of “the Japanese” as a homogeneous group of villains, Korea’s national Other, can be diminished, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of historical events and the complexities of human motivations during that period.

In identity theory, “the Other” usually refers to a group of people, the outgroup, categorised by one’s ingroup as contrasting “others” that accentuates and defines the uniqueness of one’s collective identity. However, “the Other” does not need to be constructed as a group of people with perceived inherited negative traits. For example, to participants of thanatourism (dark tourism with a focus on death and the status of being dead), dead people or death itself can constitute “the Other”.⁵ Through contemplation on death at a site perceived to represent it, one may obtain new perspectives on life and consider how the state of being alive is an essential factor to one’s identity. As death alludes to values of life through contrast, colonialism alludes to values of national sovereignty. The oppressive ideology of imperialism could constitute “the Other” in dark tourism narratives of Japanese colonialism. From the perspective of people embracing a Korean national identity, colonialism as the Other may be examined to recognise anti-colonialism as a positive identity marker of their perceived ingroup. Anti-colonial narratives at Korean heritage sites would have an enhancing function on the identity of anti-colonial Koreans.⁶

From the perspective of visitors with a Japanese national identity, repeated mention of “the Japanese” causing death and destruction may be experienced as a categorisation threat—an identity threat due to the feeling of being placed in a negatively defined category against one’s will.⁷ The series of narratives portraying “the Japanese” as villains make Japanese tourists cease to pay attention, failing to prompt contemplation on the

⁵ A.V. Seaton & John Lennon, “Thanatourism in the early 21st century: moral panics, ulterior motives and ulterior desires,” *New Horizons in Tourism: Strange Experiences and Stranger Practices* (Wallingford: CAB International, 2004).

⁶ Karina Korostelina, “Understanding Values of Cultural Heritage within the Framework of Social Identity Conflicts”, *Values in Heritage Management: Emerging Approaches and Research Directions*, edited by Erica Avrami, Susan Macdonald, Randall Mason, and David Myers, 2019. Available at <https://heritagemanagement.netlify.app/part-two/6/> (accessed 30 March 2020).

⁷ Nyla R. Branscombe, Naomi Ellemers, Russel Spears and Bertjan Doosje, “The context and content of social identity threat,” *Social identity: Context, commitment, content*, edited by Nyla Ellemers, Russel Spears and Bertjan Doosje (Oxford: Blackwell Science, 1999): 35–58.

colonial policies and actions of imperial Japan.⁸ Criticism of Japanese colonialism is less likely to be experienced as an identity threat (categorisation threat) because most Japanese people do not self-categorise as pro-colonial.⁹ Furthermore, depictions of Korean perpetrators and Japanese supporters of Korean independence will lessen chances of narratives being experienced as anti-Japanese—by Japanese and others.¹⁰ By officially recognising Japanese individuals imprisoned for anti-imperial political crimes in Seodaemun Prison, Japanese tourists may feel less intimidated to visit and less obliged to hide their nationality when doing so.¹¹

Antithetical portrayals of Koreans and Japanese reflect a form of ethnic nationalism that was ingrained in Korean education in the 1970s and 80s, and individuals educated during this period tend to possess a strong ethnic pride that may be challenged by narratives of Korean perpetrators.¹² However, younger Koreans are less likely to judge themselves based on ethnicity and ethnic peers, and are much less often moved by narratives of historical Korean heroes.¹³ Younger Koreans who were not educated under authoritarian dictators and who have experienced, for example, the candlelight demonstrations against President Park Geun-hye are also less likely to assume that the government, Korean or Japanese, represents the will of a united public.¹⁴ This was evident during the “No Japan” campaign to boycott Japanese goods, as the names of Korean activist groups participating were targeted specifically at the Japanese government and Abe Shinzō, rather than the people of Japan.¹⁵ The generational gap in Korean views of Japanese people was also evident in the survey conducted for this research. While 39.5% of respondents aged 50 and above strongly agreed with the xenophobic statement “Japanese people should not be trusted”, only 5.4% of respondents under the age of 30 shared this view. Particularly, the

⁸ Suzanna Oh, Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol interview.

⁹ It is a common Japanese response to Korean requests for apologies related to Japanese colonial history that contemporary Japanese people are not responsible for the “alleged” crimes of historical colonisers. While this denial of responsibility for colonial history and its interpretation poses challenges to mutual understanding and reconciliation, it is imperative to take into account prevailing perspectives when crafting narratives that have the potential to reshape them.

¹⁰ Ide Akira interview.

¹¹ See [section 4.5.3](#) on Japanese visitors to Seodaemun Prison.

¹² Kwon Hyeokjun, Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol interview.

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ Kim Yeonghwan interview.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

younger generations seem more receptive to historical narratives of colonialism that portray Koreans and Japanese as victims and collaborators of the colonial government without making ethnic judgments or experiencing threats to their national identity.

International bystanders, who may struggle to relate with historical narratives of Japanese aggressions, might find it more accessible to engage with narratives centered around colonialism as the Other. Foreign visitors who oppose colonialism or identify as descendants of colonised people may perceive a community of Koreans and foreigners sharing common values, allowing them to self-categorise into overarching transnational identity-groups.¹⁶ Moreover, narratives of colonialism as the Other could also provide opportunities for Japanese visitors who distance themselves from imperial ideology to self-categorise within a shared ingroup of Japanese and Korean anti-colonialists.

A re-evaluation of the dynamics between victims and perpetrators, focusing on ideology rather than ethnicity, does not inherently reduce the accountability of state actors nor alleviate the contemporary social and political responsibilities of individuals from the historical aggressor state. In narratives of colonialism, power inequalities between the colonists and the colonised must be highlighted alongside the responsibilities of the imperial aggressor. Furthermore, tourism narratives of collective trauma must extend beyond the mere documentation of historical events that precipitated it. By delving into the evolving interpretations of relevant sites since the occurrence of traumatic events, considering the perspectives of victims, perpetrators, and their descendants, thoughtfully crafted tourism narratives have the potential to heighten visitors' social and political awareness.¹⁷ Consequently, it is possible to design tours and narratives that foster a sense of political responsibility among visitors, theoretically including Japanese tourists to the above case-study sites, by refraining from actively categorising them alongside historical perpetrators. Rather, emphasis should be placed on encouraging political responsibility through reflection on the processes and consequences of marginalising the voices of

¹⁶ Discussions in summer 2022 of anti-colonial identities with two tourists of Gyeongbokgung from Caribbean countries formerly colonised by Britain and France in 2022. The Caribbean tourists, which did not visit together, stated a desire for more information on the colonisation of Korea than what was presented at the palace in order to make comparisons with colonialism in the West Indies and elsewhere.

¹⁷ Dragana Stojanović, "Holocaust and the Ethics of Tourism: Memorial Places in Narrations of Responsibility", *Philosophy and Society* 33 (3) 2022, 551–566.

victims, including the significant post-colonial role of the historical perpetrator state.

6.1.2 Remembering colonial collaborators

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the remembrance of colonial Korean “pro-Japanese collaborators (*chinilpa*)” is still a contentious topic in Korea. Most Koreans find the topic highly uncomfortable and never discuss it.¹⁸ The idea of Koreans working with colonial authorities against their own nation may pose significant “threats to the value of [Korean] social identity”.¹⁹ As discussed, memories of collaborators are omitted from the official narratives of Gyeongbokgung and Seodaemun Prison.²⁰ In Japan, Korean colonial collaborators are sometimes presented to falsely imply that most Koreans welcomed colonial rule and to deny the history of forced labour and sexual slavery (as in the examples in the previous chapter from the Tokyo Industrial Heritage Information Centre and the Nagasaki Gunkanjima Digital Museum). However, collaborators had a variety of motives for working against the Korean nation, and their roles in the colonial society are crucial aspects of colonial history. Without Korean collaborators, Japan may not have been able to effectively colonise and control Korea or rapidly recruit large numbers of forced labourers and sex slaves from the Korean countryside during wartime.

“Pro-Japanese collaborator” is a broadly defined term in Korea, typically encompassing anyone who aided imperial Japan, including public servants hired by the colonial government. A thorough investigation and justice process was not completed in South Korea after liberation as its first president, Rhee Syngman, relied on the support and services of powerful former collaborators to govern and rebuild the country while bolstering defences against its perceived new arch enemies, the communist North Koreans.²¹ Former collaborators used all opportunities to deflect attention away from

¹⁸ Han Hyein Interview.

¹⁹ Branscombe et al., “The context and content of social identity threat.”

²⁰ Seodaemun Prison exhibitions do mention Ye Wanyong who signed Japan’s annexation treaty in 1910 as prime minister of Korea. Ye Wanyong is officially and publicly acknowledged as one of the most, or the most, traitorous of collaborators and remembering him as such is not controversial in Korea. However, no information is given about Koreans who worked for the colonial government at Seodaemun Prison.

²¹ Jeong-Chul Kim, “On Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Korean ‘collaborators’ of Japanese

themselves and on to the communist threat throughout South Korea's military dictatorships, living affluent lives from fortunes derived from colonial wealth. Only during the progressive Roh Moo-hyun government (2002-2007) was a truth commission established to investigate and retrieve properties of collaborators, but, as most were no longer alive, it was their descendants that faced loss of properties and public stigmatisation. In 2009, the Centre for Historical Truth published their extensive Encyclopaedia of pro-Japanese collaborators (*Chinil inmyeong sajeon*) with biographical information on 4,389 identified individuals including several respected historical figures.²² The encyclopaedia was highly controversial and the Centre for Historical Truth was covertly monitored by the conservative Lee Myung-bak government, which did not support the previous government's efforts for transitional justice.²³ From a right-wing perspective, collaborator history can both put former right-wing dictators in a negative light as well as threaten ethnic nationalist pride. Korean collaborators remain a politicised and polarising topic as much of Korea's right-wing, including descendants of collaborators, oppose the remembrance of their full history.

I have suggested that colonialism itself should be framed as “the Other” at sites of colonial memory. This proposition does not negate the importance of acknowledging and holding accountable individual colonial aggressors and collaborators for the suffering they caused. Rather, it underscores the necessity of considering of how colonialism shaped global international relations at the time and of how most opportunities of the colonised were dictated by the colonisers. Present-day judgements of historical collaborators in Korea would likely differ if more Koreans had a deeper understanding of the diverse aspects of life under colonial rule and could imagine the difficult choices individuals faced—such as accepting colonial jobs to support their families or risking their lives to resist the colonial government.²⁴ Providing more detailed and objective historical narratives about so-called collaborators is essential to illustrate the diversity of their roles and to show that not all held anti-Korean or hostile intentions.²⁵ The same is true for Japanese people who

colonialism,” *Routledge Handbook of Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia*, edited by Mikyoung Kim (NY: Routledge, 2015), 159-71.

²² Ibid.

²³ Kim SeungEun, Centre for Historical Truth interview.

²⁴ Han Hyein Interview.

²⁵ Lee SinCheol interview.

worked in colonial Korea. Recognising that the issue of collaboration is intricate and incomprehensible without a broader understanding of colonial society at the time, ideally within a wider comparative framework encompassing colonial societies worldwide, could mitigate polarised interpretations of colonial history and create room for more public discussions.

While remembering all colonised Koreans as innocent victims serves certain political interests and reinforces national identity for some groups, it is detrimental to reconciliation and transitional justice. Refusing to acknowledge the extent of Korean collaboration in colonial history jeopardises the objective telling of the nation's story. When national identity is threatened by the actions of members of the ingroup, they are often cast as outsiders to preserve or restore a positive collective identity. This phenomenon has been named the "black sheep effect".²⁶ South Koreans who wish to forget about the "black sheep" of the colonial period for the sake of national pride must still battle with the traumatic memories of the Korean War, in which half the Korean nation were made "black sheep". Korostelina argues that "acknowledging the victimhood of a group together with providing a balanced view of the roots of conflict can help heal traumas of everyone involved."²⁷ To achieve this, a balanced perspective on the roots of Korean suffering during the colonial period and dissonant collective memories is essential, necessitating time and open dialogues across the political spectrum. The history of collaborators is a central topic for scrutiny and discussions in this context. Sites of memory can serve as platforms for public discussions on colonial collaboration, and my case-studies highlight how dark tourism is a viable method to contribute to these conversations.

Introducing objective narratives of colonial collaborators for dark tourism in Korea holds educational value not only for domestic visitors but also for international ones. international visitors can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of Korean colonial trauma by relating it to comparable colonial history from other parts of the world. This approach also helps to diminish antithetical portrayals of national groups, making

²⁶ Gi-Wook Shin, James Freda & Gihong Yi, "The politics of ethnic nationalism in divided Korea," *Nations and Nationalism* 5 (4), 1999, 465-84.

²⁷ Korostelina, "Understanding Values of Cultural Heritage".

collaborator narratives more accessible and relatable for Japanese visitors, as mentioned earlier. Euro-American visitors to the Museum of Japanese Colonial History in Korea, which dedicates a high ratio of exhibition space to collaborator history, often have difficulties grasping the concept of Korean collaborators, and guides find Nazi collaborators to be useful as a comparable example.²⁸ When narrating seemingly unrelatable Korean colonial history to foreigners, international examples are effective for elevating comprehension and fostering potential empathy by bridging colonial experiences of different regions of the world.²⁹ However, rather than a simple comparison to German-occupied Europe, diverse examples are essential for emphasising the complexities of colonialism, like those of government workers in Colonial India or African leaders profiting from the transatlantic slave trade.³⁰ The latter is a useful comparison also because Euro-American apologists of the colonial slave-trade have attempted to deflect responsibility onto African collaborators, not unlike Japanese apologists asserting that Koreans were in charge of recruiting wartime labourers and “comfort women”.³¹

To approach a balanced narrative of colonial history, I see it as essential to introduce both stories of resistance and collaboration, as well as stories of the daily lives of diverse people living under colonial rule. However, managers of most Korean sites of colonial memory only focus on victim and hero-narratives of Korean independence fighters.³² The private Museum of Japanese Colonial History in Korea attempts to provide a better balance of victim and perpetrator narratives of colonised Koreans. Diversification of colonial memory is possible in official museums as well. The official Seoul Museum of History opened a new permanent exhibition of colonial history in the summer of 2022 which demonstrates that daily colonial life can be portrayed without giving the impression that colonial rule was positive. The new exhibition encompasses narratives of discriminatory rule, wartime forced labour and sexual slavery, and the independence movement. It does not appear contradictory that it also includes narratives of cultural life

²⁸ Kim Yeonghwan interview.

²⁹ Lee SinCheol interview.

³⁰ For more on African collaborators, see for example Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, revised 1982 edition (Washington DC: Howard University Press 1973).

³¹ *Ibid*, 81-2.

³² Han Hyein interview.

in colonial Korea, such as the popularisation of Euro-American fashion, department stores, theatres and other popular culture. The exhibition does not, however, directly discuss pro-colonial collaboration.

The issue of colonial collaboration continues to be sidelined within mainstream political discourse on both the left and the right in Korea. However, the “New Right”, a right-wing movement launched in 2004, actively advocates for a revisionist interpretation of Japan’s colonisation of Korea, propagating its views through academic and political channels. This movement emerged as a response to the exposure and public criticism of post-colonial right-wing leaders and members of the capitalist elite for their pro-colonial collaboration. The “New Right” asserts a reinterpretation of Japanese colonialism, positing it as a catalyst for Korea’s integration into global capitalism and subsequent economic success, thereby seeking to vindicate and even glorify colonial collaboration.³³ Although the movement’s influence waned following the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye in 2017, it continues to exert influence within Korean political discourse.³⁴ This enduring presence underscores the critical need for presenting more nuanced narratives of colonialism and highlighting collaboration at public sites of colonial memory. Without these efforts, the intentional neglect of difficult collaborator history can enable revisionists to fill these gaps in collective memory with narratives that align with their political agendas and diminish the experiences of those who suffered as a result.

The decreasing prevalence of ethnic nationalism among younger generations of Koreans indicates that Korea is becoming more receptive to historical narratives and public discussions about colonial collaborators. The Centre for Historical Truth, which operates the Museum of Japanese Colonial History in Korea, has observed this shift in attitudes. While senior Korean visitors have expressed dissatisfaction with narratives about Korean collaborators and favoured “anti-Japanese” narratives, younger visitors are less troubled

³³ Vladimir Tikhonov, “The Rise and Fall of the New Right Movement and the Historical Wars in 2000s South Korea”, *European Journal of Korean Studies* 18 (2), 2019, 5-36.

³⁴ For example, “New Right” counter-protesters frequently interfere with the Wednesday demonstrations, where survivors and activists seek Japanese acknowledgement of responsibility and compensation for sexual slavery under the “comfort women” system. During my observations on 13 April 2022 by the Japanese embassy in Seoul, I spoke with several of these counter-demonstrators. They occupied the demonstration area, employing large banners and megaphones to promote the narrative that the former “comfort women” were voluntary sex workers currently pursuing fraudulent claims for compensation.

by such descriptions. In fact, some younger visitors have expressed disappointment over the lack of information about other colonised countries around the world (the Korean name of the museum is simply “Museum of Colonial History”).³⁵ Based on such findings, I anticipate that under a progressive government in the foreseeable future, sites of memory overseen by the government will be able to introduce collaborator history with significantly less public opposition than in previous decades.

6.1.3 Challenging hierarchies of victims

Hierarchies of victims are observable in official history and sites of memory relevant to war and colonialism in both Japan and Korea. In South Korea, independence fighters who were not communists and who died before they could object to the post-colonial South Korean dictatorships are the least complex victims to portray and are thus generally the most remembered. In most Japanese official museums encompassing history of the Asia Pacific War, Japanese victims of the atomic bombs, the *hibakusha*, dominate victim-narratives.³⁶ These hierarchies of remembrance obstruct balance in historical narratives and perpetuate historical inaccuracy in collective memory, while also denying justice for forgotten victims and those who identify with them.

In Korea, Seodaemun Prison serves as a prominent example of the official victim hierarchies across modern history, shedding light on its fundamental characteristics. Understanding the interconnectedness of colonial and post-colonial history is essential, as many victims perceive the injustices during the post-colonial period as continuations of the colonial era. This is due to the fact that post-colonial South Korean dictatorships perpetuated totalitarian and oppressive policies inherited from the colonial government, resulting in new attacks on former independence fighters who subsequently fought for human rights and democracy against Korean authorities. As discussed in [section 4.1.5](#), Seodaemun Prison History Hall is undergoing a gradual transformation of its exhibitions and symbolic representation, in order to be fully recognised as a memorial site that

³⁵ Kim SeungEun, Centre for Historical Truth interview.

³⁶ Kim Yeonghwan interview.

honours victims of both colonial and post-colonial oppression and abuse. This is a slow and difficult task due to the success of the prison museum's original memory politics which presented "the Japanese" as Korea's archenemy and portrayed the Korean people and state as one and the same (as "our nation"). The greater the inclusion of official narratives of post-colonial oppression at relevant Korean sites of memory, the more the visitors will be challenged to consider the connection between colonial and post-colonial state oppression and reimagine collective memory incorporating legacies of pre-democratic Korean memory politics.

The currently insufficient post-colonial memory at Seodaemun Prison perpetuates a hierarchy of victims which obstructs its intended purpose of victim commemoration, denying certain victim groups recognition. This unbalanced remembrance denies the value of less remembered groups and diminishes the site's potential normative function for victims whose identities are not (accurately) recognised.³⁷ In a positive turn, traditionally forgotten communist independence fighters have in recent years been included in the prison museum's official narratives as worthy Korean victims. However, they are still deliberately forgotten by some of the museum's guiding docents. Japanese political prisoners are almost completely forgotten. Complex victims like Korean and Japanese non-political criminals who endured harsh conditions under the colonial penal system have been erased from official memory. Narratives of Japanese people incarcerated for supporting the Korean independence movement are almost non-existent.³⁸ Most obviously, and perhaps most critically due to many still being alive, post-colonial victims are remembered to only a limited extent in exhibitions separate from the main colonial narrative of the prison museum.

Post-colonial victims of state oppression have interpreted Seodaemun Prison's forgetting of colonial legacies under post-colonial regimes as deliberate attacks on their own memories of suffering. In the central prison building of Seodaemun Prison, an exhibit showcases *gada-bap* cups which are colonial measurement tools that were employed to apportion food for inmates based on their crimes and the points they accumulated in

³⁷ Korostelina, "Understanding Values of Cultural Heritage".

³⁸ See section [4.3.2.2 First floor – Promoting patriotic national identity](#).

prison.³⁹ Independence activists are described by guiding docents as having received the smallest portions, and an information panel illustrates how food was measured in 1936. Ku Yonchol, who served as a post-colonial political prisoner in Busan Prison and Gwangju Detention Centre for 20 years from 1954, was served nothing but the smallest *gada-bap* portions until the day he was released.⁴⁰ When I asked his opinion on the Seodaemun exhibition's selectively represented timeframe, Ku expressed great frustration (“*cham giga makinda*”) and stated he perceived it as part of a “history obliteration policy (*yeoksa malsal jeongchaek*)” aimed at denying the brutality of South Korean dictatorships. Another former political prisoner who served in Seodaemun Prison for about half a year until its closure in 1987 and is still affected by torture endured during prior interrogations stated that the walls of his cell were covered in pro-democracy graffiti engraved by other political prisoners. He stated that all he could say about the prison museum is that he was extremely disappointed to see the graffiti had been covered up and forgotten.⁴¹

Post-colonial history adds crucial context to the colonial memory at Korean sites of memory like Seodaemun Prison. In the words of Kim Chol Su, Vice Director of the Centre for Korean Studies at Chōsen Daigakkō (Korea University in Tokyo),⁴² Seodaemun Prison should be an educational space representing human rights, not anti-Japanese sentiment, because colonial legacies of violent oppression of political activists were continued by Korean military governments supported by former Korean pro-colonial collaborators.⁴³ By objectively portraying post-colonial history, it becomes easier to challenge the notion that nationality serves as the primary distinction between victims and perpetrators in colonial Korea. By officially acknowledging this context, “the Japanese” or Japanese colonialists can no longer be viewed as the antithesis of the Korean nation, and allegiance to Korean rulers cannot be presumed to be an integral component

³⁹ Inmate food measured by these tools, before and after liberation from Japan, were referred to as “*gada-bap*”. “*Gada*” is a Koreanised form of the Japanese word “*kata* (型)” which can mean “form” or “frame”.

⁴⁰ Ku Yonchol Interview; An Jaeseong, *Shinbulsan: Ppalchisan Ku Yeoncheol saengaesa* [Shinbulsan: The life story of partisan Ku Yonchol] (Busan: Sanjini, 2011).

⁴¹ Informal conversation with former political prisoner of Seodaemun Prison introduced to me by Korean activists during fieldwork.

⁴² See [Notes on Romanisation, Translation, and Toponyms](#) and [Appendix I.VII, Introduction of research interview participants, Chōsen Daigakkō](#).

⁴³ Kim Chol Su, Chōsen Daigakkō Interview.

of Korean identity or patriotism. As a result, sites of memory related to both colonial and post-colonial authoritarian governments would gain elevated educational value and potentially be recognised and appreciated by a more diverse range of groups.

In Japan, the Japanese *hibakusha* who were victims of the American atomic bombings are central to Japanese war memory, as evident in most relevant museums. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum narratives are exclusively from the perspective of Japanese *hibakusha*, while the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum to some extent incorporates perspectives of foreign *hibakusha* who were in Japan at the time. The collective memory of the atomic bombings holds great significance in Japanese victimhood nationalism, contributing to the popular narrative of “pacifist Japan”. Japan also suffered many other non-atomic air-raids killing countless victims, but there are no official museums paying any significant attention to them. Furthermore, local Japanese governments do not arrange commemorative events for victims of non-atomic air raids.⁴⁴ Second to *hibakusha* victims are perhaps Japanese soldiers who died fighting for Japan, although in the case of museums their narratives are most common in private museums attached to *gokoku* shrines (war martyr shrines) and those operated by the Japan Self-Defence forces.⁴⁵

Not unlike the dissociation of colonial and post-colonial inhumane penal systems in Korea, the connection between pre-colonial and wartime colonial inhumane treatment of miners have been dissociated in Japan. In the edited video-interviews with former Japanese Hashima residents exhibited at the Industrial Heritage Information Centre in Tokyo, it is repeatedly suggested that wartime Korean memories of torture, abuse, and having to work without protective gear cannot be accurate because it is assumed that Mitsubishi would not treat their workers in such a way. Pre-colonial victims of fatal

⁴⁴ Kim Yeonghwan interview.

⁴⁵ When visiting for example the museums attached to the Yasukuni shrine in Tokyo (the Yūshūkan) and the Ishikawa *gokoku* shrine in Kanazawa, war dead soldiers are commemorated as heroes who fought in a holy war. The *gokoku* shrine of Hokkaido in Asahikawa also has an adjacent museum which is not managed by the shrine but by the Self-Defence forces (the Hokuchin Memorial Museum). When I visited this museum on 31 May 2023, an elite member of the Self-Defence Forces acted as my guide and provided right-wing interpretations not unlike those at the other *gokoku* shrine museums, but with a significant exception. The guide criticised the Shōwa Emperor by stating that the imperial army’s systematic suicide attacks showed an unforgivable lack of respect for the lives of the Japanese soldiers, making suicide bombers the most deserving victims in his narration. Second in this victim hierarchy were the many Japanese soldiers and civilians who ended up in gulags after territories north of Hokkaido were returned to the Soviet Union.

working conditions and abuse at Japan's industrial heritage sites are not even part of the victim hierarchy at these sites, as official narratives exclude their experiences. Nonetheless, the Tagawa City Coal Mining Historical Museum in Fukuoka prefecture exhibits Yamamoto Sakubei's artwork portraying pre-colonial torture, abuse, and workers without protective gear in coal mines.⁴⁶ These include Mitsubishi's Takashima which, as discussed, became nationally infamous in the late 19th century when its inhumane and fatal treatment of labourers was exposed. If the victims of pre-colonial and wartime abuse at Japanese industrial sites were remembered side-by-side, it would become apparent that Japanese conglomerates like Mitsubishi and Mitsui did not abuse wartime labourers in an unprecedented manner, but rather reverted to their violent but effective pre-colonial forms of labour management during wartime when high performance was required from inexperienced and unwilling labourers.

It may be needless to reiterate that foreign victims of Japan's war efforts, including victims of military attacks, forced labour and sexual slavery are at the bottom of the victim hierarchy, remaining unmentioned at most Japanese sites of memory, with the exception of private peace museums. Korean women forced to serve in "special comfort stations" for Korean forced miners may occupy the lowest rung of this hierarchy, rarely recognised anywhere, including in Korea. Any expansion of categories of victims for commemoration would be an improvement in official museums. Due to Japan's persistent memory politics of denial, it cannot be expected to narrate memories of the foreign victims of imperial Japan without significant external pressure. However, significant contributions towards meaningful public discussions at sites of memory could be made if stakeholders such as NGOs, teachers, private tour guides, foreign tour operators, and writers of travel guides made more efforts to provide tourists (and visiting students) with a more balanced overview of the diverse victims of the Asia Pacific War and imperial Japan's colonialism.

Finally, it is noteworthy how traditional gender roles are also utilised to mould the hierarchies of victims and their representation at heritage sites. As outlined in [Chapter 3.2.4](#), official narratives at Gyeongbokgung depict Queen Myeongseong through

⁴⁶ Visited on 8 July 2022.

antiquated ideals of femininity, emphasising gentleness and beauty while overlooking her documented qualities as a strategic politician and diplomat. This feminised portrayal of Queen Myeongseong serves to symbolise Japan as inherently barbaric, consistently attacking and seeking to destroy the perceived innocence and beauty of the Korean nation. It is not unlike the gendered protectionism evident in contemporary androcentric Korean views of Korean “comfort women” which sidelines female perspectives and experiences to promote a broad national victimhood narrative.⁴⁷ Contrastingly, as discussed in [Chapter 4.2](#), Seodaemun Prison highlights victims embodying masculine resistance, promoting pride and nationalism through the struggles of independence *fighters* (emphasis added).⁴⁸ These victims are portrayed as dignified and heroic role models, demonstrating unwavering patriotism even in the face of extreme torture. While Queen Myeongseong’s feminised history underscores the perceived immorality and capriciousness of imperial Japan, Seodaemun Prison’s masculinised narratives highlight the ineffectiveness of Japanese colonial violence against Koreans. Both cases select and marginalise victims based on gendered memory, contributing to an androcentric nationalism that undermines lived female experiences under colonialism.

Androcentric nationalism is also apparent at the Japanese case-study sites. Framed from the perspective of rugged miners whose labour fuelled Japan’s industrial progress, guides at Hashima emphasise “moving moment[s]” when the bodies of (post-war) miners who perished due to dangerous working conditions were returned to their families. The same narrative has that the island was like “heaven” for women because the gender imbalance of the population caused men to fight over the women there.⁴⁹ The Gunkanjima Digital Museum depicts women as merely “enjoying mindless chatter” while men patronised the “red light district”.⁵⁰ Japanese and Korean women confined there during wartime are labelled as the “beauties of Hashima”.⁵¹ Such androcentric narratives sideline female victims, objectifying them and marginalising their perspectives, resulting in a distorted

⁴⁷ See for example You-Me Park, “Comforting The Nation: ‘Comfort Women’, the Politics of Apology and the Workings of Gender”, *Interventions*, 2(2000), 199–211, 204-5.

⁴⁸ In Seodaemun Prison’s official narratives, the masculine “independence fighters” is the preferred term for those who opposed colonial rule.

⁴⁹ See [5.3.3 Sightseeing on Hashima and selective memories](#).

⁵⁰ See [5.3.1 Gunkanjima Digital Museum](#).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

and selective history of brave men whose sacrifices helped build today's Japan.

At both the Korean and Japanese case-study sites, rectifying gendered stereotypes and including documented perspectives from a diverse range of victims are urgently needed. However, the current perspectives appear effective in promoting national pride as desired by many policymakers and visitors, and may persist in official narratives unless there is significant external pressure for change.

6.2 Making dark tourism in Korea and Japan more broadly accessible

6.2.1 Creation of dark tourism guidebooks and websites for Korea and Japan.

Both Korea and Japan lack multilingual collections of information on various sites ideal for dark tourism in the two countries. In the case of Korea, there are many websites, including official sites managed by the government, that include lists of recommended dark tourism destinations.⁵² However, these limited lists only present a few of the most well-known sites along with generic information not especially useful for educational dark tourism. There are currently no books or websites that provide extensive information and directions to sites ideal for dark tourism in Korea. In Japan, the government has made no efforts to promote dark tourism. However, a number of relevant Japanese books have been published, and dark tourism in Japan is promoted online through, for instance, web magazines.⁵³ Like Korean counterparts, available online lists of destinations are short and generic. In contrast, several of Ide Akira's books on dark tourism include directions and extensive information about the history of many sites in Japan—both well-known and

⁵² See for example Kim Young Deok and Lee Jihae. "Experiencing tragic history: 3 dark tourism spots in Korea," 12 August 2019, *Korea.net* (<https://www.korea.net/NewsFocus/FoodTravel/view?articleId=174231>); Seoul Tourism Organization, "Hallyu: Seoul Dark Tourism," 22 August 2019, *Visit Seoul.net* (https://english.visitseoul.net/tours/History-Tour--Seoul-Dark-Tourism_/30991)

⁵³ See for example Matthew Hernon, "List of 7: Dark Tourism in Japan", 6 June 2023, *Tokyo Weekender* (<https://www.tokyoweekender.com/travel/dark-tourism-japan/>); Hiro K., "5 Dark Tourism Sites Across Japan," 22 January 2020, *Japan Wireless web magazine* (<https://jw-webmagazine.com/dark-tourism-sites-across-japan/>)

local.⁵⁴ However, these books are published exclusively in Japanese.

In the case of the Meiji Industrial Sites and other nearby sites relevant to their colonial and wartime history, a guidebook ideal for dark tourism has already been published by two cooperating NGOs in 2017. The “Sites of Japan’s Meiji Industrial Revolution and Forced Labor: Korea-Japan NGO Guidebook” was compiled by the Network for Fact Finding on Wartime Mobilization and Forced Labor in Japan and the Center for Historical Truth in Korea. The project was proposed by the Korean NGO, and the level of detailed data included was made possible particularly due to Takeuchi Yasuto of the Japanese NGO who has conducted relevant research and collected large amounts of data over a period of decades.⁵⁵ The book, which has Japanese, Korean, and English editions, can be bought through Amazon Japan or the Kobe Student Youth Centre, or downloaded for free from the websites of the NGOs.⁵⁶ The guidebook provides historical background on each of the Meiji Industrial Sites based on the research of the NGOs as well as maps and practical information for visiting the sites. Furthermore, other relevant sites such as private museums, memorials and graves are introduced for potential combined visits. Further guidebooks in similar style introducing other sites of colonial history in Korea and Japan would be immensely useful for anyone interested in engaging with colonial memory through travel. However, most potential tourists are unlikely to become aware of the NGO Guidebook’s existence unless visiting websites of peace activists, and although the English version excellent, it can only be found online with very specific keywords if searching in English. Furthermore, the title of the guidebook is unlikely to interest anyone without preexisting knowledge of the sites’ colonial history. The Center for Historical Truth does not have data on how many books have been sold or downloaded but assumes the number to be low due to the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ See for example Ide Akira, *Higeki no sekai isan – Dāku tsūrizumu kara mita sekai* [World Heritage of tragedy: The world seen through dark tourism], (Tokyo: Bunshun shinsho, 2021); Ide, *Dāku tsūrizumu kakuchō - Kindai no sai-kōchiku* [Dark tourism expansion: Reconstruction of modern history], (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 2018); Ide, *Dāku tsūrizumu: Kanishimi no kioku wo meguru tabi* [Dark Tourism: Travel in the context of tragic memories], (Tokyo: Gentosha, 2018).

⁵⁵ The Center for Historical Truth interview.

⁵⁶ Kobe Student Youth Center website: <https://ksyc.jp/publish/sinsokyumeiguidebook/>; Network for Research on Forced Labor Mobilization website: <https://ksyc.jp/sinsou-net/>; direct link to English guidebook: https://ksyc.jp/sinsou-net/201712_unesco_guidebook_EN.pdf

⁵⁷ The Center for Historical Truth interview.

Seo Kyoung-Duk, the scholar of public relations well-known in Korea for his activism against distortions of colonial history, is at the time of writing developing an online travel guide specifically for educational tourism at sites of colonial history in Korea and Japan.⁵⁸ The planned website has potential to become the most effective and widely accessible resource for travellers interested in colonial history in the two countries when it comes to planning their itineraries. A dark tourism website in English and other foreign languages is likely to attract the attention of, particularly, Euro-American travellers.⁵⁹ Seo Kyoung-Duk aims to maximise accessibility by creating translated versions of the site in approximately 10 languages, including Korean, Japanese, English, and Arabic. The guide is designed for all types of travellers, including families on vacation, and will offer recommendations for integrating sites of colonial memory with popular leisure attractions nearby. This approach acknowledges that most tourists have varied interests and usually do not exclusively seek dark tourism experiences. The guide for sites in Korea is being designed with international tourists with limited knowledge of Korean history in mind. The ambitious project is set to launch with online guides for sites in selected areas in Korea and Japan initially, with continuous expansions planned to encompass more locations.

The depth and accuracy of historical facts provided for each site in the online guide is unlikely to be comparable to those of the above example of the NGO guidebook, considering the differences in project scales and academic fields of the creators. Furthermore, it may be perceived to have low credibility in Japan if no Japanese historians are involved in its creation. However, if effectively search engine optimised to target tourists seeking diverse travel information for Korea and Japan, a multilingual online guide like the one planned by Seo Kyoung-Duk has the potential to inspire a considerable number of tourists to engage in dark tourism and explore marginalised colonial memories in the two countries. As similar sources of dark tourism information emerge in the future, their collective impact would continue to grow.

⁵⁸ Seo Kyoung-Duk Interview.

⁵⁹ Ide Akira Interview. According to Ide, dark tourism is most popular amongst Euro-American travellers due to its long history in Europe and for cultural reasons, but there are no comprehensive sources in European languages for dark tourism in Korea and Japan.

6.2.2 Limitations and potentials for multilingual narratives

The availability and extent of multilingual narratives and guided tours provided by managers of tourism sites naturally constrains the potential for international dark tourism. Although especially interested visitors may collect information in their own languages and engage in individual dark tourism, marginalised colonial memories would potentially reach a much larger international audience if included in official and unofficial narratives provided in a variety of languages. As discussed in the previous chapters, observations indicate that customising narratives to align with the general knowledge of local history for visitors from different linguistic and cultural regions would lead to better understanding and the potential to enhance educational experiences.

Senior managers at both the Gyeongbokgung Office and the Seodaemun Prison History Hall agree that official historical interpretations should be conveyed to visitors identically with the same level of detail regardless of language.⁶⁰ However, it appears that both guides and translators would disagree. At Gyeongbokgung, official guides clearly adjust their narratives according to presumed or experienced differences in tour participants' preexisting knowledge of Korean history, depending on their preferred language. At Seodaemun Prison, information panels containing ethnocentric and even racist⁶¹ descriptions of the Japanese in Korean have been sanitised in Japanese and English translations. Naturally, racist and xenophobic interpretations are detrimental to education in any language, but the example illustrates how, in practice, official narratives do not necessarily end up being consistent across languages despite stated efforts by senior managers.

Visitors' background knowledge of Korean and Japanese history usually differs widely depending on their home region and native language. Narrating difficult colonial history in Korea by providing the same details and wordings to, for example, Korean and German-speaking audiences would necessitate an introductory level historical overview

⁶⁰ Informal conversations with official guides at Gyeongbokgung, 2022; Park Kyung-mok interview.

⁶¹ See the information panel "Torture – A Tool For Ruling the Colony" described in chapter 4.3.2.3 [The basement interrogation rooms](#).

that would bore most Korean speakers as well as details unknown to most Koreans that could easily overwhelm and alienate the German-speakers. Furthermore, the format of narratives must be adapted for tourism cultures which vary depending on cultural backgrounds and language spoken. For example, guides accustomed to guiding Korean visitors often fail to captivate the attention of Euro-American visitors by presenting a series of facts without enough compelling stories binding them together.⁶² Considering the challenges of achieving synchronisation of narratives across languages, coupled with the substantial differences in tourists' existing knowledge of local history based on their respective regions, it becomes apparent that efforts should be redirected towards enabling a certain degree of localisation.

While providing official narratives in a multitude of languages is beneficial for reaching broad groups of tourists, applying new languages to guided tours is costly and time-consuming. A prioritising focus on providing guided tours in more languages results in less resources to further develop existing and new historical narratives at each site. At sites utilising volunteers as guides, like Seodaemun Prison, recruiting guides with diverse language abilities and sufficient historical knowledge is a constant challenge.⁶³ At sites hiring professional guides, like Gyeongbokgung, the training and quality control of new guides and narratives in additional languages may deplete budgets for developing new guided tours, such as tours focusing on difficult history ideal for dark tourism.

In the case of Gyeongbokgung, additional languages are prioritised over other additional tour options and narratives.⁶⁴ Development and training for a Spanish version of the official tour had been completed by April 2022, but could not be initiated until the end of the year due to budget limitations delaying the required hire of a second Spanish speaking expert on Korean history to approve the prepared tour. An official guide informally implied that budget issues in 2022 were partially caused by internal disagreements and a senior manager's decision to deplete the budget with "unnecessary" maintenance work. However, plans exist to develop standard official tours in many more languages. In addition, a new official Korean language tour focusing on King Gojong and the fall of the

⁶² McPherson Interview.

⁶³ Conversation with Seodaemun Prison History Hall curator Kim Cheolhyeon on 10 June 2023.

⁶⁴ Informal conversations with official guides at Gyeongbokgung, 2022.

Joseon dynasty was in development during fieldwork. However, this tour is not intended to detail Queen Myeongseong's assassination, and no plans exist to provide the tour in any other language due to prioritisation of adding languages for the standard tours.

In the case of Japan, official museums and historical sites operated or promoted by the government generally have more resources and are better equipped to accommodate non-Japanese speakers compared to many private museums.⁶⁵ Private museums that exhibit difficult colonial history and confront the government's historical denialism often face limitations in providing comprehensive translations due to their relatively limited resources compared to government-backed museums and sites. Consequently, the revised historical narratives promoted by the government are much more accessible to international tourists. Even at the Industrial Heritage Information Centre in Tokyo, which denies wartime forced labour history and receives few international tourists, visitors are offered individual digital tablets which contain written and audio-recorded translations of all information panels in the information centre. This is possible as the centre is paid extraordinary sums by the Japanese government for research and operational costs, amounting to over 1.35 billion yen from 2016 to 2021.⁶⁶ On the other hand, for example at the private Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum, which highlights perpetrator narratives of Japan's colonial and wartime history, English translations are inconsistent and less detailed than original Japanese texts. At the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace in Tokyo, which focuses on the "comfort women" issue, information in English is only partly available upon request in the form of printouts not covering recent exhibition materials. Managers of both museums wish to make their information more accessible to international visitors, but development is slow due to a lack of funding and knowledgeable multilingual volunteers.

Museums in Korea and Japan that rely on volunteers to conduct tours and provide translations in foreign languages may find it increasingly practical to recruit volunteers from the growing population of foreign residents. Furthermore, technological advances

⁶⁵ Kim Yeonghwan Interview.

⁶⁶ 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).

may reduce the costs of translations in the near future.

6.2.3 Optimising digital apps for multilingual audio guiding, virtual tourism and additional courses and narratives

As smartphones have become essential tools for most people in many parts of the world, increasing numbers of museums and heritage sites have developed digital guides that can be downloaded directly to visitor's private devices. Unlike traditional audio-guides, this allows for maps, pictures, audio, and video clips to be utilised in selectable languages without the need for managers to purchase any additional digital equipment for visitors and saves visitors from paying rental costs. Seodaemun Prison in Seoul and the Industrial Heritage Information Centre in Tokyo utilise this solution, the latter lending out large digital tablets with the app installed as an alternative to downloads to private devices. Guiding apps may also include options for virtual tours, making relevant sites digitally accessible anywhere in the world.

The official audio guide for Seodaemun Prison does not in its current incarnation provide significant information not presented in other forms at the site, but it holds potential for expansion as well as for virtual tours.⁶⁷ At the time of writing, the prison museum's audio guide may be most useful for Japanese, Chinese, and German-speaking visitors, as it provides translations of the information panels that currently lack written translations in these languages.

The official audio guide smartphone app for Seodaemun Prison contains not only recorded narration, but also pictures, written texts, a guide map, and a video introducing the history of the prison. When downloaded, it is fully accessible offline. Already in its current state, the app may function to provide educational virtual travel experiences for anyone who is unable to physically travel to Korea and Seodaemun Prison. A virtual travel experience may be further enhanced by combining the audio guide with the virtual reality tour of Seodaemun Prison available on its official website (only in Korean at the

⁶⁷ The smartphone audio guide app entitled "Seodaemun Prison History Hall" is available at the Google Play store. https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=kr.or.sphh.guide&hl=en_US&gl=US&pli=1

time of writing).⁶⁸

Not exclusive to the prison museum, alternative tour courses can be developed and provided to visitors especially interested in specific historical aspects or time periods at various sites through similar guiding apps. If the Gyeongbokgung Office upgraded their previously discussed audio guide to a smartphone app, alternative guided tours developed exclusively in Korean due to budget issues could be transformed to multilingual tour routes guided by the app, at low cost.

The War and Women's Human Rights Museum in Seoul relies on its well-developed traditional audio guide to convey the contents of its exclusively Korean exhibition texts to speakers of English and Japanese. Translations and recordings are professional, but the digital equipment is outdated and sound quality poor. If the audio guide recordings were transferred to a digital app, translated texts and pictures with captions could be provided with the recordings to improve the experience and comprehension of non-Korean speakers. Such a solution may be affordable and effective also for many of the private peace museums around Japan which lack multilingual guiding staff and space for comprehensive information panels in multiple languages.

Official guiding apps planned by managers of sites of memory have been discussed above, but there is also potential for unofficial dark tourism apps developed by individuals such as researchers and academics, or NGOs and commercial companies. Guiding apps may cover multiple sites in a certain area or country, provide digitally guided tours incorporating marginalised memories, and allow for users to add and share customised tour courses.

6.2.4 Popular entertainment as a gateway to dark tourism and colonial history

“Contents tourism,” a term coined by the Japanese government in 2005, refers to tourism that is primarily or partially driven by popular culture, and those who engage in it may be

⁶⁸ Seodaemun Hyeongmuso Yeoksagwan VR-bogi, official website. http://www.sdm.go.kr/360vr/05_indepen_fort/index.html (last accessed 20 March 2023).

referred to as “fan tourists”.⁶⁹ This concept emerged as part of the government’s tourism development policy, aligning with the “Cool Japan” branding initiative that emphasises the promotion of Japanese popular culture. Although the term was coined in Japan, contents tourism is globally popular and attracts fan tourists to various countries with significant soft power, with Korea being a prime example.⁷⁰ Many of the research participants interviewed and tourists I had informal conversations with brought up the fact that a high ratio of Japanese and other tourists to Korea visit the country primarily due to interest in its popular culture.⁷¹ It is uncommon amongst the general Japanese public to seek knowledge of Korea’s history beyond what is taught at schools, but Korean popular entertainment is well-known and widely consumed.⁷² The “Korean Wave”, or the global spread of popular Korean entertainment and contemporary culture, has become a formidable soft power capable of generating interest in Korea in large groups of international consumers beyond East-Asia.

The popularity of Korean entertainment can be utilised to introduce and attract attention to narratives of colonialism. This is exemplified by Seo Kyoung-Duk, who has successfully collaborated with renowned Korean celebrities to consistently engage both domestic and international audiences in the history disputes between Korea and Japan.⁷³ Collaborations that shed light on colonial history have the potential to captivate and pique the interest of contents fans in Korea and beyond. Furthermore, utilising popular culture at sites of memory can serve as a means to engage fan tourists and establish connections between historical narratives and visitors who possess a deeper understanding of the country’s popular culture than its history.⁷⁴ Many recent popular Korean films have been set in the colonial period and contribute to the visualisation of and international interest

⁶⁹ Nelson Graburn & Takayoshi Yamamura, “Contents tourism: background, context, and future,” *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 18:1 (2020), 1-11.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Interviews with Seo Kyung-Duk, Lee SinCheol, Han Hyein, Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol, Center for Historical Truth and Justice, Ide Akira, Nagasaki Mindan.

⁷² Nogi Kaori, Centre for Historical Truth Interview.

⁷³ Seo Kyoung-Duk Interview. Examples includes visiting Hashima and Takashima with Korean reggae singer Haha on the popular entertainment program “Muhan Dojeon” (aired 12 September 2015) and traveling to the United States to distribute information pamphlets with Korean actress Song Hye-kyo at American heritage sites relevant to Korea’s struggle for independence.

⁷⁴ Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol Interview. Volunteer guide Suzanna Oh effectively references Korean popular music in historical narratives to engage and generate interest among international tourists in *gugak*, the traditional Korean music.

in Korean colonial memory.⁷⁵

It is possible to utilise popular entertainment at sites of difficult memory without controversy. For example, an official guide at Seodaemun Prison referenced the Korean television drama “Mr. Sunshine” from 2018, pointing out that historic colonial prisoners from the museum’s exhibitions were depicted in this popular drama. Another example is the Mokpo Modern History Museum which narrates imperial Japan’s colonial exploitation of Mokpo and is housed in the former Japanese consulate of Mokpo built in 1900. The building was a central filming location for the highly popular fantasy television drama “Hotel del Luna” from 2019, whose narrative is unrelated to colonial history. Regardless, the photography zone in one room of the Modern History Museum displays both historical narratives and images of the independence movement as well as large promotional photos with fictional characters from “Hotel del Luna”.⁷⁶ If the museum was promoted appropriately for domestic and international fan tourists, a broader range of visitors would be exposed to colonial memory and, potentially, dark tourism.

If more Korean films and television dramas specifically relevant to, for example, Queen Myeongseong’s assassination or Seodaemun Prison were produced and became popular, a natural demand for relevant dark tourism narratives may be expected at the sites.⁷⁷ Guides at Gyeongbokgung are often asked questions relevant to Korean film and television dramas set during the Joseon Dynasty.⁷⁸ For example, several Euro-American tourists at Gyeongbokgung were observed asking if Crown Prince Sado was murdered at the palace—a shocking filicide at Hwasong Fortress depicted in various popular films and television dramas.⁷⁹ Contents tourism has been taken into account in the ongoing

⁷⁵ Examples include *The Good, the Bad, the Weird* (Kim Jee-woon, 2008), *Assassination* (Choi Dong-hoon, 2015), *The Handmaiden* (Park Chan-wook, 2016), *The Age of Shadows* (Kim Jee-woon, 2016), *The Battleship Island* (Ryoo Seung-wan, 2017) and *The Battle: Roar to Victory* (Won Shin-yun, 2019).

⁷⁶ Observed 1 September 2022.

⁷⁷ The film *The Sword with No Name* (2009) by Kim Yong-gyun centres around Queen Myeongseong’s life and death. It portrays her as remarkably intelligent and politically engaged, weaving a fictional narrative around her assassination alongside a secret love interest. Additionally, a 124-episode historical television drama titled *Empress Myeongseong*, created by Yoon Chang-bum and Shin Chang-suk, aired in Korea from 2001 to 2002. Seodaemun Prison was used as a filming location for the internationally recognised *Breath* by Kim Ki-duk (2007) and *The Handmaiden* by Park Chan-wook (2016), but neither portray it as a colonial prison.

⁷⁸ Informal conversations with guides and observations. In the case of Japanese visitors, *Jewel in the Palace* (2003) is most frequently mentioned.

⁷⁹ Crown Prince Sado was confined in a chest and starved to death by his father King Yeongjo in 1762 in

reconstruction project of Gyeongbokgung, with deliberate priority given to the reconstruction of the *Sojubang*, or palace kitchen. This decision was directly influenced by the significant role the *Sojubang* played in the 2003 television drama “Jewel in the Palace (*Dae Jang Geum*)”, which garnered popularity not only in Korea but also in Japan and other countries.⁸⁰ Narratives at Korean palaces relevant to colonial history may be accessed and absorbed by a broader range of visitors, including Japanese, if they encompassed and referenced narratives from popular Korean entertainment.⁸¹

In Japan contents tourism is widely promoted. Museums like the private Gunkanjima Digital Museum and the official Gunkanjima Museum display movie posters for various recent films with scenes shot on the island.⁸² International tourists stating they travelled to Hashima after having seen it in the James Bond film “Skyfall” have been featured on Japanese television programmes celebrating World Heritage sites. Contents tourism to Hashima is unlikely to highlight any colonial memory for Japanese visitors.⁸³ However, international James Bond fan tourists are likely to become aware of wartime foreign forced labour history at the island when preparing their trip, because it is highlighted to an extent in most available English sources relevant to visiting the island. In Korea, Ryoo Seung-hwan’s film “Battleship Island” may be referenced in promotion of educational tours, as long as its historical inaccuracy is highlighted. Fact-based Korean novels may also be utilised by unofficial actors to attract Koreans to Mitsubishi’s undersea coal mines,

Hwasong Fortress in Suwon.

⁸⁰ Explained to participants of a Gyeongbokgung tour by a volunteer from Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol on 11 June 2023.

⁸¹ Ide Akira Interview.

⁸² For example, *Skyfall* (Sam Mendes, 2012), *Attack on Titan* (Higuchi Shinji, 2015) and *Gunkan Shonen* (Saito Yuki, 2021).

⁸³ Contents tourism in other areas of Japan may attract some Japanese attention to colonial history. The manga and anime series *Golden Kamuy*, created by Noda Satoru, is set in real locations in early 20th century Hokkaidō and introduces Ainu culture and history. The language and culture of the Ainu was nearly erased when Meiji Japan colonised their land and renamed it Hokkaidō in the early Meiji era. Aspects of Hokkaidō’s development by Japan are comparable to the colonial occupation of Korea. During my visit to sites of Ainu memory in the spring of 2023, I had conversations with several indigenous Ainu individuals who highlighted the impact of the popular *Golden Kamuy* on increasing tourist numbers. They expressed optimism that tourism would continue to grow with the upcoming release of the live-action movie adaptation, which was in production at the time of my visit. Most museums relevant to the Ainu included *Golden Kamuy* posters, and souvenirs from the series were sold in souvenir stores around Hokkaidō, including in the Abashiri Prison Museum (featured in the series) and the Hokuchin Memorial Museum of military history run by the Self-Defence Forces (one of the two *Golden Kamuy* protagonists is a fictional veteran of the Russo-Japanese War).

such as Han Susan's popular *Kkamagwi* from 2003, or the still lesser-known "Takashima" by Jin Hyeonseok published in 2022 about Korean forced labour on the eponymous island.⁸⁴

6.2.5 Promoting regional dark tourism and local memories

Historical information and impressions tend to leave a stronger impact when experienced at relevant historical sites, where one can witness the same or similar scenery as historical figures did, allowing their memories to be vividly imagined.⁸⁵ This is a key reason why dark tourism can effectively highlight marginalised memories, and it also enhances the value of visiting regional historical sites while traveling. Therefore, promoting and facilitating dark tourism in less-visited regions can play a dual role, contributing not only to the dissemination of local memories but also to the development of regional tourism.

As discussed, Japan is attempting to increase industrial World Heritage inscriptions for industrial heritage sites, including sites with foreign forced labour history, partly for the purpose of urban revitalisation. The government's historical denialism may be unfortunate also for tourism because the touristic value of many areas with significant sites of difficult memory could have been enhanced through dark tourism. Nagasaki, for example, has great potential for increased and broadened dark tourism, not only due to its history of being victim to the atomic bomb, but also for its sites of wartime forced labour as well as its feudal history of oppressing Christians, presented at the World Heritage inscribed "Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region". If wartime forced labour history was officially acknowledged, official tourist maps and recommended routes could be updated to include a variety of relevant sites such as those described in the previous chapter.

There are diverse but little-known sites of war and colonial memory across Japan that could be utilised in similar ways, and promoted with local peace museums to enhance regional tourism. For instance, Hokkaidō holds, in addition to sites and private museums

⁸⁴ Jin Hyeonseok, *Takashima* (Seoul: Bansok chulpansa, 2022).

⁸⁵ Seo Kyoung-Duk interview.

of wartime forced labour, many historical sites related to Meiji Japan's colonisation of the island.⁸⁶ Marginalised memories of Japanese war victims could also enhance local tourism, for example at Kōchi in Shikoku where the Grass Roots House peace museum narrates both little-known memories of wartime air raids on Kōchi, as well as those of Kōchi soldiers in China.⁸⁷

In the case of Korea, several regional governments are utilising colonial buildings for tourism, such as in the cities of Gunsan and Mokpo, and the village of Guryongpo in Pohang. However, in Gunsan and Guryongpo, many colonial buildings have been fully restored but are used for leisure tourism focussing on nostalgia with activities such as kimono-wearing experiences and traditional candy stores.⁸⁸ In a central area of Gunsan, restored and reconstructed colonial buildings are used as guest-houses and even as fast-food restaurants.⁸⁹ It is perhaps needless to point out that such theme-park-like treatment of colonial heritage may in many cases not facilitate meaningful dark tourism or education.⁹⁰ Gunsan does, however, offer a multitude of informational museums pertaining to the city's colonial history, making dark tourism possible even for visitors with minimal pre-existing knowledge. Furthermore, tourism developments in areas like Gunsan demonstrate for Koreans that colonial heritage can attract tourists, and the acceptance of highlighting colonial heritage for tourism and leisure activities reflects a

⁸⁶ Japan's official stance on Hokkaidō's historical development does not acknowledge colonisation, instead describing it as a region developed by pioneering Japanese settlers who were militarised by the government, known as "farmer-soldiers" (*tondenhei*). However, at the Historical Village of Hokkaidō in Sapporo, which exhibits over 50 relocated historical buildings from the late 19th century during Hokkaidō's modern development, English translations on informational panels use "colonial department" when referring to "*kaitakushi*", which is often officially translated as "development department." I visited the site on 1 June 2023.

⁸⁷ Kim Yeonghwan interview.

⁸⁸ Observations from visit in 2016. See Oh Seona, Ōnuma Hisao and Seo Sangmun, "Kindai rekishi bunka isan toshite no shokuminchiki (nitteikyōsenki) no Nihonjin shūjū chiku fukugen no ugoki: Kankoku nantōbu kaigan ni aru Pohan-shi no Kuryonpo wo chūshin ni [Moves to Restore Japanese Residential Areas from the Period of Japanese Colonial Rule as Modern Historical and Cultural Heritage: Focusing on Guryongpo in Pohang City on the South-eastern Coast of Korea]", *Kyōai gakuen Maebashi kokusai daigaku ronshū* 17 (2017), 71-90.

⁸⁹ Observations from visit from 1 to 3 September 2022. See Bak Suhyeon, "Geundaemunhwayusangwangwang-ui jinjeongseong-e daehan gochal -gungnae dakeu tu-eorijeum-ui baljeon banghyang [Study on the Authenticity of Modern Cultural Heritage Tourism -Development Direction of Dark Tourism in Korea]", *Yeogagwangwangyeongu*, 25, 1 (2016), 37-55.

⁹⁰ See Todoroki Hiroshi, "Kankoku no kyū kaikō-jō ni tōei sareta 'Nippon' - Tōji no toshi keikaku to gendai no kankō keikaku no aida de ["Japan" projected on the former Open Port Settlements in Korea: Colonial city plans of the time against modern tourism plans]", *Ritsumeikan daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyū-sho kiyō*, 121, 12 (2019), 165-198.

changing perspective on how the colonial past is remembered and presented in contemporary Korean society.⁹¹

In Mokpo, which was one of colonial Korea's most important port cities, the local government is protecting many colonial buildings recently designated as cultural heritage sites rather than demolishing and/or reconstructing them. These include the former Japanese consulate of Mokpo (currently housing the Mokpo Modern History Museum), Air-raid shelters and tunnels from the Asia-Pacific War, the former Japanese Christian church, colonial buildings of the former Simsang Public Primary School, as well as various Japanese-style commercial buildings and residential houses. Information panels with historical interpretations have been erected in front of each building. The local government have created tourist maps for the city with walking routes specifically for sites of colonial memory. According to Jeon Yeongja, an official Korean tourist guide with 18 years' experience in Mokpo, both the local government and public are well aware of dark tourism and hope that their city will become better known for it. She convincingly hypothesised that the city could become an international hot spot for colonial history and dark tourism, and pointed out that there are many sites that international tourists may relate to while engaging with local memory such as air-raid shelters and colonial warehouses which are also found in different forms and shapes in many other parts of the world. During my visit to Mokpo, an absence of foreign tourists was evident, underscoring the necessity of efforts to promote the city as a destination for international tourism.⁹²

While most Koreans know the national colonial history taught in schools, many lack information about the local colonial history in their hometowns and the lives of their individual ancestors during that period.⁹³ However, in Mokpo, the heritage landscape clearly highlights the significance of the colonial era, and the local government actively utilises such heritage for education and tourism. As a result, most inhabitants are familiar with local colonial narratives and generally do not find the overall colonial memory

⁹¹ Han Hyein interview.

⁹² 31 August to 1 September 2022. At the time, entry to Korea was no longer significantly restricted by COVID-19 countermeasures and international tourism had returned in popular areas like Seoul.

⁹³ Kim Yeonghwan interview.

incongruous to tourism.⁹⁴ Many other areas in Korea possess officially unrecognised or underutilised colonial heritage that could be developed for educational dark tourism, similar to the approach in Mokpo. In recent years, the Korean government has designated many colonial buildings around the country as national heritage.⁹⁵ Initiatives like these have the potential to shed light on local colonial history for both residents and domestic tourists, with the possibility of attracting increased international tourism in the future. By officially valuing and protecting local heritage while disseminating relevant historical information, potentially sensitive and negative memories are redefined as valuable history. This way, marginalised vernacular memories may also gain greater prominence in public discussions.

Local colonial history can be effectively disseminated for tourists in museums, even when relevant heritage sites do not remain in the vicinity. One example is the National Memorial Museum of Forced Mobilisation under Japanese Occupation, which opened in Busan in 2015. The museum's location was strategically chosen because imperial Japan used Busan as a port for forced mobilisation to Japan, and many forced labourers came from the Gyeongsang region where Busan is located.⁹⁶ Situated next to the United Nations Memorial Cemetery pertaining to the Korean War, this area offers an ideal setting for educational dark tourism.

A different example is the private Museum of Sexual Slavery by Japanese Military, located at the premises of “the House of Sharing”, a care home for former “comfort women” in Gwangju, Gyeonggi province. “Comfort women” were mobilised from poor rural areas around the country, but this museum's location appears to be based on the convenience of its owners. Due to internal conflicts linked to allegations of mishandling of donations and improper treatment of survivors, “the House of Sharing” is at the time of writing not open for regular visits.⁹⁷ The history of “comfort women” only became known in the 1990s and is still marginalised, in general and in the context of sites of

⁹⁴ Conversation with Mokpo tourist guide Jeon Yeongja, 1 September 2022.

⁹⁵ Han Hyein interview.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Informal conversation with whistleblower Yajima Tsukasa in Seoul, 19 June 2023. See Choe Sang-Hun, “Japanese Photographer Blows Whistle on Treatment of ‘Comfort Women’”, *The New York Times*, 14 August 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/14/world/asia/south-korea-comfort-women-scandal.html> (accessed 24 July 2023).

memory. As few or no known heritage sites directly relevant to “comfort women” exist in Korea, the need for their memories to be represented in museums is even greater. Local governments and relevant NGOs should consider narrating the history of “comfort women” in local museums, incorporating local vernacular memories to the extent possible.

6.3 Negative perceptions of dark tourism and explorations of difficult history

6.3.1 Perception of dark tourism as unapplicable to celebrated heritage

In contrast to Euro-American notions of tourism, *kankō* (観光), the Japanese concept of tourism, composed of characters meaning “to see” and “light”, traditionally emphasises the exploration of bright or beautiful aspects of a given area.⁹⁸ Unlike in Christian societies in western Europe, *thanatopsis*, or contemplation of death, has not traditionally been linked to tourism in Japan and Korea.⁹⁹ Tourism in Korea developed during the Japanese colonial occupation, and the hanja (Chinese characters used in Korea) and original connotations of the Korean term *gwangwang* (sightseeing/tourism) align with its Japanese counterpart. In both countries, negative or difficult memory is typically considered incongruous to tourism. Sites like the Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome) in Japan and Seodaemun Prison in Korea, for instance, may appear like exceptions. However, domestically in Japan and Korea, visits to such sites are usually labelled as “educational visits” rather than “tourism”, due to the sites being defined by difficult but important memories. This cultural distinction between educational visits and tourism may make the term “dark tourism” confusing and apparently self-contradictory because

⁹⁸ The term *Kankō* was popularised in Japan after the Meiji Restoration. Its origins have been traced back to around the 4th century BC, stemming from a phrase found in the ancient Chinese classic, the *I Ching* (“Book of Changes”): “觀國之光”, which can be translated as “to see the light of the country”. See Satake Shinichi, “Tsūrizumu to kankō no teigi - sono gogen teki kōsatsu, oyobi, shoki no shiyō rei kara erareru kyōkun [Definitions of *Tsūrizumu* and *Kankō*: An Etymological Examination and Lessons from Early Usage Examples]”, *Journal of Osaka University of Tourism* (10) March 2010, 89-98; Morikoshi Kyoko, “A Review of the Concepts and Definitions Regarding Hospitality and Tourism in Japan”, *Hokusei Ronshū* 12, 17-28; Ide, *Dark tourism expansion*, 228.

⁹⁹ Thanatoptic elements have been common in various forms of tourism in Europe at least since the 18th century. See for example A.V. Seaton, “Guided by the dark: From thanatopsis to Thanatourism,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 2 (4), 1996.

educational visits to sites of difficult memory fall within its definition. In light of this, some argue in Japan that the katakana rendering of the English word tourism, *tsūrizumu*, should be employed to encompass aspects of tourism not traditionally covered by *kankō*, given its narrower scope of sites and activities.¹⁰⁰

Partly due to the deep-rooted idea in Japan and Korea that popular tourism sites should reflect positive culture and history, difficult and sensitive histories such as colonial history are generally not detailed at celebrated heritage sites in either Japan or Korea. For example, at Japanese castles, now popular tourism assets, it is not mentioned that castles were used nationwide by the imperial army as military bases and sites of public events contributing to the militarisation of Japanese society before 1945.¹⁰¹ In Korea, President Park Chung Hee was assassinated inside the Blue House presidential compound, but this event is not even mentioned to visiting tourists by either guides or information panels.¹⁰²

Japanese historical industrial sites like mines and factories are generally not celebrated or considered significant tourism assets. However, UNESCO World Heritage inscriptions are, in Japan to a high degree, expected to bestow touristic value on recognised sites. Japan holds a high number of celebrated World Heritage sites popular with tourists, and domestic and international World Heritage sites are frequently celebrated in popular mass media. As sites for educational visits, Japanese heritage sites like mines and factories may include narratives of death and disaster, but if World Heritage inscribed, the sites become celebrated heritage whose violent memories are sanitised to facilitate traditional leisure tourism.¹⁰³ For example, after the Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape was World Heritage inscribed in 2007, all information onsite about the Edo-period

¹⁰⁰ Satake, “Definitions of Tsūrizumu”.

¹⁰¹ Oleg Benesch and Ran Zwigenberg, *Japan’s Castles: Citadels of Modernity in War and Peace* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 96-139.

¹⁰² The Blue House opened fully for tourism in May 2022. Before this, it had been exclusively used by presidents, and tourists were limited to guided tours that did not include access to any of the Blue House buildings. I visited on 15 March 2022 and, after fully opening, on 27 May 2022, with no mention of Park Chung Hee’s death in any form on either visit. It is worth noting that views on Park Chung Hee are polarised in Korea and that those in charge of tourism at the site may be avoiding mention with the intention of preserving harmony amongst visitors.

¹⁰³ The World Heritage inscribed Hiroshima Peace Memorial is an obvious exception, as its historical value is tied exclusively to difficult war memory, and official narratives reflects this. However, while it is not a celebrated heritage, its constructed symbolism of peace and Japanese pacifism is arguably made a focal point for celebration. The history of Japan’s role as perpetrator in the war is dissonant to this narrative and is not officially discussed at the site or nearby museum.

execution ground for escaped labourers was removed.¹⁰⁴ Since the central government joined efforts to nominate the Sado Mines for World Heritage inscription, tourists are no longer informed of how thousands of homeless Japanese forced labourers died in the mines due to hazardous working conditions in the Edo period.¹⁰⁵ Two out of three mining pits of the Miike Coal Mines open to tourists are inscribed as part of the Meiji Industrial Sites, but only at the pit *not* World Heritage inscribed, the Mikawa pit, do information panels include POW labour history.

Due to Japan's memory politics, as discussed, the inclusion of Korean forced labour history to any extent in relevant official Japanese museums and heritage sites is extremely rare—irrespective of the sites' historical significance or World Heritage status. Foreign forced labour history has never been acknowledged for visitors to sites in Japan mentioned above, even prior to World Heritage inscription efforts. Furthermore, the exclusion in official narratives of well-documented cases of systematic abuse and torture inflicted upon Meiji-era Japanese labourers at several of the Meiji Industrial Sites can perpetuate anachronistic notions propagated by denialists, suggesting that it is uncharacteristic for Japanese individuals to subject others to forced labour and expose them to perilous working conditions with insufficient equipment and rations. The omission of difficult history, such as that of foreign forced labourers, from World Heritage-listed sites leaves the Japanese government susceptible to continuous warnings from UNESCO which in turn may invite criticism from the broader public.

In the case of Korea, the value of dark tourism to sites defined by difficult memory is officially recognised and even promoted in certain contexts, but traditional views of tourism still pose obstacles to official facilitation of dark tourism at celebrated heritage sites. Korean heritage sites like royal palaces are generally not considered suitable for dark tourism by their managers and Korean potential visitors. Although 48.9% of this study's Seodaemun survey respondents stated they had "often heard the term 'dark tourism'", its definitions and purposes do not appear to be commonly known in Korea. In Korea, sites applicable to Stone's darkest category, "Dark Genocide Camps", is often

¹⁰⁴ Ide, *World Heritage of tragedy*, 75-79.

¹⁰⁵ Nikolai Johnsen, "The Sado Gold Mine and Japan's 'History War' Versus the Memory of Korean Forced Laborers," *The Asia Pacific Journal / Japan Focus* vol. 20, issue 5, no. 1, 1 March (2022).

perceived as the typical form, or even only form, of dark tourism.

The case study of Gyeongbokgung exemplifies a Korean celebrated heritage site that is frequently viewed as incompatible with dark tourism by many Korean managers, guides, and visitors. This perception appears to stem from both misconceptions surrounding dark tourism, as well as the intended symbolic significance of the site. Gyeongbokgung holds historical significance as the site of Queen Myeongseong's assassination and a focal point for domestic and international power struggles that ultimately led to the downfall of the Joseon dynasty and the subsequent Japanese colonisation of Korea, which involved the construction of the Japanese Government-General Building on the palace grounds. These historical elements position Gyeongbokgung within several defined categories of dark tourism. According to A.V. Seaton's early typology, the palace fits category b) of dark tourism (or thanatourism), "Travel to see the sites of mass deaths or individual deaths, after they have occurred."¹⁰⁶ In Stone's typology of seven types of suppliers of dark tourism, Gyeongbokgung could be placed in the second "darkest" category, "vi) Dark Conflict Sites," which are history-centric educational (heritage) sites often related to warfare.¹⁰⁷

The senior managers at the Gyeongbokgung office consider dark tourism to be strictly confined to sites *defined* by tragic deaths and as a form of morbid entertainment. Consequently, they are opposed to the expansion of narratives depicting Korean tragedies for the purpose of facilitating dark tourism at the palace.¹⁰⁸ I was introduced to a manager at the Gyeongbokgung Office who agreed to consider participating in an interview for this research depending on questions sent in advance. After receiving my questions which revolved around dark tourism and official narratives related to colonialism at Gyeongbokgung, the manager ignored all my following emails, phone calls and text messages about the potential interview. Discussing dark tourism at Gyeongbokgung with Uri Munwha Sumgyeol Director Gang Cheonung and qualified volunteering guides Kwon Hyeokjun and Suzanna Oh, all three initially challenged the idea of dark tourism

¹⁰⁶ Seaton, "Guided by the dark," 234–244.

¹⁰⁷ Philip Stone, "A dark tourism spectrum: Towards a typology of death and macabre related tourist sites, attractions and exhibitions". *Tourism: An Interdisciplinary International Journal* 54(2), 2006, 145-160.

¹⁰⁸ Informal conversation with official Gyeongbokgung guide, 2022.

at the palace until I provided definitions and broad examples of dark tourism sites. Kwon Hyeokjun expressed his appreciation for dark tourism and revealed a strong desire to lead a Korean tour to the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camps in the future, but he had never considered Korean royal palaces as potential destinations for dark tourism. To many Koreans and others unfamiliar with diverse forms of dark tourism, it may appear as if facilitating dark tourism at royal palaces would categorise them together with genocide camps.

Dark tourism is a foreign term for a methodology that is not necessarily weakened by alternative labels. For example, in Japan, government-sanctioned dark tourism at sites affected by the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster labelled as “Hope tourism” mitigates negative perceptions from locals.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, anyone facilitating dark tourism in Japan relevant to colonial history may benefit from using other labels than “dark tourism” in Japanese promotions. In Korea as well, the term “dark tourism” may be avoided in order to mitigate negative connotations and misunderstandings related to misconceptions of dark tourism at sites encompassing difficult memory. For instance, the lesser-used but self-explanatory term “yeoksa gyohun yeohaeng (history learning travel)”, created by the National Institute of the Korean Language as a native Korean term for dark tourism, could serve such a purpose. The Korean survey results of this study, in which 95.1% of respondents agreed that they would recommend sites of colonial history to foreigners interested in Korean history, implies that the Korean public is generally positive about foreigners participating in certain forms of educational dark tourism. Existing official tours of Gyeongbokgung and other palaces already facilitate a certain amount of dark tourism, albeit highly limited, due to inclusion of narratives of colonial assassinations and destruction of palace buildings.¹¹⁰

Negative perceptions of dark tourism in Korea and Japan are also likely to change over time, as it becomes better understood. For instance, in contrast to senior managers, several

¹⁰⁹ Ide Akira Interview.

¹¹⁰ Narratives of colonial destruction are included at all four royal palaces in Seoul that offer free official tours. For example, official tour narratives of Changgyeonggung Palace encompasses colonial destructions of buildings and creation of a colonial zoo on palace grounds (observed 11 June 2022), and guides at Deoksugung Palace narrate the story of Gojong’s residency in the Russian legation and his untimely death, which is believed to be the result of a Japanese assassination plot (observed 25 May 2022).

younger employees of the Gyeongbokgung Office are positive about dark tourism.¹¹¹ As more people of younger generations attain relevant positions of power in the future, dark tourism narratives may increase, and may or may not be promoted as such.

6.3.2 Korean perceptions of colonial history as a threat to Japanese tourism in Korea

This study reveals significant potential for the expansion and promotion of colonial dark tourism narratives in Korea without any apparent risk of reducing the number of Japanese visitors. Narration of colonial history is limited at Korean heritage sites like Gyeongbokgung, partly because the intention is to ensure visitors have a positive experience. For narratives of colonial history, attention is paid to the risk of negatively affecting the mood of Japanese visitors.¹¹² However, although public sentiment related to colonial history in Japan is complex, Japanese tourists in Korea appear generally unthreatened and unoffended by Korean memory of the colonial occupation.¹¹³ Nonetheless, most Korean tour guides, if not trained otherwise, will instinctively circumvent colonial history when guiding Japanese tourists due to the assumption that it may obstruct a positive tourism experience.¹¹⁴

Many Japanese people may have limited interest and knowledge of colonial history, but curiosity is more easily piqued in relevant historical sites and areas. For example, it is not uncommon for the Museum of Japanese Colonial History in Korea to welcome Japanese tourists who stop by due to its vicinity to the K-pop themed “Hybe Insight”, better known in English colloquially as the “BTS Museum”.¹¹⁵ About 10% of the pre-pandemic number of visitors to this museum were Japanese. Another example is that although it is extremely rare for Japanese tourists to travel to China for the purpose of visiting museums of

¹¹¹ The generation gap in perceptions of dark tourism within the Gyeongbokgung Office was described by an official guide during informal conversation.

¹¹² Informal conversation with senior staff from the ticket-counter office.

¹¹³ Informal conversations with official and unofficial Japanese-speaking guides at Gyeongbokgung; Kim SeungEun and Nogi Kaori, Center for Historical Truth Interview; discussions with Japanese nationals at Gyeongbokgung and others who have visited Korea and Gyeongbokgung in the past.

¹¹⁴ Kwon Hyeokjun, Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol Interview.

¹¹⁵ Kim SeungEun and Nogi Kaori, Center for Historical Truth interview.

colonial history, it is very common for Japanese people on business in the region of former Manchukuo to visit such places—including the potentially shocking Harbin Unit 731 Museum about imperial Japan’s inhumane biological experiments on Chinese civilians.¹¹⁶

Many Japanese tourists in Korea are already exposed to Korean memories of colonialism to a certain extent at popular tourism sites like Gyeongbokgung. Official guides for Japanese tourists at relevant sites are usually trained to present such narratives without emotion or sensationalism, and continue to do so without controversy. Most Japanese tour participants listen carefully without comments or questions about colonial history. When presented with the official narrative of Queen Myeongseong’s assassination, Japanese tourists occasionally apologise for crimes attributed to their forefathers.¹¹⁷ According to Korean official guides and evidence from Japanese online reviews, it is more common for Japanese tourists to express feelings of responsibility for the actions of their ancestors than to express anger or frustration over Korean colonial memory and its representations at the palace. On KONEST.com, only two of 258 Japanese comments about Gyeongbokgung mentioned colonialism, neither being a criticism of palace narratives.¹¹⁸

Japanese visitors to Korea might exhibit a tendency to avoid sites associated with colonial memory, not due to a lack of curiosity or interest, but rather due to fear of Japanese being unwelcome at such sites. This is exemplified by the Japanese tourist mentioned in the Seodaemun Prison chapter who visited the prison museum alone and did not speak a word to hide their nationality in anticipation it may upset Korean visitors.¹¹⁹ However,

¹¹⁶ Ide Interview; Ide, *Dark tourism expansion*, 176.

¹¹⁷ Informal conversations with official guides of Gyeongbokgung.

¹¹⁸ One positive comment included how a Korean guide had briefly mentioned “the sad history of crimes committed by the Japanese” and that it was food for thought (“*iroiro kangaesaseremashita*”). Another Japanese visitor stated that they were grateful to meet a friendly old man by the palace who gave directions in fluent Japanese, but that their hearts ached when thinking he could have been “forced to learn Japanese when Japan invaded Korea.” See KONEST, “Gyeongbokgung”, https://www.konest.com/contents/spot_mise_detail.html?id=265 (accessed 6 December 2022).

¹¹⁹ I experienced a comparable example when staying in Korea as an exchange student from a Japanese university in 2010. As I came from a Japanese university and lived in an international dormitory, most of my first friends in Korea were Japanese. On 15 August, the National Liberation Day of Korea, I went to the Gwanghwamun area to observe and participate in related celebrations and invited Japanese friends. However, with one exception, every Japanese I asked, who were all exchange students in Korea, stated that they would not go outside on this particular day to avoid offending Koreans and out of concern for private safety. However, the single Japanese exchange student who joined me, his nationality easily recognisable from his fashion, hairstyle, and language, gained positive attention from Korean celebrants.

discussing this issue with diverse tourism stakeholders and members of the Korean public makes clear that the large majority of Koreans gladly welcome Japanese people interested in Korean perspectives on the colonial occupation. Therefore, Korean sites where official narratives focus on colonial memory should promote tours and information in Japanese to make them more accessible and reassure Japanese tourists that they are welcomed.

6.3.3 Dark tourism, national tragedies, and *schadenfreude*

Due to the sensitivity of colonial history in Korea and Japan, any business facilitating relevant dark tourism at predominantly positively perceived heritage sites risks being seen as capitalising on conflicts and tragedies. Dark tourism was popular but controversial in Europe long before the term was coined, mostly due to perceptions that participants' motivations were voyeuristic and immoral. It is not disputed that some people may participate in certain forms of dark tourism due to *schadenfreude*, the “secret pleasure in witnessing the misfortune” and humiliation of others.¹²⁰ Therefore, domestic tourists and professionals may evaluate dark tourism itself as disrespectful, potentially threatening, and undesirable if they observe any real or perceived instances of *schadenfreude* among international tourists.

Concerns of senior members of the Gyeongbokgung Office who oppose dark tourism at the palace due to their interpretation that such activities constitute irreverent entertainment derived from Korean suffering are not completely ungrounded. Many visitors reacting to the information panel and explanations of their guides at Queen Myeongseong's former residence in Gyeongbokgung were observed during fieldwork. Most foreign visitors had no prior knowledge of this event and expressed surprise (many gasping) and interest when learning that a Korean queen had been assassinated by “the Japanese” at the spot they were standing. However, some tourists also smiled and

We engaged in conversations with numerous Koreans and conveyed our congratulations on the occasion. The response from Koreans, especially towards the participation of my Japanese friend in the celebratory event, was overwhelmingly positive, contradicting the expectations of those who did not venture outside.

¹²⁰ A.V. Seaton & John Lennon. “Thanatourism in the early 21st century: moral panics, ulterior motives and ulterior desires,” *New Horizons in Tourism: Strange Experiences and Stranger Practices* (Wallingford: CAB International, 2004), 68-71.

appeared excited when they absorbed this information. Many of the tourists I conversed with at the site responded they would have interest in a guided educational dark tour of the palace detailing the murder with its political background and outcomes. A tourist seemingly from the United States stated their belief that “people would get a kick out of it”, if participating in such a tour. Whether motivated by schadenfreude or simply prospects of hearing intriguing stories, this response exemplifies how participants of sensitive dark tourism are prone to make inappropriate interpretations and react in potentially offensive ways if they do not understand the psychological and emotional impact certain historical sites and narratives may have on those personally affected.

Even in the extreme example of tourism at the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camps, well-known as emotionally challenging sites to visit, the management struggles to prevent visitors from capturing and sharing insensitive photographs to commemorate their trip or as “stupid jokes”.¹²¹ In Korea, tour guides who predominantly guide foreign Anglophone tourists may be tempted to utilise narratives rooted in traumatic memories for dramatic or comedic effect, despite the potential to offend Korean participants. For example, ZenKimchi’s Dark Side of Seoul tour incorporates a brief description of Queen Myeongseong’s assassination, narrated as participants cross Gwanghwamun Square, which includes the joke that “sadly” no Japanese ninjas were involved in the killing. The joke is arguably useful as edutainment for Western tourists who might imagine Japanese ninjas when they hear about historical Japanese assassins, but occasional Korean participants have expressed offense over such narratives tailored for bystanders (foreigners).¹²² Suppliers of dark tourism should attempt to consider all significant stakeholders when framing and moulding narratives of national tragedy to minimise real and perceived schadenfreude.¹²³

¹²¹ Auschwitz Memorial press representative Pawel Sawicki, cited by Sarah Hucal. “When a selfie goes too far: How Holocaust memorial sites around Europe combat social media disrespect”. *Abc news online*, 30 March 2019. <https://abcnews.go.com/International/selfie-holocaust-memorial-sites-europe-combat-social-media/story?id=62025268> (accessed 2 January 2023).

¹²² McPherson Interview. The comment that some Koreans have expressed offense over tour narratives was general, and not in direct relation to the ninja joke.

¹²³ As demonstrated for example by popular Korean films and television dramas set in the colonial period, narratives of Japanese colonialism in Korea may successfully encompass elements of entertainment without controversy when national collective memory of the period is visibly considered and respected.

Paradoxically, perhaps, dark tourism may in some cases reduce feelings of *schadenfreude* by highlighting diverse perspectives on history in ways that elevate understanding of tragic events. For example, it is not uncommon for members of the Korean public to consider the United States' atomic bombings of Japan as positive and derive a sense of satisfaction from a collective memory of inhumane Japanese colonisers being punished.¹²⁴ Such interpretations are derived from the idea of imperial Japan and its citizens as a collective evil and a lack of knowledge of the many Koreans who also perished in the blasts and due to radiation exposure.¹²⁵ By traveling to Hiroshima and/or Nagasaki with an informed dark tourism guide or guidebook, individuals can have the opportunity to reevaluate their collective memories based on local narratives of Japanese, Korean, and other victims, while also questioning the direct connection between the nuclear bombings and Korean independence. The very nature of dark tourism, which encourages introspection and critical reflection, has the potential to alleviate the collective trauma experienced by Koreans engaging in such tourism in Japan.¹²⁶ By confronting and acknowledging historical injustices and complexities, educational dark tourism may offer an opportunity for healing and a deeper understanding of the shared history between the two nations rather than allowing one group to derive satisfaction from misfortune of others.

6.3.4 Official perspectives on dark tourism and difficult history

Dark tourism narratives may lean in any political direction, often encompassing contradictory political views and nuances, and most sites of dark tourism are related to politics in one way or another.¹²⁷ Any narratives contradicting official historical interpretations are unlikely to be endorsed by governments. To avoid potential conflicts, managers of official sites of memory may refrain from introducing narratives that could lead to discussions on memory politics or challenge the government's official memory. Private museums that feature exhibitions on potentially sensitive topics may navigate

¹²⁴ Kim Yeonghwan interview.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Lee SinCheol interview.

¹²⁷ Ide Akira Interview.

controversy and secure governmental support by aligning their historical narratives with the official government views, as exemplified by the case of the Gunkanjima Digital Museum in Nagasaki.

The Japanese national government has never deliberately facilitated dark tourism. “Hope tourism” projects in Fukushima relevant to the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster are planned and supported by the local government. However, narratives are focussed on reconstruction and revitalisation and avoids discussions of government responsibility.¹²⁸ Hiroshima Peace Tourism completely avoids Japanese perpetrator narratives. These projects may fit under a broad definition of dark tourism, but they do not highlight all “dark” aspects of relevant history necessary for participants to critically reassess their collective memories and consider a broad range of long-lasting implications. In Japan, it is exclusively up to private companies, organisations, institutions and individuals to facilitate educational dark tourism.

The Korean government has in the past and present explored potentials of dark tourism at difficult heritage sites to raise historical awareness and to expand tourism.¹²⁹ Despite perceptions of controversy, the government of Korea recognises dark tourism as a multifaceted industry with significant potential for revenue generation.¹³⁰ Official efforts on Jeju island are relatively well-known in Korea, where stakeholders in the local government have actively promoted dark tourism relevant to the colonial period, the 4.3 Massacre (Jeju Uprising), and the Korean War for both educational and commercial purposes.¹³¹ Subsequently, Jeju dark tourism NGO tours have developed successfully.¹³² Additionally, tours to Korea’s Demilitarized Zone, arranged in cooperation with the government, could be classified as official dark tourism, although they are not explicitly labelled as such. However, these tours, often labelled as “security tourism (*anbo gwangwang*)”, convey a narrative that underscores a perception of the DPRK as a dangerous threat, lacking objectivity and consequently diminishing their educational

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ E-mail communication with Min Hyun-Suk, Senior Research Fellow at The Seoul Institute.

¹³⁰ Han Hyein Interview.

¹³¹ See for example Mun Sundeok, “Jeju jiyegui dakeutueorijeum hyeonhwangwa hwalseonghwa bangan [Current Status and Activation Plan for Dark Tourism on Jeju]”, *Jeju baljeonyeonguwon FOCUS*, 183, 12 (2013), 1-19.

¹³² See homepage of Jeju Dark Tours, <https://www.jejudarktours.org/en/> (accessed 24 July 2023)

merit.¹³³

The opening of Seodaemun Prison History Hall may also be considered an official dark tourism project. However, it completely overlooked how dark tourism at the site would, in fact, inadvertently highlight exactly what was desired to be forgotten—difficult post-colonial memory.¹³⁴ Nonetheless, with a relatively progressive director, Seodaemun Prison currently continues to revise colonial exhibitions for historical accuracy and increase post-colonial narratives while being overseen by the local government. The Korean government may plan and support certain dark tourism initiatives at more sites in the future. However, the fact that there are still no official museums in Korea primarily dedicated to the general history of Korea under Japanese rule indicates persistent official reluctance toward prioritising the visualisation of diverse colonial memories.¹³⁵

As discussed, however, the Korean government is unlikely to support dark tourism initiatives at celebrated heritage sites like Gyeongbokgung, which is overseen by the Cultural Heritage Administration of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. Since inbound tourism rose in the 1990s, Korea has aimed to develop tourism in order to improve its global image by focussing on the country's achievements, while avoiding difficult topics like for example “comfort women”.¹³⁶ Seodaemun Prison was not promoted to international tourists until recently. The government has preferred tourism to focus on traditional highlights such as Korean royal culture and cuisine, while the desire to avoid any risk of negative perceptions is so strong that even the history of common people and popular comfort food is taboo because it may be associated with poverty.¹³⁷ Whether progressive or conservative, Korean governments have been concerned about dark tourism initiatives fearing they may portray Korea in a negative

¹³³ If combined and compared with a visit to the north side of the DMZ arranged in the DPRK, the two tours together can provide a highly educational dark tourism experience. However, such comparisons are not desired by either government, and Korean nationals cannot visit both sides as tourists.

¹³⁴ Ide Akira Interview.

¹³⁵ The Independence Hall of Korea, like Seodaemun Prison, focusses mostly on the Korean independence movement. Some official museums include exhibitions related to the general history of Korea under Japan (for example the Seoul Museum of History and the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History).

¹³⁶ Suzanna Oh, Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol Interview

¹³⁷ McPherson Interview. McPherson, who in addition to dark tourism designs and guides culinary tours of Seoul have on several occasions worked with the government to promote Korean food to foreigners.

light.¹³⁸

Although the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, which manages the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO), has promoted sites like Seodaemun Prison for dark tourism on its websites, tourism focussed on colonial history does not appear widely valued or understood by the KTO. I visited the tourist information stand in KTO's Seoul Center with a tourist from Trinidad and Tobago who requested information about heritage sites and museums encompassing colonial history.¹³⁹ The staff of the information desk appeared surprised at the question, and left through the backdoor to find information as they did not have an immediate answer. Several minutes later they came back with pamphlets for Seodaemun Prison, Cheonggyecheon Museum, and the National Museum of Korea, stating that there may not be much relevant information at the latter but that it is worth seeing. Cheonggyecheon Museum, exhibiting information related to the history and 2005 restoration of the Cheonggyecheon stream which runs through Seoul, does have an informative section focussing on the stream during the colonial period, but it is not one of the most useful museums in Seoul to learn about colonial history. The national museum of Korea does not have exhibitions of colonial history or any guides who can talk about it.¹⁴⁰

It appears that staff at the KTO tourist information desk, even after consulting with others in a back room, were not aware of informative exhibitions on colonial history in museums like the Seoul Museum of History, the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History, or the Museum of Japanese Colonial History in Korea. This suggests that colonial history is in general not valued as a tourism asset by the KTO besides the iconic Seodaemun Prison, and that it is uncommon for tourists to ask questions about sites of colonial memory. However, the absence of questions about colonial sites does not imply that they would not be valued by tourists. It may suggest that many tourists do not consider visiting sites of colonial history because they have never heard about such sites for tourism in Korea. It can be argued that the KTO has a responsibility to promote sites

¹³⁸ McPherson Interview

¹³⁹ I opted not to ask directly myself in order to observe an authentic dialogue between a foreign tourist and KTO's tourist information staff about sites of colonial memory (August 2022).

¹⁴⁰ Seo Kyoung-Duk Interview.

of colonial memory, given that a significant number of Koreans believe that an understanding of colonial history is crucial for foreign tourists visiting Korea.¹⁴¹

It is also worth noting that recent conservative Korean governments, including the current administration led by Yoon Suk-yeol, are opposed to official historical interpretations that could strain Korea-Japan relations, making it challenging to present comprehensive narratives of Japanese colonialism at popular tourism sites.¹⁴² Conservative governments may covertly monitor companies and institutions that present historical narratives perceived as biased by far-left interpretations.¹⁴³ The frequent changes in power between progressive and conservative Korean governments, along with their conflicting positions on colonial memory politics, have led to a trend where researchers of colonial history are often hired by progressive governments on temporary contracts that are not renewed by subsequent conservative governments, hindering the overall development of official colonial history in Korea.¹⁴⁴ This frequent alternation between conservative and progressive governments is also likely to have a negative impact on the implementation of potential official dark tourism plans related to colonial history.

6.3.5 Commercial dark tourism, marketing, and public relations

Due to common negative perceptions of dark tourism in Korea and Japan, particularly when it pertains to sensitive and contested national memories, commercial tour companies face potential risks in promoting and organising such dark tourism activities. If a commercial dark tourism tour focussed on colonial history gains popularity in Korea or Japan, the historical narratives associated with it are likely to come under scrutiny and criticism from individuals who prioritise national pride and are unwilling to accept diverse and nuanced interpretations of colonial memory. Furthermore, some tour

¹⁴¹ In the survey conducted for this study, only 11.6% of respondents agreed with the statement “If foreigners visiting Korea are not interested in history, it does not matter if they do not hear about the colonial period”.

¹⁴² Informal conversation with official Gyeongbokgung guide.

¹⁴³ For example, the right-wing Lee Myung-bak government covertly monitored the politically left-wing Center for Historical Truth and their preparations to open the Museum of Japanese Colonial History in Korea. Kim SeungEun, Center for Historical Truth interview

¹⁴⁴ Han Hyein Interview.

participants may act in provocative ways and attract negative attention to their tour companies, for example by waving Korean flags in protest at Japanese sites of memory.¹⁴⁵ The potential controversies surrounding dark tourism can make stakeholders hesitant to collaborate with companies offering such tours. This poses a risk for companies providing diverse tours in Korea and/or Japan, as the promotion and facilitation of dark tourism may impact their conventional tourism offerings. Essential partners may seek to distance themselves from the company due to concerns or reservations associated with perceivably controversial narratives.¹⁴⁶ Most successful tour companies in Korea and Japan are more concerned about increasing business while avoiding conflicts than providing historically accurate narratives.¹⁴⁷

Some Korean travel companies that offer tour arrangements for Hashima promote the island as a World Heritage site without any mention of colonial history.¹⁴⁸ Other Korean companies use equivocations when promoting “dark tourism” at Hashima by alluding to a “painful history” without explicitly specifying the historical context they are referring to, thus evading commitment to their stance in the memory dispute.¹⁴⁹ For example, one Korean company promotes a Nagasaki tour of Glover Garden, Hashima, and Chinatown as follows in Korean:

“Dark tourism? A journey to reflect on historical sites and gain insights. Disembark on Hashima Island, which became an issue after being World Heritage inscribed and was featured on Muhan Dojeon (Infinite Challenge) in 2015. Walk slowly around the island, observing it from every angle and discover its hidden history.”¹⁵⁰

The promotion is misleading, because no hidden history can be discovered on the island by tourists due to movement being limited to a highly restricted path and explanations

¹⁴⁵ The Center for Historical Truth interview. Kim SeungEun hypothesised that some Koreans may act in such ways on dark tourism tours in Japan if not informed how it would contradict the purpose of such tours.

¹⁴⁶ Seo Kyoung-Duk interview.

¹⁴⁷ Nogi, Centre for Historical Truth interview.

¹⁴⁸ For example, Tteugeoun cheongchun, Nagasaki and Hashima tour description, Here we go website (n.d.), https://herewego.link/shop/item.php?it_id=KK_103057 (accessed 31 July 2024).

¹⁴⁹ For example, TMON, Hashima day tour description, TMON website (n.d.), <https://www.tmon.co.kr/deal/467600546> (accessed 31 July 2024).

¹⁵⁰ My real trip, Youtourbus Nagasaki tour description, my real trip website (n.d.), <https://www.myrealtrip.com/offers/9099> (accessed 31 July 2024).

being given exclusively by guides of the five Japanese companies approved to carry tourists to the island. When companies refrain from openly stating the true nature of the so-called “dark tourism” and instead promote unrealistic expectations of exploration and discovery, it becomes evident that educational potential is compromised by commercial interests. However, there are exceptions.

Turista, which hosted Seo Kyoung-Duk’s commercial guided tours to Japanese sites of colonial memory, is a major Korean travel company offering diverse tours to Japan as well as Europe. The company has also conducted tours with their internal guides following the route prepared by Seo Kyoung-Duk which includes Hashima, Takashima, the Miike Mines, and the Oka Masaharu Museum.¹⁵¹ Members of Japanese far-right groups stalked Seo’s tour group when he acted as the guide, but according to Seo, this was not a major issue for anyone involved and plans exist for more tours in cooperation with the company in the future.¹⁵² The fact that Turista continues to promote Seo Kyoung-Duk’s tours despite apparent risks, including that of Korean tourists having uncomfortable experiences with the Japanese far-right, demonstrates that even large-scale Korean travel companies may successfully promote and provide tours to Japanese sites of colonial memory if they are willing to attempt it.

There appears to be no Japanese companies that promote dark tourism relevant to colonial history to foreign visitors to Japan. This could be attributed to the potential friction with business partners and parts of the public due to negative perceptions of dark tourism and disputed colonial memories, as mentioned. Another likely part of the reason is that the Euro-American concept of dark tourism does not appear commercially lucrative in Japan in comparison to popular traditional tours. Chinese, Taiwanese, and Korean tourists account for about 75% of international tourists in Japan, and there is insufficient demand for dark tourism within these national groups.¹⁵³ However, a smaller company that exclusively provides dark tourism and strategically markets it internationally may have

¹⁵¹ Turista, description of group tour exploring sites of colonial resistance in Fukuoka, Nagasaki and Hashima, Turista website (n.d.) https://www.turista.co.kr/index.php?ref=user&type=product&action=view&product_idx=707 (accessed 31 July 2024).

¹⁵² Seo Kyoung-Duk interview.

¹⁵³ Ide Akira interview.

the potential for future success.¹⁵⁴ Such tours could also be operated by foreign dark tourism companies with destinations in various parts of the world.¹⁵⁵

In Japan, there are companies that offer domestic and international educational tours in Japanese encompassing colonial history, exemplified by Tabisen Tsunagu and Fuji International Travel Service (Fuji Kokusai Ryokōsha).¹⁵⁶ Both companies not only offer tours but also actively promote peace activism by providing educational lectures on various topics, including Korea's colonisation and Japanese war crimes. Examples of domestic tours include Tabisen Tsunagu's guided tour to Hanaoka mine in Akita, known for the massacre of about 400 Chinese forced labourers in June 1945.¹⁵⁷ Fuji International Travel Service offers a four-day "study tour" to Korea focussed on war and colonialism which includes a visit to the Demilitarised Zone, The War and Women's Human Rights Museum, the Museum of Japanese Colonial History in Korea, and Gyeongbokgung. This demonstrates the potential for Japanese companies to operate viable educational dark tourism at sites of colonial memory in Japan and Korea. However, neither company label their tours as "dark tourism" and they may be difficult to discover for anyone not already interested in peace activism. There are, as discussed, benefits to avoiding the term dark tourism in Japan and Korea, but the lack of standardised alternative terms again underscores the need for databases on less visible dark tourism opportunities such as those of Tabisen Tsunagu and Fuji International Travel Service.

6.4 Practical potential for unofficial guided dark tourism at sites of colonial memory

Creating and conducting guided dark tourism tours at sites of colonial memory in Korea

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ For instance, following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022, the Ukrainian tour company Chernobylx, known for its dark tourism offerings in the Chernobyl zone, established a new headquarters in Slovakia and expanded its operations to include tours to various sites in other countries, including the Fukushima Power Plant in Japan. See its website: <https://chernobylx.com/tour/fukushima-2-day-tour-with-the-power-plant/>

¹⁵⁶ See the homepage of Tabisen Tsunagu and Fuji International Travel Service. <https://tabisen-tsunagu.com/company/> and <http://www.fits-tyo.com/>

¹⁵⁷ Tabisen Tsunagu, 3-day Hanaoka tour description, Tabisen Tsunagu website (n.d.), <https://tabisen-tsunagu.com/travelpost/22ikedahanaokaakita/> (accessed 31 July 2024).

and Japan could significantly enhance tourists' ability to discover and engage with marginalised memories. This subchapter delves into the practical potential of unofficial dark tourism tours encompassing colonial memory in both countries, with a focus on the case studies of this thesis. Notably, the potential as well as official regulations differ significantly between the two countries, and they will be discussed separately in the following section. After exploring the practical possibilities primarily related to commercial dark tourism, the potential for non-commercial multinational study tours will be examined in the final section.

6.4.1 Korea – Gyeongbokgung and Seodaemun Prison

At most celebrated heritage sites in Korea, such as royal palaces, unofficial guided tours have broader potential for the facilitation of dark tourism than official tours. This is because, as discussed, official narratives aligned with the positive symbolism of these celebrated heritage sites only include limited aspects of the difficult history associated with them. Furthermore, at sites like Seodaemun Prison or the Independence Hall in Cheonan, where difficult memory is central to official narratives, unofficial guided tours have the potential to offer greater educational value. This is due to the fact that unofficial tours can more easily incorporate multiple perspectives to approach more objective narratives, in contrast to official tours, which cannot contradict official memory politics without facing consequences. At Gyeongbokgung and other similar sites, potential unofficial dark tourism tours may introduce an overview of difficult memories in the full history of the site, or focus on specific periods, themes, or historical events. [Appendix III](#) presents and discusses an illustrative hypothetical tour narrative centered on the life and demise of Queen Myeongseong within the framework of Korea's colonisation.

As mentioned, the Gyeongbokgung Office monitors tours of both official and unofficial guides at the palace biannually to prevent inaccurate or potentially offensive tour narratives. The current monitoring poses a challenge for potential suppliers of dark tours at the palace because dark tourism is not welcomed by senior managers. In actuality, private guides at Gyeongbokgung are able to provide any type of narrative they may

desire as long as controversial topics are adjusted during biannual monitoring and complaints to the palace are avoided.¹⁵⁸ For example, during fieldwork at Geoncheonggung I observed a Korean guide volunteering for a “Seoul Guided Walking Tour” officially organised by municipal authorities.¹⁵⁹ The guide provided a large group of Korean visitors with a lengthy and emotional monologue about how “Japanese bastards” (*ilbonnom*) murdered Queen Myeongseong before they stripped her naked and violated her “most private parts”.¹⁶⁰ I later joined a “Seoul Guided Walking Tour” of Gyeongbokgung in English on which the guide did not use any offensive terms, but presented unconfirmable and misleading ideas as facts.¹⁶¹ This demonstrates that while the monitoring of unofficial tour guides at the palace can be an obstacle to the creation of unofficial regularly scheduled dark tourism tours, it is not effective in ensuring objectivity and historical accuracy.

Various companies and organisations provide guided tours of Gyeongbokgung, ranging from free group tours to upscale private tours. None are labelled as dark tourism, but many incorporate difficult history in their narratives to varying extents. Depending on framing and labelling, alternative tours with a focus on colonialism could be made both educational and captivating for a mainstream audience despite the difficult theme. For example, Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol’s extended Gyeongbokgung tours, monitored and approved by the Gyeongbokgung Office, may be described as dark tourism. The tours are led by highly qualified volunteers and are intended to elevate participants’ appreciation and understanding of Korean culture and history relevant to the palace, and provide a balance of narratives of both celebratory and difficult aspects of the palace’s history. The extended tours, lasting over two hours, are only bookable directly through Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol (unlike one-hour tours one may join without reservations on Sundays). A

¹⁵⁸ Gang Cheonung, Uri Munwha Sumgyeol interview. Director Gang confirmed hypothetical possibilities but did not encourage anyone to conduct palace tours with narratives breaching official guidelines.

¹⁵⁹ See “Seoul dobohaeseol gwangwang.” <https://korean.visitseoul.net/walking-tour> (accessed 31 December 2022).

¹⁶⁰ See section [3.1.3 The Queen’s Assassination](#).

¹⁶¹ Examples of misleading interpretations on this tour (April 2022), includes presenting concubines as “palace women who protected the king”, and that “Geoncheonggung was not painted because the king desired to live like a commoner”. Geoncheonggung is a luxurious yangban-style villa which was not painted as a royal palace to emphasise that it was built with private funds (the public strongly disapproved of the high taxes imposed for the reconstruction of Gyeongbokgung in the 1860s).

Korean-language extended tour I joined had five reservations, but by the end of the tour the group grew to over 30 people as other visitors to the palace were intrigued by the exceptionally knowledgeable guides' captivating narratives.¹⁶²

For most non-Korean guides and companies, Gyeongbokgung's requirement for guides to be officially licensed in Korea pose a bigger obstacle than the monitoring of tour narratives.¹⁶³ During visits to Gyeongbokgung in 2023, staff were observed holding large multilingual signs stating that only licensed and approved guides may operate in the palace, revealing that unapproved tours are considered a significant problem by the administration. Since 2009, Korea's Tourism Promotion Act has required tourism businesses for foreign clients to only hire guides officially certified in Korea. Certification requires passing difficult written and oral exams encompassing comprehensive Korean history and relevant laws, exclusively in Korean.¹⁶⁴ As a result, an expert on the history of colonialism in Korea (or history relevant to this period at Gyeongbokgung) must also have deep knowledge of, for example, ancient Korean history, and possess near-native Korean language proficiency in order to guide foreign tourists inside the palace. Another result is a lack of diversity in official guides in Korea, who are almost exclusively Koreans with similar educational backgrounds. For tourism agencies to become licensed, the Korean government requires financial capital so extensive that smaller businesses consider it a regulation designed to prevent competition for Korea's most powerful tourism operators.¹⁶⁵ Korea's Tourism Promotion Act impedes others who may be qualified and willing to capitalise on educational dark tourism in Korea.

The requirement for official tour guide certification is indeed a challenge for anyone desiring to guide foreign tourists anywhere in Korea, although in fact, it poses limitations for uncertified guides and agencies rather than completely preventing them from guiding. For example, the Korea-based tour company ZenKimchi which runs the most popular anglophone food tours and dark tourism walking tours in Korea does not have an official

¹⁶² Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol tour of Gyeongbokgung, guided by Kwon Heonsu, 24 April 2022. Before the tour started, Kwon explained that many more participants usually join during the tour, and apologised to those with reservations for any disappointment in the fact that it would not remain a small group.

¹⁶³ Joe McPherson interview.

¹⁶⁴ Kwon Mee-yoo, "Stricter Qualifications Required for Tour Guides for Foreigners," *The Korea Times*, 29 July 2009. https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2023/07/113_49313.html

¹⁶⁵ McPherson Interview.

licence and several guides do not speak native-level Korean and lack official certifications. As a result, the company may not arrange tours that utilises vehicles to move tourists, or that include overnight stays. However, unlicensed companies are free to capitalise on tailored walking tours and cultural experiences in Korea which in many cases are more valued by their users than standard certified tour programmes.¹⁶⁶

In principle, anyone who wishes to do so may create and conduct guided tours of Seodaemun Prison. In contrast to the case of Gyeongbokgung, the Seodaemun Prison management does not prevent unlicensed guides from guiding tourists inside the prison museum.¹⁶⁷ Seodaemun Prison annually invites external unofficial guides from travel companies for voluntary training, but participation is not a requirement for arranging tours there.¹⁶⁸ External guides may bring small or large tour groups without prior appointments, and the narratives of external guides are not monitored. This allows for various forms of guided dark tourism, with almost limitless future potential. Unofficial educational dark tourism tours to Seodaemun Prison could be organised around a range of themes, such as human rights and freedom, colonial and/or post-colonial general or penal history and their interconnectedness, the lives of specific independence and democracy activists, Korean memory and identity politics, or other relevant topics. Tours could be customised for specific groups based on various factors, such as age, national background, or relevant existing knowledge. Such tours could also include other nearby sites.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Park Kyung-mok interview.

¹⁶⁸ Participating in an unofficial Seodaemun Prison tour with about 30 others led by David Mason on 21 May 2022, there were no problems at the official ticket counter although the ticket staff appeared stressed by the unannounced arrival of our large group. During the research interview for this thesis, Director Park confirmed that unofficial tours, with or without prior appointment, are not considered problematic by the management.

¹⁶⁹ For instance, Joe McPherson, the creator and guide of the “Dark Side of Seoul” tours, has suggested a tour encompassing narratives of notorious criminal Ji Kang Hun who was shot by the police in Seodaemun in October 1988. Ji is famous in Korea for calling attention to societal inequalities with the now well-known line “If you have money, non-guilty. If you don’t have money, guilty (yujeonmujoe mujeonyujoe)” when his standoff with the police in Seodaemun was broadcast live on television. He had escaped from Yeongdeungpo Detention Centre with 11 others after being given a sentence of 17 years imprisonment for robbery. The sentence appeared excessive in comparison to those of members of the elite convicted of large-scale white-collar crimes. The group moved around Seoul staying in apartments of which the residents were taken hostage. See for example Nam Jongyeong, “Chonge majeun hollidei jungong Ji Kang Huneun wae susuldo motago jugeonna [Why did Ji Kang Hun, protagonist of

Numerous unofficial tours of Seodaemun Prison in various languages can be booked at the time of writing, several of which could be labelled educational dark tourism. Examples are tours in Japanese combining Seodaemun Prison with the War Memorial of Korea,¹⁷⁰ and tours in Korean for small family groups.¹⁷¹ In addition, some tour guides conduct unofficial specialised intermittent tours of the prison museum. For example, ANZA Korea and Deutscher Club Seoul arranged a three-hour walking tour of the Independence Park and Seodaemun Prison led by David Mason, formerly professor of Cultural Tourism at Sejong University, on 21 May 2022. Mason repeated the popular and successful tour independently on 10 March 2023.¹⁷² Mason's extensive tour in 2022 was of academic standard and started with a detailed narration of the background of Korea's colonisation by Japan. Inside the prison museum, its former function as a modern model prison was explained along with narratives of brutal treatment of colonial and post-colonial political prisoners. Participants were encouraged to make comparisons with cases in other countries and contemplate why people around the world suffer systematic discrimination and abuse.¹⁷³ Mason's Seodaemun tours exemplify how extensive dark tourism tours, featuring detailed academic content, can be effectively executed at Seodaemun Prison.

The above clarifies that, in Korea, unofficial guided dark tourism tours encompassing heritage sites are possible to varying extents, depending on the regulations of individual sites and licensing of tour guides. Korea's Tourism Promotion Act, which significantly limits the activities of guides who are not fluent in the Korean language and do not possess comprehensive and chronological knowledge of Korea's long history, is especially problematic as it puts foreign companies and guides at great disadvantage. Educational dark tourism is necessarily more focussed on modern memories than ancient history in

‘Holiday’, not receive surgery before dying of gunshots?], *Hankyoreh*, 22 February 2013. <https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/health/575176.html>

¹⁷⁰ Veltra, Seoul city history exploration tour. <https://www.veltra.com/jp/asia/korea/seoul/a/13483>

¹⁷¹ Myrealtrip, Kids' docent tour of Seodaemun Prison <https://www.myrealtrip.com/offers/114805>

¹⁷² David Mason, “Guided Tour to the Seodaemun Prison History Hall,” Facebook post, 7 March 2023.

¹⁷³ Mason's tours primarily target foreigners living in Korea, providing tailored narratives in English for audiences that have general knowledge about the country but have not extensively studied Korean history. As a foreign academic challenging the Korean collective memory of imperial Japan as a unique and unsurpassed evil, some Korean observers may have objections. A Korean participant living in a Euro-American country commented that Mason's perspectives were highly valuable as they differed from those of Korean guides, and that his tours would be meaningful but controversial if conducted in Korean.

order to prompt reflections on how contemporary society has been formed. As a concept originating from- and popularised in Euro-American countries, dark tourism may have grown quicker in Korea if it was less complicated for foreign companies and guides to offer diverse tours localised for various groups of foreign tourists.

6.4.2 Japan – Takashima and Hashima

Japan used to have even stricter requirements than Korea for tour guides, mandating comprehensive exams and official licenses to guide foreign tourists anywhere in the country. However, these laws were scrapped in 2017 due to a shortage of guides, particularly outside major cities.¹⁷⁴ Consequently, unlicensed guides are allowed to accompany tourists throughout the country, providing historical and cultural interpretations at official and private museums, heritage sites, and other locations of interest.¹⁷⁵ The interpretations and narratives provided by these tour guides are not monitored, and each company has the discretion to decide how and what information to present to tourists. Although not a company, the fact that since 1986 Chōsen Daigakkō (Korea University) in Tokyo has taken large groups of Korean students to Japanese official sites which do not recognise Korean forced labour without significant obstacles reveals the practicality of regularly narrating contested history to groups of visitors at official sites of memory.¹⁷⁶ However, various other obstacles still exist at certain sites, as exemplified in the following discussion of Japanese case studies.

The island of Takashima has immense potential for organised educational dark tourism by private companies and NGOs for a number of reasons. Takashima's coal mining history is unique and highly significant both to Japan's industrialisation and its use of foreign forced labour. Takashima coal mine was the first in Japan to be mechanised and

¹⁷⁴ Japan Tourism Agency, *Tsūyaku annaishihō no kaisei gaiyō ni tsuite* [Overview of revisions to the Licensed Guide Interpreter Act], Document no 1, 1 April 2017. <https://www.mlit.go.jp/common/001187705.pdf>

¹⁷⁵ I have personal experience guiding foreign tourists through Japan without a licence while working for a British tour company (2019-2020). The company did not include sites of difficult or contested memory in itineraries of guided tours besides popular sites in Hiroshima.

¹⁷⁶ Chōsen Daigakkō interview. Sites include the Ashio Copper Mine in Tochigi, Matsushiro Underground Imperial Headquarters in Nagano, and Sagami Dam in Kanagawa.

the first to employ colonised Koreans, and data accumulated there was used for planning and executing imperial Japan's wartime forced mobilisation of Korean labourers.¹⁷⁷ The island contains a combination of sites with potential for education and for leisure. Its coal mine is recognised as World Heritage by UNESCO. It is the only Japanese mine once managed by exploitative foreigners before a similarly exploitative Japanese management opted to abuse foreign labourers.

Despite having been infamous for Mitsubishi's extreme abuse of its labourers both during the Meiji period and during the Asia-Pacific War, such memories have been officially forgotten by the Japanese government and the company responsible after World Heritage inscription. Takashima's dark history encompasses memories of Japanese, European, Korean and Chinese voluntary and involuntary residents. Its complex history covers a century of abuse and oppression in which victims and perpetrators cannot be defined by their nationalities. Thus, the island has potential to become known as a valuable destination for internationally significant memories of authoritarian and colonial abuse, ethnic discrimination, labour exploitation, and historical denialism by culpable elites.

As long as Japanese memory politics restrict official remembrance of foreign forced labour, Takashima holds much higher potential than Hashima for organised dark tourism and commemoration of wartime victims. Anyone in Japan can travel to Takashima by public transport and visit most of its sites of memory unrestricted. Takashima is a meaningful site for commemoration as the remains of victims from both Takashima and Hashima are kept there. In addition to the detailed Hashima miniature and general Hashima history provided in the Takashima Coal Museum, Takashima offers direct views of Hashima's north and east sides, which may be carefully examined with binoculars or even smartphone cameras. Guided Takashima tours by private companies, NGOs, and/or academics could utilise cars and/or minibuses to visit many of, or all the sites described in the previous chapter on half-day or full-day tours, while providing information essential for understanding the wartime history of both islands and the relevance of their specific sites of memory. Tour participants could potentially choose whether to return to the mainland or stay on Takashima for further exploration or leisure after the end of their

¹⁷⁷ See section [5.1.3 Pre-war experimentation with Korean labour on Takashima and Hashima](#).

tour.

In contrast to Takashima, unofficial tours to Hashima must join officially approved tour companies, and private guides are not allowed to provide their own narration or even translations of official narration while on the island.¹⁷⁸ Hashima's walking route is minimal and offers no views of the island's former residential district and apartment buildings whose basements were used to accommodate wartime Korean forced labourers. Tours to Hashima can, as discussed, be burdensome for those who identify with its victims due to the celebratory narratives of official guides and the joyful reactions of many Japanese visitors, potentially eliciting anti-Japanese sentiment in some foreign tourists.

Difficult memory of the better known Hashima/ "Battleship Island" could be utilised as a draw to facilitate interest in Takashima tours. Hashima and Takashima share difficult history as their coal mines were operated as branches of the same mining complex, but sites of memory are more accessible on the latter. Visitors are unlikely to be disturbed by anyone desiring to celebrate the island's industrial history like most visitors to Hashima. Locals on Takashima do not appear to be opposed to tourism relevant to the island's difficult history, including that of wartime foreign forced labour.¹⁷⁹

While facts about the unnamed remains on Takashima are lacking, the tragedy of the conflict between Mitsubishi and bereaved Koreans unable to confirm and retrieve the remains of family members forcefully mobilised to Japan during wartime highlights the Senninzuka and Konshōji temple as sites representing both past and present human suffering. Several NGOs have already guided many groups of visitors to the Senninzuka for commemoration, but only for pre-arranged irregular visits. As long as the path leading to it is officially blocked, most commercial companies are unlikely to organise tours to

¹⁷⁸ For example, Nagasaki Mindan and Seo Kyoung-Duk have arranged Hashima tours, utilising officially recognised tour companies to embark on the island. On Hashima, the groups must closely follow the official guide, and participants are warned not to speak during the official guide's constant narration. The tours have still been educational and successful as the unofficial guides narrate wartime history before and after visiting the island and incorporate other destinations such as the Oka Masaharu Museum.

¹⁷⁹ I was treated with hospitality by everyone I spoke to on the island, despite introducing myself as a researcher interested in sites of memory relevant to Korean labourers. Before Seo Kyoung-Duk brought necessary tools to Takashima cemetery to clear the Senninzuka path in 2015, he asked locals if such actions could be problematic. Those approached had no objections.

this officially forbidden tomb. However, there are exceptions, such as Turista's tour of colonial memory in Kyushu (designed by Seo Kyoung-Duk) whose official promotional materials even include pictures of the official fence and the Senninzuka.¹⁸⁰ For non-Korean visitors more focussed on educational tourism than commemoration, commercial dark tourism tours limited to showing pictures of the Senninzuka when arriving at the fence could potentially be as effective as crossing it, as the suffering of the victims and their descendants perpetuated by the Japanese government would be obvious from the symbolic fence clearly intended to marginalise the voices of foreign victims.

6.4.3 Joint Multinational Study Tours

Joint multinational study tours, where multiple national groups, potentially with conflicting collective memories of shared history, visit relevant sites in a country together to learn and discuss can be an effective method for challenging entrenched biased interpretations and examining how specific images and narratives shape collective memories.¹⁸¹ I have argued above that historical narratives of guided tours should ideally be localised and adjusted for different groups of nationals depending on their pre-existing knowledge of local history, but in the case of joint multinational tours the discussion of dissonant perspectives on narratives experienced together is central to the learning experience. When individuals from nations depicted as historical enemies engage in meaningful interactions at pertinent historical sites, distinctions between the portrayed adversary group and its contemporary constituents are illuminated. The inclusivity of multinational tours underscores that present-day members of historical perpetrator groups are not categorised together. This aligns with Korostelina's notion of the healing function of heritage on identity-related trauma, countering generalised negative characterisations of national groups.¹⁸² Such advantages of visiting sites of difficult and/or dissonant

¹⁸⁰ Turista, description of group tour exploring sites of colonial resistance in Fukuoka, Nagasaki and Hashima, Turista website (n.d.) https://www.turista.co.kr/index.php?ref=user&type=product&action=view&product_idx=707 (accessed 31 July 2024).

¹⁸¹ See for example Tessa M. Suzuki, *The Past Within Us: Media, Memory, History*, (The Bath Press, 2005), 29.

¹⁸² Korostelina, "Understanding Values of Cultural Heritage"; Branscombe et al., "The context and content of social identity threat."

history in international groups were frequently emphasised during fieldwork interviews.¹⁸³ Joint study tours may not have high potential for commercial businesses, but schools, activists, NGOs, and even private museums may arrange international group tours or visits to sites of memory in Korea and Japan.

The Asia Peace and History Institute in Korea has organised joint study camps for Korean, Japanese and Chinese students in all three countries annually for 19 years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁸⁴ Usually lasting six days, junior high and high school students meet in one of the countries and visit a series of sites of difficult and/or dissonant memory, such as sites of forced labour and remains of military bases from the Asia Pacific War in Japan, and the House of Sharing (“comfort women” museum) and the Jeju 4.3 Peace Park in Korea. Dark tourism is the main tool used at the camps for the students to learn about history and better enable them to relate to each other’s collective memories.¹⁸⁵ The young students are quick to find interest in each other, and although it takes time to achieve any form of mutual understanding of dissonant history, the students (especially the Japanese) are usually intrigued and surprised by the historical narratives of their neighbours. Students find ways to communicate even with limited command of foreign languages, and interpretations and translations are provided in multiple languages during study visits by the student’s teachers and/or local guides.

It may be easy to assume that it would not be practically possible for Japanese teachers to bring young students to sites of difficult colonial memory in Korea, but even the Independence Hall of Korea in Cheonan is visited annually by certain Japanese high schools.¹⁸⁶ Another seemingly difficult form of joint study trips with successful precedents are those of South Korean students visiting sites of colonial memory in Japan

¹⁸³ Director Gang Cheonung, Uri Munhwa Sumgyeol interview; Nogi, Center for Historical Truth interview; Lee SinCheol interview.

¹⁸⁴ Lee SinCheol interview. Lee has led several of these as the director of the Asia Peace and History Institute.

¹⁸⁵ Lee SinCheol interview. The visits to local sites are not labelled or promoted with the term “dark tourism.” The program itself is named “*Tongil asia cheongsonyeon yeoksa cheheom kaempeu*” (Unified Asian youth history experience camp).

¹⁸⁶ Informal conversation with official Japanese-speaking guide at the Independence Hall of Korea, June 2022. It is an uncommon destination for Japanese school trips, but a few Japanese high schools have developed relations with the museum and visit regularly on school trips. These trips are not joint multinational tours.

with students from the DPRK-aligned Chōsen Daigakkō in Tokyo.¹⁸⁷ Such tours may be even more meaningful if students of diverse nationalities, including Japanese, participated—an idea highly welcomed by Chōsen Daigakkō.¹⁸⁸ Kim Cholsu, Vice Director of the university's Centre for Korean Studies, noted it would be a rare opportunity for Japanese students to engage with foreign perspectives of imperial Japan as both a wartime perpetrator and victim.

In the above example of international history camps, students form bonds across borders, particularly because their engagement with narratives of past conflicts is paired with positive experiences of cultural exchange in the present. Additionally, spending almost a week together fosters deeper connections.¹⁸⁹ Other potential tours do not need to be as long, but should at least incorporate multiple sites and time for both discussions and friendly socialising. The case studies of this thesis would all be meaningful destinations for joint international tours. Gyeongbokgung is a fitting inclusion for sites in Korea, due to its co-existing functions of representing Korean culture as well as holding official and public memory of colonialism encompassing history relevant to many other countries. Seodaemun Prison may be valuable as a site for discussing nationalism and views of the Other in the contexts of colonialism, civil war, and dictatorship. For a joint study tour in Japan, Nagasaki and its vicinity emerge as ideal destinations. Participants can engage with diverse memories of discrimination, colonialism, and war, where victims and perpetrators are blurred across nationalities, offering rich opportunities for meaningful reflections, discussions, and exchanges. For local participants, visiting sites of difficult memory with others of diverse nationalities is likely to highlight marginalised memories of foreign historical victims such as forced labourers and those killed or otherwise affected by the atomic bombings.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Interviews with Kim Cholsu at Chōsen Daigakkō and Kim SeungEun at the Centre for Historical Truth. Kim SeungEun participated in such a joint tour in Japan in the past as a South Korean graduate student. Her South Korean supervisor had applied and gotten permission from the Ministry of Unification to temporarily work at Chōsen Daigakkō as a visiting professor.

¹⁸⁸ In the research interview, Kim Cholsu expressed a will to cooperate with foreign universities to organise multinational study trips in Japan on which students could exchange views and interpretations of colonial history.

¹⁸⁹ Lee SinCheol interview.

¹⁹⁰ Chōsen Daigakkō interview. Kim Cholsu brought up the example of the visit of former U.S. President Barack Obama to Hiroshima in 2016 which highlighted memories of foreign victims of the atomic bomb,

Joint international study tours focussed on war and colonialism in Korea and Japan can hold profound significance for individuals beyond those from nations directly involved in local memories. A large number of countries and peoples around the world share comparable histories of war and colonialism, encompassing victims and perpetrators from diverse nations and time periods. Given the limited opportunities for people from diverse corners of the world to meet and discuss difficult memories of colonialism encompassing East-Asian memories, such joint international study tours in countries like Korea and Japan, with participants from other continents, offer valuable opportunities to enhance understandings of colonial memories among the ingroup and outgroups of participants. In 2019, before the pandemic, 100,215 and 59,950 foreign students were enrolled in degree courses and non-degree courses, respectively, in Korean institutions of higher education (in total 160,165).¹⁹¹ This very significant pool of international students, together with Korean students enrolled in the same universities may be ideal as initial participants for joint international study tours in the country.¹⁹²

In Korea, a common belief prevails that their nation suffered the most due to the perception of Japanese colonialism being the most brutal in human history.¹⁹³ In contrast, in most Euro-American countries, Nazi Germany is typically presented as the most brutal perpetrator in global modern history. Engaging in joint international dark tourism provides opportunities for the exchange of difficult memories, revealing to participants how colonial, fascist, and racist ideologies have caused immeasurable suffering for peoples all over the world.¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, joint tours involving, for instance, both Japanese and German participants may offer valuable settings for discussions on remembering one's forefathers as both perpetrators and victims in a global context. Another common idea in Korea that may generate identity threats for Korean ingroups

as well as complexities surrounding victim and perpetrator roles of Japan and the U.S.

¹⁹¹ Korean Ministry of Education, "Foreign Students in Higher Education".

<http://english.moe.go.kr/sub/infoRenewal.do?m=0305&page=0305&s=english#:~:text=The%20number%20of%20foreign%20students,degree%20course%20is%2032%2C263%20students> (accessed 13 January 2022)

¹⁹² Lee SinCheol interview. Lee SinCheol has tentative plans for arranging guided dark tourism for Korean and international students in Korea.

¹⁹³ Karina Korostelina "The normative function of national historical narratives: South Korean perceptions of relations with Japan," *National Identities*, 21:2 (2019), 171-189.

¹⁹⁴ Lee SinCheol interview.

and foreign outgroups is the misconception that Korea was the only culturally and politically developed nation to have been colonised by a foreign power.¹⁹⁵ Engaging and exchanging collective memories with individuals from other former colonies around the world would challenge these insular perspectives. It would provide an opportunity for a broader, more inclusive understanding of historical experiences and foster a more nuanced appreciation of the complexities of colonial histories worldwide.

6.5 Conclusions

6.5.1 Findings

This research project aimed to explore how dark tourism may be utilised to highlight marginalised and contested memories of war and colonialism in Korea and Japan. It sought to identify ways in which such dark tourism can highlight alternative perspectives to those presented officially, and how it can influence dissonant collective memories and social identities surrounding colonial history. Dark tourism has been defined as a method to obtain insights into contemporary society and its complex contradictions by traveling to sites of memory to engage with and compare historical narratives of progress and of human suffering.¹⁹⁶ The data necessary to answer the research questions has been collected through dark tourism participation and observation at the four case study sites and other relevant sites in their vicinity, semi-structured interviews with 17 stakeholders, and a survey targeting 250 Koreans. Gyeongbokgung and Seodaemun Prison History Hall were examined as Korean case studies, and in Japan, Hashima and Takashima were selected.

By identifying challenges and potentials for dark tourism at the case study sites in Korea and Japan, this research reveals significant practical opportunities for dark tourism to be facilitated and utilised to effectively highlight marginalised and dissonant colonial memory in both countries. The case studies exemplified how memory politics in both countries influence the objectivity and balance of official narratives at historical sites

¹⁹⁵ Han Hyein interview.

¹⁹⁶ As discussed, my definition of dark tourism reflects that of Ide Akira. See for example See for example Ide, *Dark tourism expansion*, 15-16.

associated with national achievements and patriotism. The study revealed a limited but significant number of existing opportunities for engaging in individual and/or guided dark tourism at the sites, primarily arranged by unofficial external stakeholders such as NGOs and memory activists. These discoveries confirmed that dissonant official and unofficial memories can coexist and become topics of public discussion at heritage sites in Korea and Japan, and indicate untapped potentials for further facilitation and development of diverse forms of dark tourism at relevant sites in the future.

Awareness of educational dark tourism is increasing in both Korea and Japan, but negative perceptions and misconceptions of dark tourism are not uncommon. Such negative perceptions pose risks to those who desire to facilitate dark tourism for commercial gain, and limit the potential reach for those who attempt to facilitate it primarily to highlight marginalised memories. However, dark tourism may be successfully facilitated and promoted under alternative labels in Korean and Japanese to mitigate negative misconceptions until dark tourism becomes more broadly understood.

Due to Japan's official memory and social identity politics in which imperial Japan's role as an aggressive coloniser and war perpetrator is forgotten and replaced by a selective celebratory history that aims to enhance national pride, meaningful *official* dark tourism at sites of colonial memory in Japan appears unlikely in the near future. In Korea, the government has facilitated and promoted forms of dark tourism at sites defined by difficult memory, such as Seodaemun Prison. While victimhood nationalism and the official dissociation of colonial rule and human rights abuses from that of post-colonial Korean dictatorships diminishes the objectivity of narratives presented through such official dark tourism, progressive managers at official sites in Korea have gained increased freedom to revise official narratives to reflect previously ignored complexities of the nation's modern history. This increase in freedom is linked to changing perspectives among younger generations on colonial history. The younger generations, who were not educated under the aforementioned dictatorships, are less influenced by the ethnic nationalism propagated at that time, and many see colonial history as an important part of national history that should be scrutinised and disseminated.

Due to the risk of causing controversy and the still relatively limited market for dark

tourism in Korea and Japan, only a small minority of commercial companies with a strong sense of social responsibility operate tours that attempt to highlight marginalised colonial memory. As more tour organisers and tourists in Euro-American countries are typically more familiar and experienced with dark tourism than East-Asian counterparts, smaller Euro-American companies offering tours in English and other foreign languages may be better positioned to first initiate viable commercial dark tourism businesses in Korea and Japan. However, in Korea, foreign companies and guides are disadvantaged by official requirements to obtain licencing by passing comprehensive exams exclusively in Korean language in order to move tourists in vehicles or guide tourists at certain heritage sites for commercial purposes.

Because of the limitations posed by official memory politics, unofficial forms of dark tourism are less restricted and have higher potential than official forms for highlighting diverse perspectives and memories of colonialism in both Korea and Japan. Pragmatic ways to facilitate unofficial dark tourism in the two countries include the creation and promotion of guided dark tourism for tourists and students by companies, NGOs, schools, and private museums, as well as the promotion of self-guided tours through dark tourism guidebooks, online guides and databases, and digital applications providing directions, essential historical facts, and information for interpreting and navigating the contradictory memories of relevant groups. By combining visits to multiple official and unofficial sites of colonial memory such as heritage sites, official and private museums, and public memorials in either or both Korea and Japan, tourists may engage with diverse colonial memories and experience their dissonance first-hand, potentially evaluating their understanding of not only colonial history but also of contemporary memory politics and opposing political and national identities connected to colonial memory.

Observation and participation in dark tourism at sites of colonial memory together with informal conversation with participants and interviews with professional stakeholders indicated that such dark tourism can significantly affect collective memories and identities related to colonialism in Korea and Japan. In part due to the fact that contemporary memory and social identity politics in both countries aims to enhance national identities, perpetrator narratives of ingroups have undergone revision, reduction,

and concealment amidst a multitude of narratives emphasising national victimhood and triumphant recovery. In order to emphasise positive aspects of the national ingroup, negative aspects of the Other are highlighted and at times exaggerated. Hierarchies of victims emerge in official narratives on both countries, in which memories of complex and intragroup victims are marginalised. As official memory is disseminated through education and diverse media, it moulds the collective memory of the public which may no longer fully represent the intricacies and nuances of vernacular memories based on lived colonial experiences. In turn, national identities and evaluations of outgroups are influenced by official memories of national forefathers and their out-groups. A core purpose of dark tourism is to identify and examine difficult marginalised memories, and the study demonstrates that by applying dark tourism methods to sites of colonial memory in Korea and Japan, marginalised memories that challenge aspects of official narratives can be highlighted for domestic and international visitors. As marginalised memories are discussed and absorbed into public memory at relevant sites, visitors are prompted to reassess official narratives and the perceived defining qualities of the national ingroup and outgroups.

Koreans engaging in dark tourism at sites of colonial memory in Korea or Japan can experience how marginalised memories challenge the dichotomous idea that the large majority of Koreans remained innocent victims of Japanese innate greed and violence during the colonial period. Narratives challenging Korean ethnic pride may still pose identity threats, particularly for older generations, but the general public is increasingly valuing colonial heritage for reflecting a difficult history that no longer defines a successful Korean nation. Examining and comparing colonial and post-colonial memories in Korea highlights interconnected legacies of oppression and inequalities, involving victims and perpetrators across nationalities and modern eras. This nuanced approach challenges dichotomies in collective memory and calls for a more balanced reassessment, challenging glorifying views of Koreans and negative stereotypes of the general Japanese public.

In Japan, it is not uncommon for domestic tourists and students to participate in dark tourism in the form of study trips and visits to peace museums, many of which are private

and whose narratives of war and colonialism are more objective and comprehensive than those moulded and highlighted by the Japanese government. Objective historical narratives encompassing colonial foreign forced labour and sexual slavery may threaten the social identities of a significant minority of Japanese people who celebrate the powers and/or ignore the war crimes of imperial Japan to enhance their own identities. On the other hand, a large part of the Japanese population appears to view colonial history as irrelevant to their lives, resulting in the lack of curiosity and active absorption, and processing of colonial narratives at sites of memory.

However, the Japanese government's efforts to World Heritage inscribe sites of wartime foreign forced labour history to celebrate Japan's industrial development inadvertently heightened the relevance and scrutiny of these sites' colonial history. This, in turn, contributes to an increase in dark tourism to lesser-known unofficial sites, such as the Oka Masaharu Peace Museum. Through engaging in dark tourism, combining visits to private and official sites of memory in Japan, visitors are confronted with contradictions that prompt contemplation and reassessment of their collective memories of the roles of imperial Japan. This process may potentially enable Japanese visitors to empathise with historical victims of imperial Japan, and their descendants demanding justice, to a greater extent than before.

The survey conducted in Korea for this research confirmed that a significant part of the Korean public recognise the value of dark tourism focussed on colonial history at sites in both Korea and Japan. Even though 92.8% of survey respondents by Seodaemun Prison agreed with the statement that "the Japanese government cannot be trusted", the majority responded positively to all questions related to ideas of visiting Hashima in Japan for tourism, education and commemoration, regardless of official narratives presented at the site itself. Triangulated with stakeholder interviews, the data confirms a market for Korean dark tourism in Japan. Surprisingly, the ratio of Korean survey respondents who would consider visiting Hashima with a knowledgeable Korean tour guide was identical to that of Koreans who would consider visiting the site individually and gathering information from alternative sources. While guided tours at diverse Japanese sites of colonial memory may contribute to making more sites known to potential tourists, the

research data indicates that well-known sites of colonial memory are already a target for Korean dark tourism.

Another noteworthy finding related to Korean dark tourism in Japan is that it challenges a persistently held notion in Korea that the Japanese government's historical denialism reflects the stance of the Japanese public. As mentioned, a significant portion of survey respondents (39%) agreed with the problematic statement "Japanese people should not be trusted". This notion is gradually decreasing in younger generations, and dark tourism can contribute to accelerating this decline further. Koreans seeking colonial memory through travel in Japan are likely to discover that the current level of documented history on the injustices of imperial Japan and its dissemination through peace museums across the country is only possible due to the accumulated efforts of large groups within the Japanese public opposing their government's approach.

This study further indicates that the facilitation of dark tourism by presenting balanced narratives of colonialism and offering relevant tours at heritage sites in Korea can attract and be valued by Japanese tourists in the country. No collected data suggested that Japanese visitor numbers to Korea would increase due to such dark tourism, but triangulated data from observations and stakeholder interviews indicate that many Japanese visitors who choose to travel to Korea become curious about colonial history and related Korean memories when introduced to them during sightseeing. Although only a small Japanese minority would travel abroad specifically to engage with different memories of colonialism, many Japanese travellers become curious and visit sites of colonial memory if they become aware of their existence at their chosen travel destination.

A common misconception among Japanese visitors in Korea is the belief that they, as Japanese, are not welcome at Korean sites of colonial memory, which obstructs their desire to visit them. However, the promotion of official and unofficial dark tourism opportunities to Japanese visitors in Korea may challenge this misconception and prompt them to act on their curiosity and engage with colonial memory. Japanese tourists engaging with colonial memory in Korea are often surprised and intrigued, but rarely offended or threatened by relevant narratives, indicating the potential for a meaningful reassessment of their collective memory of the colonial period and a deeper understanding

of relevant memory conflicts. The less nationalistic and dichotomous the presentation of Koreans and Japanese in historical narratives, the more relatable, meaningful, and less threatening they become to Japanese tourists.

From the perspective of bystanders, or tourists who do not identify as Korean or Japanese, engaging in dark tourism focussed on colonial memories in Korea and Japan can offer a meaningful opportunity to enhance their understanding of Korea-Japan relations, contemporary Korean and Japanese societies, and the broader global history of colonialism. By examining similarities and differences with colonial memory in their home regions, as well as how victims and perpetrators are remembered compared to in their own nations, colonial memory in Korea and Japan may gain greater value and relevance to bystanders. There is potential for enriching public memory at heritage sites in both countries through the presence of foreign tourists and their ideas which can contribute to public discussion. This can lead to the visualisation of additional perspectives and a global contextualisation of Japan's historical imperialism, which, in turn, challenges insular interpretations of local memories and identities. In the context of contemporary global society, local and international participants in dark tourism in Korea and Japan can collectively imagine transnational ingroups opposing colonialism, including Japanese nationals.

Dark tourism focussed on marginalised memories of war and colonialism in Korea and Japan proves to be both pragmatic and meaningful. Dark tourism is continuing to gain increased recognition and understanding in both countries, and it is already to an extent being facilitated under various labels. As the local interest and foreign demand for guided and independent dark tourism options in Korea and Japan continue to grow, diverse local groups and individuals are likely to step forward to facilitate and promote dark tourism in both countries. Unofficial and non-commercial actors are well-positioned to facilitate educational dark tourism surrounding colonial memory because they are less constrained by official memory politics and the fluctuations of the political cycle, as well as by the risks of negative public relations that come with addressing sensitive and controversial marginalised colonial narratives.

Japan's use of UNESCO's World Heritage programme to attempt to legitimise its denial

of the memories of foreign victims has attracted international attention towards the history of Japan's colonial occupation of Korea. Simultaneously, Korea's soft power continues to grow globally, incorporating Korean memories of colonialism into its popular entertainment. These factors synergistically contribute to rising potential for dark tourism focussed on colonial memory in Korea and Japan, and can attract diverse people to engage with dissonant colonial memories. This, in turn, fosters more contributions to public discussion and public memory at heritage sites and other relevant arenas, visualising marginalised memories of colonialism, and highlighting the necessity for honest dialogue incorporating voices of victims, transitional justice, and true reconciliation.

6.5.2 Recommendations for future research and implications

This exploratory study represents a significant contribution to the limited body of academic research on dark tourism as a tool for visualising and engaging with dissonant and marginalised memories, particularly in the context of Korea and Japan. In light of the exploratory nature of this study and its reliance on a limited dataset, it is recommended that future research endeavours aim to validate and expand upon the findings presented herein. To enhance the robustness and generalisability of the conclusions drawn, further investigations should be conducted, examining actual cases of dark tourism at diverse sites of colonial memory with a wide range of participants. Experimental guided dark tourism in Korea and Japan, involving research volunteers from both countries and beyond, would serve to test findings more comprehensively, providing essential insights into the actual effects on participants. This approach can yield more detailed and crucial data to minimise identity threats and rejections of memories of outgroups and maximise the educational value for a broader range of participants.

As previously mentioned in the section on research limitations within the methodology chapter, a survey in Japan could not be conducted due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, limiting the time available for data collection. Consequently, future research is essential to explore the perspectives and views of the general Japanese public concerning dark tourism, particularly focusing on marginalised colonial memory in both Japan and Korea.

This study focussed on dark tourism in the context of Korean, Japanese, and other, primarily anglophone Euro-American tourists in Korea and Japan. While acknowledging the significance of Chinese tourists in both countries, this study could not explore narratives and perspectives in Chinese, highlighting the need for future research to address this gap.

Sites of memory related to Japanese war and colonialism exist in every country affected by this history, resulting in a plethora of sites across many nations that warrant research as sites for dark tourism. Examination of diverse sites is crucial for developing a more comprehensive understanding of how dark tourism related to colonial memory can be effectively facilitated in formerly colonised countries, allowing for the highlighting of marginalised memories and fostering solidarity and mutual understanding. Future research should encompass a more extensive array of case studies, not limited solely to heritage sites but also encompassing official and private museums and memorials. One typically overlooked region rich with sites of colonial memory is North Korea. Although it could not be examined in this study, future studies should endeavour to include North Korean sites and memories when possible.

Finally, this study highlights the importance of addressing difficult memories from preceding and subsequent eras, encompassing pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods. By connecting the interlinked but disassociated systems of human suffering across eras, a better visualisation of the complex causes and webs of responsibility can be achieved. Future research should explore the challenges and potentials for dark tourism focusing on pre-colonial and post-colonial human suffering in Korea and Japan, examining how these aspects can be better understood in the broader context of colonial history through tourism.

Despite its exploratory nature, this study bears practical implications. The study thoroughly documents challenges and potentials associated with promoting and utilising dark tourism to effectively highlight marginalised memories of colonialism in both countries, taking into account official government stances, practical considerations at heritage sites and their surroundings, and potential effects on Korean, Japanese, and other tourists. Consequently, the findings have relevance for conscientious tourism companies

seeking to develop educational dark tours or guidebooks, as well as for diverse stakeholders aiming to raise awareness about difficult and dissonant colonial memory and its implications in Korea and Japan. These stakeholders include memory activists, research institutes, universities, educators, private museums, and NGOs.

Furthermore, the findings may prove beneficial for Korea's central and local governments, which are currently exploring dark tourism and are increasingly designating and utilising colonial heritage sites. Additionally, the analysis of reactions of Korean and Japanese tourists and potential tourists to official narratives at sites of colonial memory provides valuable data for managers of such sites who are involved in creating or optimising educational narratives and tours for domestic and international audiences.

Lastly, the study inadvertently brought to light the Japanese government's refusal to acknowledge the history of foreign forced labour at industrial sites that have been inscribed as, or are in the process of nomination for, UNESCO World Heritage status. Moreover, UNESCO's insufficient attempts to prevent historical denialism at its registered sites in Japan have been underscored. At the time of writing, it has been eight years since Japan pledged to tell the "full story" of the Meiji Industrial Sites in 2015, including the history of Koreans and others forced to work at the sites against their will in deplorable conditions. Japan has utilised the World Heritage programme for its own political agenda, and despite UNESCO's warnings, it has expressed its intent to continue disseminating revised history at existing and future inscribed sites without facing any disciplinary action from UNESCO. As this international issue gains increasing attention, it becomes evident around the world that UNESCO's principles of international solidarity and cooperation are not being upheld. Consequently, the value of the World Heritage programme and the legitimacy of UNESCO may be called into question. This puts UNESCO in a difficult position as Japan is one of the primary financial contributors to the organisation.¹⁹⁷ Given Japan's unwillingness to adhere to UNESCO's warnings and instructions, the most logical course of action is for UNESCO to remove the Meiji Industrial Sites from its World Heritage list and refrain from inscribing other Japanese

¹⁹⁷ In the 2022-23 biennium, Japan contributed 85,401,000 USD to UNESCO, only exceeded by China, Italy and the EU. See UNESCO Core Data Portal, "Sources of Funding" at <https://core.unesco.org/en/sources-of-funding>

sites with a history of foreign forced labour.

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Appendices

Appendix I Introduction of research interview participants

Below follows brief introductions of interview participants for this study, in chronological order.

I.I Uri Munwha Sumgyeol - Gang Cheonung, Suzanna Samstag Oh and Kwon Hyeokjun (2 June 2022)

Uri Munwha Sumgyeol is a Seoul-based NPO which works to raise awareness and facilitate appreciation and protection of Korean cultural heritage through guided tours to heritage sites, predominantly historical palaces. It started as a branch of national citizen's group KYC (Korea Youth Corps) in 1999, and established itself as an independent organisation in 2013, continuing palace tours in a programme named Gunggwolgillajabi (the palace guide). See "3.2.6 Tours by volunteering guides" in the main text for more on their guided tours.

Gang Cheonung is the current director of Uri Munwha Sumgyeol. He started guiding at heritage sites as a member of the civic society Young Korean Academy (Hung Sa Dahn) around 2005. Suzanna Samstag Oh is a volunteer guide, still in Uri Munwha Sumgyeol's training program at the time of the interview (which involves actually guiding groups of both Korean and foreign visitors). She has been in Korea since 1980 when she came as a Peace Corps volunteer, and has worked 15 years managing the Kim Deoksu Samulnori band (renowned Korean traditional performing artists) and more recently as the head of the cultural division of Nami Island. Kwon Hyeokjun has been a volunteer guide for the palace guiding programme since 2006, conducting tours in Korean, English and German, while working for a Korean commercial company.

I.II Lee SinCheol (8 June 2022)

Lee SinCheol is an academic who initially centered his focus on inter-Korean relations. He embarked on research and activism concerning Korea-Japan memory conflicts in 2001. Currently, he holds the position of director at the Korean NGO Asia Peace and History Institute. The institute has primarily dedicated its efforts to the exploration of colonial memory within East Asian textbooks. Lee SinCheol has organised, at the time of the

interview, 19 joint international history camps for Korean, Japanese and Chinese secondary and high school students.

I.III Han Hye-in (8 June 2022)

Han Hye-in is a historian at the Asia Peace and History Institute specialising in the history of wartime forced labour and sexual slavery under imperial Japan. Obtaining her doctorate in Hokkaido, Han Hye-in has experience excavating remains of Korean forced labourers in Japan as a member of the Forum of Forced Labour Victims in Hokkaido since 1998. She worked as a member of the Presidential Committee for the Inspection of Collaborations for Japanese Imperialism from 2005-2009. At the time of the interview, Han Hye-in was involved in the planning of the National Women's History Exhibition Hall, an official museum encompassing "comfort women" history scheduled to open in Seoul in 2024.

I.IV Park Kyung-mok (21 June 2022)

Park Kyung-mok has been the director of Seodaemun Prison History Hall since 2004, a position obtained through passing an official exam. He has continuously conducted research and published academic findings on Korea's colonial penal history and independence movement during his time in this role. Park Kyung-mok's role in transforming and expanding official symbolisms of Seodaemun Prison is discussed in chapter 4.

I.V The Centre for Historical Truth - Kim SeungEun and Nogi Kaori (30 June)

Kim SeungEun is the Head Researcher of the Centre for Historical Truth, and Head of the Museum of Japanese Colonial History in Korea. Nogi Kaori is a Japanese researcher the Centre for Historical Truth. She worked for the centre first in 2007 after coming to Korea as an exchange student from Japan, and has worked there permanently since 2015.

The Centre for Historical Truth is known as *Minjok Munjae Yeonguso* (lit. National issues research centre) in Korean, and was previously known as the Institute for Research in Collaborationist Activities in English. It is sometimes also called The Centre for

Historical Truth and Justice in English. The Centre is an NGO founded in 1991 with the purpose of revealing the history of Korean collaboration with imperial Japan and seeking transitional justice. It is best known for publishing the controversial Encyclopaedia of pro-Japanese collaborators (*Chinil inmyeong sajeon*) in 2009 with biographical information on 4,389 individuals. The Centre for Historical Truth operates the Museum of Japanese Colonial History in Korea in central Seoul, which opened in 2018 after more than a decade of planning. In 2015, members of the centre travelled to the World Heritage Committee's 39th Session in Bonn, Germany, to lobby for the recognition of forced labour history at the "Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution".

I.VI Joe McPherson (1 July)

Joe McPherson is the founder and company President of ZenKimchi which operates "the dark side of Seoul" dark tourism tours, the most successful dark tourism tours in English in Korea. McPherson is an American who came to Korea in 2004 and started a food blog, before launching his own food tours of Seoul a few months before his "dark side" tours in 2010. The "dark side" tours encompass Korean colonial memory but is predominantly focussed on local eerie folk stories and the supernatural. Even with several employees and business partners running his popular tours, McPherson still personally guides several groups per week for both type of tours.

I.VII Chōsen Daigakkō - Kim Chol Su and Lee Yong Chol (13 July)

Chōsen Daigakkō (or Korea University in Tokyo), is a private university in Japan affiliated with Chongryon (the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan). Notably, Chongryon recognises the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as the legitimate governing authority of the Korean nation. Pak Kyongsik started the very first collections of Korean victim testimonies of wartime forced labour in the 1960s as a professor at Chōsen Daigakkō.

Kim Chol Su is the vice director of the university's Centre for Korean Studies and a professor of English literature. The centre is dedicated to collecting and disseminating

data on the history of Koreans abroad, including that of wartime forced labourers in Japan. Kim Chol Su is responsible for annual study tours to sites of wartime Korean forced labour, joined each time by hundreds of the university's Korean students.

Lee Yong Chol is a professor of Japanese language and the director of the university's Public Relations Office. He accompanies his students on field trips, such as visits to Hokkaido examining memorials for Korean forced labourers and museums displaying Ainu culture and history.

I.VIII Nagasaki Mindan - Kang Seong Choon and Kim Sang Jin (1 August)

Mindan, the Korean Residents Union in Japan, is, in contrast to Chongryon, the organisation for Koreans in Japan who embrace South Korean identities. Mindan possesses prefectural headquarters all over Japan. Some headquarters, like the one in Nagasaki, is authorised to act on behalf of and carry out certain functions of South Korean consulates in Japan.

Kang Seong Choon previously held a leadership role at the Nagasaki headquarters of Mindan, and at the time of the interview, he was serving as a Senior Consultant. He has overseen annual events commemorating the Korean March First Independence Movement and Korean victims of the atom bomb dropped on Nagasaki. He has also organised small Korean group visits to the Senninzuka ossuary on Takashima, thought to hold remains of wartime forced labourers.

Kim Sang Jin is the executive director of the Nagasaki Mindan support centre for Korean travellers. Before online reservations for visits to Hashima was made possible by relevant tour companies, the support center made advance reservations for Korean travellers while providing advice on where to access information about Korean forced labourers not encompassed in official tour narratives.

I.IX Seo Kyung-Duk (19 August)

Seo Kyung-Duk is a public relations professor at Sungshin University, best known as a

public figure and activist advocating for the remembrance of broad aspects of the independence movement and against utilisation of the imperial Japanese flag in political, aesthetic, and any other non-educational contexts. Seo frequently appears in Korean national media and often highlights marginalised memories of wartime Korean forced labour. He has also led tours to sites of forced labour in Japan, including Hashima and Takashima.

I.X Kim Yeonghwan (23 August)

Kim Yeonghwan is the Chief of External Cooperation Office of the Centre for Historical Truth. He is well-known amongst Korean and Japanese memory activists for his long public support of Korean victims of forced labour and sexual slavery under imperial Japan, and their efforts to seek compensation. Having already interviewed Kim SeungEun, the head researcher of the centre, I approached Kim Yeonghwan for an interview predominantly because of his experience with Japanese peace museums.

After participating in the Korean-Japanese Student Workshop for Excavation of the Remains of Forced Labor Victims in Hokkaido in 1997, Kim Yeonghwan volunteered at the Museum for Bamboo-Bush Grave Markers (of Korean forced labour victims, “*Sasa no bohyo tenjikan*”) in northern Hokkaido. He then moved to Kōchi, Shikoku, where he acted as executive director of the Grass Roots House peace museum from 2002 to 2006. During this period, he actively participated in international conferences organised by the International Network for Museums of Peace (INMP).

I.XI Ku Yonchol (31 August)

Ku Yonchol is currently an activist and member of the Movement for One Korea promoting Korean reunification and labourer’s rights. Born in southern Korea in 1931, Ku Yonchol attended elementary school on Hashima in Japan from 1939 to 1945 where his father was already working when Japan’s forced labour programme began in September 1939. Returning to Korea after the Asia-Pacific War, Ku Yonchol became a communist partisan in South Korea during the Korean War, and subsequently served 20

years of a life sentence for participating in armed guerrilla warfare against South Korean and American forces.

Ku Yonchol's autobiography, published in 2011, eloquently captures his recollections of observing forced labour on Hashima, his engagement in guerrilla warfare within the Jirisan mountain region, and his experiences as a political prisoner during the reign of South Korean dictators.¹ His background as a communist guerrilla fighter has been opportunistically exploited by Japanese denialists of wartime forced labour history, including the director of the Industrial Heritage Information Centre in Tokyo. These denialists have sought to undermine the veracity of his forced labour witness accounts and to cast doubts upon the reliability of other Korean testimonies.²

I.XII Ide Akira (20 September)

Ide Akira is Japan's most prominent dark tourism scholar and an associate professor at Kanazawa's Institute of Liberal Arts and Science. He publishes extensively on dark tourism in Japan and beyond, encompassing sites of colonial memory in Japan, Korea and elsewhere.³ Ide argues that highlighting difficult marginalised memories across modern time periods, including prison labour, forced labour, and oppression of minorities, can enrich tourism in Japan and enhance its educational potential. While all other interview participants for this study were interviewed in Korea or Japan, I interviewed Ide during one of his visits to England due to scheduling conflicts during my fieldwork in Japan.

¹ An Jaeseong, *Sinbulsan: ppalchisan guyeoncheol saengaesa [Sinbulsan: The life story of freedom fighter Ku Yonchol]* (Sanjini 2011).

² Nikolai Johnsen, "Katō Kōko's Meiji Industrial Revolution - Forgetting forced labor to celebrate Japan's World Heritage Sites, Part 1", *The Asia Pacific Journal / Japan Focus*, vol. 19, issue 23, no. 1, Dec. 1 (2021); Johnsen, "Katō Kōko's Meiji Industrial Revolution..., Part 2", vol. 19, issue 24, no. 5, Dec. 15 (2021).

³ See for example Ide Akira, *Higeki no sekai isan – Dāku tsūrizumu kara mita sekai [World Heritage of tragedy: The world seen through dark tourism]*, (Tokyo: Bunshun shinsho, 2021); Ide, *Dāku tsūrizumu kakuchō - Kindai no sai-kōchiku [Dark tourism expansion: Reconstruction of modern history]*, (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 2018); Ide, *Dāku tsūrizumu: Kanishimi no kioku wo meguru tabi [Dark Tourism: Travel in the context of tragic memories]*, (Tokyo: Gentosha, 2018).

Appendix II Gyeongbokgung – Historical background

The following is more comprehensive overview of Gyeongbokgung's modern history than the abbreviated version in [Chapter 3](#) of the main text, focussing on the murder of Queen Myeongseong.

II.I Constructing and reconstructing a symbol of the authority of the Joseon Dynasty

Gyeongbokgung palace was first constructed, in one year from 1394-95, as the primary palace of the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897). The dynasty's founder, King Taejo (formerly General Yi Seong-gye), moved the capital from Gaegyeong (present-day Kaesong) to Hanyang (present-day Seoul), and had Gyeongbokgung constructed in its centre. Both the location of Hanyang as capital, and the specific site where Gyeongbokgung was built was carefully chosen based on principles of *pungsujiri*, Korean geomancy (*feng shui*). Hanyang was an ideal location because it was surrounded by high and low mountains with an entrance opening south by the east-west flowing Han River.¹ In 1395, Gyeongbokgung consisted of 775 royal buildings, but it was only partially reconstructed after a fire in 1553.²

All remaining buildings of the palace were burned to the ground during the Japanese invasions of Korea from 1592-1598 known as the Imjin War. It is commonly believed by many Koreans that the Japanese invaders intentionally set the royal palace ablaze. However, historical records do not provide explicit details to support this claim. It is plausible that the palace was consumed by fire due to riots and looting, possibly carried out by Korean citizens, or that deliberate measures were taken to prevent its capture by the invading forces. The palace was not rebuilt until the 1860s, one of the reasons being that Korean royals and scholarly elite believed geomancical miscalculations had allowed its destruction. Until Gyeongbokgung's reconstruction, the site was used for royal ceremonies attributed to the founders of the dynasty.³ Deoksugung and Changdeokgung were used as the primary official royal palaces for over two centuries until

¹ Jang Jiyeon, "Gyeongbokgung".

² Lee Hyun Kyung, 'Difficult Heritage', 163-4.

³ Jang Jiyeon, "Gyeongbokgung".

Gyeongbokgung was finally reconstructed.

Gyeongbokgung's reconstruction from 1865-1867, was orchestrated by King Gojong's father and then de facto ruler of Korea, Heungseon Daewongun.⁴ No detailed architectural records of the original palace existed, and the much larger reconstructed palace differed greatly from the original.⁵ In order to rebuild the palace, the Daewongun had implemented high taxes and collected contributions by force, minted new "arbitrary hundred cash coins" causing inflation, and mobilised a great number of labourers causing public resentment.⁶ The Daewongun's palace reconstruction was so costly that it has been considered an indirect cause of the fall of the Joseon Dynasty.⁷

The high costs of reconstruction exacerbated due to accidental fires. Large parts of the palace burned down and were subsequently reconstructed in 1873, and yet again due to another fire only three years later. Due to the fires and related superstitions, King Gojong did not move his residence from Changdeokgung to Gyeongbokgung until 1884.⁸ Gojong left his residence within Gyeongbokgung, Geoncheonggung, unpainted to emphasise that it was built as a private residence with private funds rather than collected taxes. Despite public opposition and frequent fires, the rebuilt grand palace of Gyeongbokgung stood as a symbol of a powerful Joseon dynasty while its neighbouring countries of China, Russia and Japan were competing for dominance over the Korean peninsula.

II.II Internal power struggles and external threats

In 1872, Queen Myeongseong of the Min clan (a.k.a. Queen Min, posthumously Empress Myeongseong), wife of King Gojong supported the impeachment of the king's father, the Daewongun. The Min clan had attained many influential government positions through

⁴ Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, translated by Edward W. Wagner with Edward J. Shultz (Seoul: Ilchokak publishers 1984), 261-262.

⁵ Michael Kim, "Collective Memory and Commemorative Space: Reflections on Korean Modernity and the Kyōngbok Palace Reconstruction 1865-2010," *International Area Review*, 13, 4 (Winter 2010), 78-79; Youl Hwa Dang, *Korean Ancient Palaces: Kyōngbokkung Palace, Ch'angdōkkung Palace, Ch'anggyōnggung Palace, Tōksugung Palace, Chongmyo Shrine*, (Seoul: Youl Hwa Dang Publishers, 1988) Second Edition, 1993.

⁶ Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 261-262.

⁷ Youl Hwa Dang, *Korean Ancient Palaces*.

⁸ Michael Kim, "Collective Memory," 80.

the queen's influence over King Gojong, and would not accept continuous rule by the Daewongun after the coming of age of King Gojong who that year turned 20. The Daewongun was accused amongst other failures of impoverishing the people of Korea for the sake of rebuilding Gyeongbokgung.⁹ The king's father was ultimately forced to retire in 1874, and Korea was ruled by King Gojong and Queen Myeongseong, with influence from the Min clan.

With the isolationist Daewongun out of the way, Japan pushed through the first international treaty with Korea, the 1876 Treaty of Ganghwa, achieved by gunboat diplomacy. The unequal treaty opened Korean ports for Japanese merchants, granted Japan extraterritoriality, and stipulated that Korea was not a tributary state of China. King Gojong allowed Japanese military presence in Korea as a strategy for modernisation, recognising their superior weapons. Queen Myeongseong and her Min clan, on the other hand, supported China and its traditional dominance over Korea for protection against other powers.¹⁰ Against the will of the queen and the Min clan, King Gojong sent several missions to Japan to establish better relations and to bring back Japanese knowledge for the modernisation of Korea. In 1881, Gojong invited Japanese army lieutenant Horimoto Reizō to Korea for the training of a new modern (Japanese-style) Special Skills Force (Byeolgigun).

These power struggles pushed the Daewongun to support a Korean military revolt in July 1882, known as the Imo incident, in which Horimoto Reizō was killed, and the Japanese legation burned down.¹¹ The background of the riot was the king's negation of Korean regular forces in favour of the Japanese Special Skills Force. While these new forces were provided with modern weapons, the first payment to regular forces in 13 months was given as spoiled rice diluted by millet, bran and sand.¹² Furious rioters from the regular Korean forces went after Min Gyeomho, the overseer of government finances, who was directly responsible for the insulting payment of inedible rice and grains. Being the

⁹ Charles Roger Tennant, *A History of Korea* (NY: Routledge 1996), 208.

¹⁰ Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History, Updated Edition* (NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), eBook, 129-42.

¹¹ Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 271-2.

¹² Donald Keene, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and his World, 1852-1912* (NY: Columbia University Press 2002), 373; Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 272-3.

Queen's nephew, Min Gyeomho sought refuge inside the palace of Changdoekgung. On 24 July, the day after the attack on the Japanese legation, the rioters successfully broke into Changdoekgung where they murdered Min Gyeomho and several other high-ranking elites. These Korean rioters also sought to assassinate Queen Myeongseong, who was assumed dead after successfully escaping the palace disguised as a court lady carried on the back of a loyal guard.¹³

As a result of the Imo incident, King Gojong reinstated his father as the de facto ruler of the dynasty, and a state funeral was prepared for the queen.¹⁴ However, China sent troops to Korea which forced the Daewongun to Tianjin against his will, and reaffirmed Chinese suzerainty over Korea with the support of Queen Myeongseong who could return to the palace alive and well.¹⁵

Korean members of the Enlightenment Party (a.k.a. Independence Party/ Progressive Party), which formed after the Imo Incident in 1882, led by well-known nationalists such as Kim Okkyun and Soh Jaipil instigated the failed Gapsin Coup in 1884. The coup d'état was supported by the Japanese minister to Korea, Takezoe Shinichirō, without explicit permission from Japan itself.¹⁶ The Enlightenment Party attacked and killed members of the Pro-Chinese faction, including more of Queen Min's family members, and occupied Changdoekgung for two days before being driven out by the Chinese forces which had remained in Korea.¹⁷ Although Russian presence and political influence grew after Japanese power in Korea decreased with the failed coup, Japanese merchants thrived. By 1893, 91% of exports and 50% of imports went and came from Japan.¹⁸

II.III The Sino-Japanese War and dominance over Korea

Japan initiated the first Sino-Japanese war in 1894. The opportunity came when Korean

¹³ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 374.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Keith Pratt and Richard Rutt: *Korea: A Historical and Cultural Dictionary* (NY: Routledge 1999), 184-185.

¹⁶ Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910* (LA: University of California Press, 1995), 57.

¹⁷ Pratt and Rutt: *Korea*, 203-204.

¹⁸ Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 282.

rebel peasants following Donghak (Eastern learning) organised an army to fight for their rights and an independent kingdom, in a movement known as the Donghak peasant revolution and the Donghak peasant army uprising.¹⁹ The rebels were fighting against both the Korean government and the Japanese in Korea. The rebel army demanded reforms against yangban (Korean aristocrats) who were collecting arbitrary taxes for themselves and exploiting farmers, and the abolition of slavery. They also wanted to drive out Japan and enforce laws to punish pro-Japanese collaborators, mainly because cynical Japanese merchants exploited farmers by giving loans for purchases and later claiming harvests as interest. As the rebels emerged victorious against King Gojong's forces, he sought assistance from China, which promptly dispatched an additional 3,000 soldiers to Korea. Japan argued that it needed to protect its citizens residing in Korea and subsequently sent its own troops, resulting in the first clash with Chinese forces near Asan Bay on July 25, 1894.

Two days before instigating this war against China on Korean soil, Japanese troops had marched into Gyeongbokgung palace and occupied it by force.²⁰ Gyeongbokgung was at this point the permanent residence of the king and queen, and the official centre of the Korean government. The Japanese plan was to remove the pro-Chinese queen and her clan from power, officially presenting the Japanese troops as aids of the Daewongun acting according to his will. The night before the attack on the palace, however, the Daewongun was visited by a Japanese infantry company but refused to cooperate until threatened into submission.²¹

Following orders from the incumbent Japanese Minister to Korea, Ōtori Keisuke, Japanese troops had Gyeongbokgung surrounded around 4:30am. The Japanese troops forced their way inside the palace and returned fire on Korean soldiers in a deadly battle until 8:10am when the occupation was reported as successful, and King Gojong had been discovered from hiding.²² The Daewongun was brought to the palace by Japanese soldiers,

¹⁹ See for example Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History* 283-88; Cumings, *Korea's Place*, 129-34.

²⁰ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 480; Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 290.

²¹ Duus, *The Abacus*, 76-77.

²² Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR) and the British Library, "Outbreak of the war : Japan and China dispatch troops to Korea, fighting begins – Declaration of war", *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: as seen in prints and archives, online exhibition* (2015).

<https://www.jacar.go.jp/english/jacarbl-fsjwar-e/smart/about/p002.html>

and Gojong was forced to reinstate his father yet again as ruler of Korea. The Daewongun promised Japanese minister Ōtori that he would not make any moves without prior consultation.²³ A new government was formed headed by pro-Japanese Kim Hong-jip as Prime Minister. With the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki on 17 April 1895, Japan had won the first Sino-Japanese war, gaining Taiwan and the Liaodong Peninsula, and China was made to end its suzerainty over Korea.

Although the Daewongun remained in Gyeongbokgung as the official ruler of an officially independent Korea, he had no power over the new Korean government created by Japan. The Gabo Reforms (1894-1896) were implemented against his will.²⁴ The new government consisted of several key members of the failed Gapsin coup, who had returned from exile in Japan. The reforms modernised the organisation of the Korean government, reducing the power of the royal family in favour of the cabinet supported by Japan. While the new cabinet consisted of Korean politicians, they were pressured by Japan to hire Japanese advisors beginning with a police sergeant to instruct the Korean police force. By early 1895, forty Japanese officials had been hired by the Korean government and placed within the royal household and cabinet ministries, as well as within the police and postal services.²⁵

The Gabo Reforms, which included a new monetary system based on silver and standardised weights and measures, enabled Japanese capitalism and further exploitation of Koreans by Japanese merchants. The new government with members from the Enlightenment Party was not necessarily controlled by Japan when implementing the reforms. Most of the Gabo reforms were true to existing progressive Korean ideas of modernisation and aligned with Donghak opposition of the class system. The social class system including slavery was abolished, child marriage was ended, widow remarriage was allowed, traditional Confusion examinations were ended, and a newly created Ministry of Education expanded the school system and modernised textbooks. The Gabo reforms represents the beginning of modern Korean politics, free from China's

²³ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 480.

²⁴ Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 290-5; Cumings, *Korea's Place*, 134-42; Pratt and Rutt: *Korea*, 194-95.

²⁵ Duus, *The Abacus*, 90-91.

dominance but under the shadow of Japanese imperialism.²⁶

The Daewongun, who strongly opposed the Gabo reforms, plotted a military coup to drive Japanese forces out of Korea and replace King Gojong with one of the Daewongun's grandsons.²⁷ Despite finally returning to power after being a prisoner of China, the Daewongun initiated secret communication with China with hopes that they would win the war and rid him of his Japanese minders. His communications were discovered by Japan, which in response sent Inoue Kaoru to replace Ōtori and ensure control over Korea and its unpredictable royal family. Inoue swiftly forced the Daewongun back into retirement for the final time. King Gojong was instrumentalised by Japan to legitimise the regime change and political reforms. On 7 January 1895, King Gojong swore to his ancestors, in an official ceremony at the Royal Ancestral Shrine, that he would implement the reforms stripping him of any remaining true political power.

II.IV The Queen's Assassination

By 1895, Queen Myeongseong was the only remaining politically significant member of the royal family not broken by Japan's aggressive meddling. After China's defeat by Japan, the Min clan recognised Russia as their most powerful and ideal protectors. Russia had shown strength that April during the Tripartite Intervention in which they cooperated with Germany and France to threaten and force Japan to give up their newly acquired Liaodong Peninsula in China. Queen Myeongseong gave more cabinet appointments to pro-Russian Korean politicians after recognising Russian power in the Tripartite Intervention, revealing herself to Japan as a powerful obstacle to their expansionism.²⁸

The Queen's assassination was planned by Miura Gōro, a Japanese lieutenant general with no diplomatic experience who was appointed Minister to Korea in September 1895.²⁹ His plan was to evade blame of Japan by using the Japanese-trained Korean new

²⁶ Young Ick Lew, *Gabo gyeongjang yeongu [Studies on the Gabo Reform Movement]* (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1990) 178-222.

²⁷ Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 290-5; Cumings, *Korea's Place*, 134-42.

²⁸ Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 294-5; Duus, *The Abacus*, 108-12.

²⁹ Isabella Bird Bishop, *Korea and her Neighbours*, (New York, Chicago, Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1897), 269-82; Duus, *The Abacus*, 108-12.

Hullyeondae military force to stage a false coup in the name of the Daewongun, killing the queen in the process. Miura convinced, amongst other conspirators, the company president of Japanese language newspaper Kanjō Shimpō, Adachi Kenzō, to secretly recruit Japanese mercenaries for the assassination.³⁰ The mercenaries are often described as *rōnin* or *sōshi* (unemployed warriors, thugs, or bandits), but the recruits also included Kanjō Shimpō newspaper employees and other Japanese residents as well as Japanese soldiers stationed in Korea.³¹ “Mercenaries” is used within this text for a lack of a better term, but it should be noted that most were not professional mercenaries.

On 7 October 1895, the Korean war minister informed Miura that the Hullyeondae was to be disbanded the next day and a pro-Russian member of the Min clan (Min Yeong-Ik) was to be placed in charge of court affairs. Miura was on the same day also visited by Wu Beomseon, commander of the second battalion of the Hullyeondae. Miura decided, as necessary for his plot involving the Hullyeondae, that the assassination must happen immediately.³² Miura, through his Japanese co-conspirators, quickly gathered as many mercenaries as possible. Historical records strongly imply that the Japanese emperor and government was unaware of Miura’s plan. In letters dated 1894-1895 by the then consular assistant Horiguchi Kumaichi, not made public before 2021, Horiguchi states that he was amongst the palace invaders who killed Queen Myeongseong.³³ The letters confirm that Miura was not the only Japanese diplomat involved.

The assassination of Queen Myeongseong, known as the Eulmi incident, took place on 8 October 1895. Before sunrise, about 40 Japanese mercenaries and policemen (some dressed as Korean policemen) headed to the Daewongun’s residence to convince him to

³⁰ Yi Sugyeong and Pak Inshik, “Chōsen ōhi satsugai jiken no saikō [Reassessing the murder of the Korean queen]”, *Tōkyō gakugeidaigaku kiyō jinbun shakai kagakukei* 1, 58 (2007), 93-105; Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 515; Duus, *The Abacus*, 111.

³¹ Kim Munja, *Myeongseong hwanghu sihaewa ilbonin* [The murder of Empress Myeongseong and the Japanese], Korean edition translated by Thaeaksa Publishing (Paju: Thaeaksa 2011), first published in Japanese, 2009; Tsunoda Fusako, *Minbi ansatsu: Chōsen ōchō makki no Kokubo* [The assassination of Queen Min: The last empress of the Joseon Dynasty], (Tokyo: Shinchōsha 1993), 373-92; Yi and Pak, “Reassessing the murder.”

³² Duus, *The Abacus*, 110.

³³ Nagai Yasuji, “Gaikōkan ‘ōhi koroshita’ to tegami ni: 126-nen mae no Minbi ansatsu jiken de shin shiryō [Diplomat admits murder of queen in letter: New document on the assassination of Queen Min 126 years ago]”, *Asahi Shimbun*, 16 November 2021.

<https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASPCH54VBPC6PTIL008.html>

take part in the coup against his political enemy, the queen. They had raided a police storage on the way, where they obtain more weapons and Korean police uniforms.³⁴ The Daewongun negotiated against such a coup and was ultimately taken by force and put in a palanquin to be transported to Gyeongbokgung as a scapegoat.³⁵ The plot had this far only been described as a coup, and it was first after bringing the Daewongun out of his residence that the mercenaries received the order to hunt down and kill “the fox” (*kitsune*), referring to the queen.³⁶ In Japanese folklore, foxes are known to be mischievous or evil beings that can shapeshift into humans, typically female.

As the Daewongun had successfully stalled the Japanese in his residence, the sun started rising, causing many bystanders to witness the Japanese plotters marching towards and entering the palace.³⁷ About 200 Korean soldiers from the second battalion of the Hullyeondae joined them on the way as planned, along with more Japanese soldiers and mercenaries near the palace.³⁸ The mutinying Hullyeondae soldiers were led by second battalion commander Wu Beomseon.

Reaching Gwanghwamun Gate of Gyeongbokgung, some of the attackers climbed the walls and opened the gate from the inside. Some of the soldiers remained outside, while others took the Daewongun to Gyeongbokgung’s central Gangnyeongjeon hall, where they stayed with him until the hiding queen had been found.³⁹ Gunshots were heard sometime between 5:30 am and 7 am as the Hullyeondae and Japanese assassins fired at palace guards near Geoncheonggung, the royal residence.⁴⁰

A Ukrainian architect from the Russian Empire, designer of the Russian legation and friend of King Gojong, Afanasy Ivanovich Seredin-Sabatin, was in the palace during the attack.⁴¹ So was the American General William McEntyre Dye, who served as advisor to

³⁴ Tsunoda, *The assassination*, 385.

³⁵ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 515; Duus, *The Abacus*, 111.

³⁶ Tsunoda, *The assassination*, 387.

³⁷ Kim Munja, *The murder*, 299-300.

³⁸ Tsunoda, *The assassination*, 389-90.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 393.

⁴⁰ Kim Munja, *The murder*, 298.

⁴¹ Noh Hyung-seok, “Russian architect personally witnessed Empress Myeongseong’s assassination by Japanese ronin, account reveals”, *The Hankyoreh*, 20 October 2020.

https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/966501.html (accessed 28 June 2023); Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 515-17.

King Gojong and commander of the palace guards. They both stayed in buildings by Geoncheonggung and came outside as they heard the battle against the palace guards who soon were overpowered and fled.⁴² Seredin-Sabatin's witness account, which is now preserved in Russia, describes how the Japanese mercenaries pulled court ladies outside by their hair while searching for the queen. They asked the unknowing Seredin-Sabatin as well about her whereabouts.

No undisputable account exists of exactly where and how the queen was assassinated in the Geoncheonggung residence. The Japanese attackers, not knowing which one was the queen, cut down and killed three or four women inside Geoncheonggung, all dressed in similar clothing. According to the first official Japanese investigation,⁴³ the queen was killed outside while fleeing, a few meters north of the main quarters (Jangandang).⁴⁴ It is said that it was confirmed that one of the murdered women was the queen by dragging Crown Prince Sunjong and other court ladies into the room (Keene 2002: 516).⁴⁵ However, this contradicts records of King Gojong still believing that the queen had managed to escape days after her murder.⁴⁶ British explorer Isabella Bird, who knew the queen and travelled back to Korea from Japan to investigate the assassination, stated that the attackers tore off the Crown Prince's hat, pulled him by his hair and threatened him with swords to make him guide them to the queen, but that he managed to flee to his father.⁴⁷ According to Bird's investigation, the Minister of the Royal Household (Yi Gyeongjik) had stood in front of the queen to protect her with outstretched arms. The mercenaries thus identified their target, slashed off the minister's hands causing him to bleed to death, and chased after the queen before murdering her.

It is unconfirmed whom in the group of Japanese and Korean mercenaries and mutinying soldiers delivered the fatal slashes. A map in the Japanese investigation report suggests that after being murdered by the main quarters, Myeongseong was temporarily moved to the queen's residence in Geoncheonggung's inner quarters (Gonnyeonghap—more

⁴² Tsunoda, *The assassination*, 397.

⁴³ Report by Uchida, discussed below.

⁴⁴ Kim Munja, *The murder*, Uchida's map on p. 4.

⁴⁵ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 516.

⁴⁶ See for example Bird, *Korea*, 273-4.

⁴⁷ Bird, *Korea*, 273.

specifically Okoru or Okollu, the easternmost wing of Gomyeonghap). The assassins could still not be completely sure they had killed the right target because the queen had worn the same clothes as court ladies. She may have always worn a sleeping garment similar to court ladies, but this theory is disputed as she was known to enjoy luxury and extravagance.⁴⁸ It is more likely that she camouflaged herself as a court lady when hearing the attack, as she had done during the Imo incident. In the account of Lillias Horton Underwood, an American missionary who had served as Queen's Myeongseong's medical doctor, the attackers covered the queen's dead body before suddenly displaying it to court ladies who were brought inside Gomyeonghap. Shocked by the sight, the women "shrieked with horror, 'The queen, the queen!'" confirming her identity.⁴⁹

King Gojong was somewhere in the inner quarters of the Geoncheonggung during the assassination. He emerged into a front room attempting to divert the attackers' attention to give the queen time to escape and was pushed around.⁵⁰ The attackers were ordered not to hurt him for strategic reasons.⁵¹ After the queen's assassination, Gyeongbokgung was guarded by the Hullyeondae and Japanese soldiers, and Gojong had no choice but to issue an order to Miura to come and inspect the scene.⁵² Miura arrived at daylight, accompanied by the secretary of the Japanese legation (Sugimura) and another Japanese man the king recognised from the attack itself.⁵³ After identifying the queen, Miura appeared to have directly ordered her body to be burned.⁵⁴ However, some accounts imply that she was burned before his arrival.⁵⁵

According to a report by Ishizuka Eizō, a Japanese advisor to the Korean cabinet at the time, the queen's body was stripped naked and her "private parts examined".⁵⁶ This report

⁴⁸ Tsunoda, *The assassination*, 399.

⁴⁹ Lillias Horton Underwood, *Fifteen years among the topknots*, (New York: American Tract Society, 1904), 149. Available online at <https://archive.org/details/fifteenyearsamo00undegoog/page/n8/mode/2up?view=theater>

⁵⁰ Bird, *Korea*, 273.

⁵¹ Tsunoda, *The assassination*, 395.

⁵² *Ibid*, 405.

⁵³ Bird, *Korea*, 275.

⁵⁴ Tsunoda, *The assassination*, 405.

⁵⁵ See Bird, *Korea*.

⁵⁶ “局部検査”- See copy of relevant page of this report in Jeong Jihwan, “‘Myeongseong Hwanghu, sihae jeon ‘neungyok’ danghaetda’: hanil woldeukeopgwa 107-nyeongjeon ‘Eulmi sabyeon’ [‘Empress Myeongseong was sexually violated before her murder’: Korea-Japan World Cup and the Eulmi Incident

is sometimes suggested as evidence that the queen was raped before her cremation, a common belief in contemporary Korea.⁵⁷ As stated by many witnesses, the 43-year-old queen was difficult to identify because she had the appearance of a woman in her twenties. In relation to the following court case of the murder, a telegram from prosecutor Kusano, sent to Minister of Justice Yoshikawa on 9 November, stated that while the queen had a young face, the appearance of her breasts suggested she was older.⁵⁸

II.V The exposed Japanese legation investigating itself

Miura ordered Uchida Sadatsuchi, the Japanese consul, to inform other foreigners in Korea that Japan had not played a part in the queen's assassination. Based on Uchida's private letters to Japan's Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hara Kei, it is clear that Uchida already knew this to be untrue.⁵⁹ Several foreign witnesses had seen the Japanese mercenaries enter the palace, and aforementioned Seredin-Sabatin from the Russian Empire and American General Dye had experienced the attack from the inside. American diplomat Horace Allen had seen about thirty Japanese attackers escape the palace after the assassination.⁶⁰ Uchida's negation of Japanese involvement and Miura's plan to frame the Daewongun as the assassins' leader failed.

Uchida was ordered by the Japanese Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs to conduct a thorough investigation of the assassination. Uchida gathered information directly from witnesses and many of the Japanese attackers and traced their movements while

107 years ago]", *Oh My News*, 3 June 2002.

http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS_Web/View/at_pg.aspx?CNTN_CD=A0000077332 (accessed 28 June 2023).

⁵⁷ There are numerous Korean blogs and online videos that propagate the collective memory of the queen's rape as an established historical event. These narratives vary, alleging that Queen Myeongseong was subjected to rape both before and after her death. Some even claim that she was still alive when burned. Namu wiki, one of the most popular audience-edited online encyclopaedias in Korea, supports the theory that the queen was raped by Japanese (as of April 2022). The rape of Queen Myeongseong has also been presented as historical fact by Euro-American scholars. See Namu Wiki, "Eulmi sabyeon [Eulmi Incident], open collaboration online encyclopaedia.

<https://namu.wiki/w/%EC%9D%84%EB%AF%B8%EC%82%AC%EB%B3%80>; Kallie Szczepanski, "Biography of Queen Min, Korean Empress", *ThoughtCo*, 28 August 2020. [thoughtco.com/queen-min-of-joseon-korea-195721](https://www.thoughtco.com/queen-min-of-joseon-korea-195721) (Accessed 28 June 2023).

⁵⁸ Tsunoda, *The assassination*, 400.

⁵⁹ Kim Munja, *The murder*, 290-6.

⁶⁰ Duus, *The Abacus*, 111-2.

investigating in Gyeongbokgung on 22 November.⁶¹ Uchida reported his findings to Hara in “secret report no. 51” dated 21 December 1895.⁶² Several of the Japanese mercenaries involved in the attack contradicted each other’s accounts in attempts to take credit of the queen’s murder.⁶³ It is possible that Uchida’s investigation led him to more answers, but the report avoids any mention of specific perpetrators. It does, however, include a detailed map of the attackers’ movements, and states that it is based on a hand drawn map from a Japanese informant.

Uchida’s map shows that the attackers entered the palace through Gwanghwamun, took a left in front of Heungnyemun and passed through the western gate of Yongseongmun. They proceeded north passing the western side of the Sujeongjeon and Gyeonghoeru until reaching the front of Taewonjeon. From there they turned east, before again proceeding north along the walls of Taewonjeon, until finally turning east again reaching the northern side of the Hyangweonji pond. They entered the royal residence of Geoncheonggung from its main gate on its southern side and fought off the Korean guards commanded by General Dye. They subsequently spread out searching for the queen, as seen by Seredin-Sabatin. According to Uchida’s report and map, the queen, still unidentified, was spotted and attacked while attempting to exit from the upper eastern gate of Geoncheonggung, and dragged by her hair to Jangandang hall inside the residence. She was identified and murdered inside Jangandang hall, before her body was carried across the residence to Gonnyeonghap, according to Uchida’s investigation.

The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs later obtained further details from Uchida reported in a re-investigation of the assassination in 1938.⁶⁴ The reinvestigation report states that the body of Queen Myeongseong was initially thrown in the palace well, only to be lifted back up to avoid leaving evidence (the location is not specified—Gyeongbokgung had seven known wells). If this is correct, it is likely her body was thrown in the well soon after her murder, before Miura arrived to inspect the same morning. Both the official Korean royal report and Uchida’s report states that her body

⁶¹ Kim Munja, *The murder*, 301-7.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 516.

⁶⁴ Kim Munja, *The murder*, 306.

was taken to the southwestern side of Noksan hill, east of the Geoncheonggung, where she was doused in flammable oil and burned. According to the 1938 report, the queen (body or remains) was subsequently dumped in the adjacent Hyangweonji pond, but as the water was shallow, she was again pulled out “the next day or so” and buried in the forest by Noksan hill. According to the accounts of Bird and Underwood, not more than a few small bones remained after the queen was burned by Noksan hill soon after her murder.⁶⁵ However, outdoor cremations usually leave a large amount of fragmented bones as temperatures do not get high enough for complete pulverisation. It is possible that her ashes were thrown in the pond while remaining bones were buried.

Uchida confirmed finding traces of the fire by Noksan hill and “something” being buried nearby in his original 1895 report to Hara. The official Korean report states that the queen’s body was wrapped in silk after she was cut down, but does not mention it being stripped naked or being thrown in either the well or the pond (Keene 2002: 516). These unconfirmable details may have been left out due to their dishonourable nature.

Another significant source is the Gojong Sillok (Veritable Records of King Gojong), which was compiled between 1927 and 1932 based on the records of the king’s historiographers. However, the Gojong Sillok is not officially included in the Joseon Wangjo Sillok (Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty) because it was compiled and likely censored under Japanese authorities. The first entry for 8 October 1895 describes the palace invasion and murder of the queen.⁶⁶ According to the Gojong Sillok, Queen Myeongseong died in Gonnyeonghap. The records state that Wu Beomseon, commander of the second battalion of the Hullyeondae had gone to see Miura the day before. At the break of dawn of 8 August, Korean and Japanese officials led the Daewongun to Gyeongbokgung, and the leader of the palace defence force (Hong Gye-hun) was killed in front of Gwanghwamun.⁶⁷ It was recorded that the Minister of the Royal Household (Yi Gyeongjik, who according to Bird died protecting the queen) was harmed in the palace garden. The record further states that Gonnyeonghap was lost to the attackers as the battle

⁶⁵ Bird, *Korea*, 274; Underwood, *Fifteen years*, 150.

⁶⁶ Gojong Sillok, vol 33, Gojong year 32, 20 August (lunar), first entry. Available at https://sillok.history.go.kr/id/kza_13208020_001

⁶⁷ In Bird’s account, Hong Gye-hun was cut down and shot eight times by Geoncheonggung (p. 272).

intensified, and that the queen's murder was not immediately announced as her death was not confirmed on this day.

As a result of Uchida's investigation and foreign pressure in Korea for punishing the culprits, 48 suspects including Miura were sent to Japan to stand trial in Hiroshima.⁶⁸ Most of these, including Miura, were arrested by order of the Japanese government 10 days after the queen's murder.⁶⁹ However, the queen's death was not publicly announced until November 26 the same year.⁷⁰ Because the Japanese had enforced their own extraterritoriality in Korea, the Japanese perpetrators could stand trial in their home country. On 20 January 1896, the court held that Miura and other Japanese, not Koreans, had planned the palace attack and assassination, but released all defendants due to a lack of official evidence of the murder.⁷¹

At some point after the queen's murder, while deposed of royal rank, a monument was built at the exact location of her cremation by the southwest base of Noksan hill. An illustration of the monument is included in Bird's 1897 travelogue.⁷² Undated photographs of the monument said to have been taken by foreigners in Korea circulate online.⁷³ The monument looks like a large stone coffin, or altar, constructed from rectangular stone blocks. It appears to be about one meter high and four meters wide. The path to this location is fenced off today, and the location is covered by trees in satellite images. However, the monument is unlikely to remain, as imperial Japan built modern buildings around the base of Noksan.

II.VI Aftermath of the assassination

Although the queen was removed as intended, Miura's scheme did not yield the anticipated benefits for Japan, as Japanese participation was exposed and trust towards

⁶⁸ Kim Munja, *The murder*, 319.

⁶⁹ Bird, *Korea*, 277.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 281.

⁷¹ Kim Munja, *The murder*, 319; Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 520-1.

⁷² Isabella Bird left Korea in March 1897. Monument is illustrated on p. 268.

⁷³ See for example Charles Kim's blog for copies of these photographs (17 March 2018).

<https://m.blog.naver.com/PostView.naver?isHttpsRedirect=true&blogId=minsu977&logNo=221230892520> (accessed 8 December 2022).

Japan was lost from both Korean and foreign officials. After the assassination, the Hullyeondae guarded the palace and in effect held Gojong hostage. When representatives of foreign missions came to meet him, the king sobbed, grabbed their hands and asked for assistance.⁷⁴ He was forced to sign a royal edict deposing the queen of royal rank for having allowed extortion of citizens and for creating political disorder.⁷⁵ The edict did not mention that the queen was not alive, a fact still not publicly known at this time (perhaps even the king himself had hopes the queen had managed to escape).⁷⁶

A new cabinet, headed by Kim Hong-jip once again, was established, comprising ministers who advocated for the Japanese modernisation of Korea.⁷⁷ This cabinet pursued the continuation of the Gabo reforms, which included the introduction of universal primary education. However, it also enforced the mandatory cutting of top knots worn by Korean men as part of its modernisation agenda.⁷⁸ In Confucian Joseon, a man's topknot was highly valued as an indispensable symbol of dignity. The Queen's assassination by Japanese officials followed by the pro-Japanese cabinet's unacceptable reforms spawned anti-Japanese guerrilla fighters, known as "Righteous Armies" (euibyeong) all over the country who battled the soldiers sent from Seoul to subdue them.⁷⁹

On 11 February 1896, King Gojong and the crown prince successfully escaped Gyeongbokgung in closed palanquins usually used by court ladies, and sought refuge in the Russian legation until the following year. Gyeongbokgung never again became a royal residence, as the king left the Russian legation for the nearby palace of Deoksugung. Immediately after his escape from Gyeongbokgung, King Gojong ordered the executions of Kim Hong-jip and other pro-Japanese ministers.⁸⁰ Kim Hong-jip, hated by the Korean public for his reforms, was dragged out through Gwanghwamun where angry mobs stoned and/or trampled him before his body was cut into pieces and his severed head put on display.⁸¹ A new pro-Russian government was formed, and Japan's power in Korea

⁷⁴ Bird, *Korea*, 275.

⁷⁵ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 519-20.

⁷⁶ Bird, *Korea*, 276.

⁷⁷ Duus, *The Abacus*, 111.

⁷⁸ Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 294-5; Cumings, *Korea's Place*, 136.

⁷⁹ Yi and Pak, *Reassessing the murder*, 100.

⁸⁰ Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 521-2.

⁸¹ Ki-Baik Lee, *A New History*, 300; Duus, *The Abacus*, 118; Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 521-2, 827-28.

was temporarily weakened until its victory in the Russo-Japanese war in 1905.

As Japan's influence in Korea waned, Wu Beomseon, who had commanded the Hullyeondae during the queen's assassination, fled to Japan where he remarried and started a new life. In 1903 he was killed by three Korean assassins in Hiroshima as revenge for aiding Miura. This incident is not well-known in Korea today, but some argue Wu Beomseon's assassins should be officially recognised as heroes of the Korean independence movement.⁸²

II.VII A short-lived Korean Empire

Before losing all power to Japan, on 12 October 1897, Gojong made himself emperor as he proclaimed Korea a fully independent empire, the *Daehan Jeguk*. Queen Myeongseong was given her post-humous title, Empress Myeongseong, and a grand and costly funeral was arranged, two years after her death. As her body was lost, her clothes were buried along with a finger bone discovered at the site of her cremation by the Japanese in Gyeongbokgung.⁸³ The public watched as thousands of soldiers escorted the hearse to the royal funeral site in present-day Seoul's Cheongnyangni. This tomb has not been preserved, as the empress' hearse was moved and buried together with Gojong after his death. The Hongneung tomb of Emperor Gojong and Empress Myeongseong, located just outside Seoul in Namyangju, is part of the "Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty" inscribed as UNESCO World Heritage in 2009.⁸⁴

After Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese war, Japan first made Korea a protectorate in 1905, before annexing it into the Japanese empire in 1910. Emperor Gojong had been forced by Japan to abdicate in 1907 for his less politically engaged son, Sunjong, in order

⁸² Jeong Manjin, "U Beomseon cheodan uisadeul, dongnibyugongjaro injeonghaeya [The patriots who punished Wu Beomseon should be recognised as independence fighters]", *Oh My News*, 9 October 2020. http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS_Web/View/at_pg.aspx?CNTN_CD=A0002682296 (accessed 9 December 2022).

⁸³ Robert Neff, "Empress Myeongseong's Funeral procession: Part 3", *The Korea Times*, 28 November 2021. https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2021/11/721_319523.html (Accessed 28 June 2023); Cumings, *Korea's Place*, 138.

⁸⁴ UNESCO, "Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty", World Heritage list website (n.d.) <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1319/> (Accessed 28 June 2023).

for Japan to enforce another treaty that paved the way for full colonial occupation.

Gojong's sudden death in Deoksugung on 21 January 1919 and the fast-spreading rumour that he had been poisoned by Japan fuelled the national independence movement (March First Movement) that started the same year. Gojong lived 66 years, relatively long for a Joseon dynasty King, and had been taking medication for a multitude of minor diseases.⁸⁵ In Korea, the collective memory of Gojong's lethal poisoning by Japan is widely regarded as historical fact. It is not unlikely that he was poisoned, but there is no concrete evidence, and the official cause of death was cerebral haemorrhage. However, accounts from Korean and Japanese diaries of individuals close to Gojong indicate that his teeth fell out and his body exhibited unnatural swelling after his death, suggesting that he may have been poisoned by his Korean doctor on behalf of Japanese authorities.⁸⁶

II.VIII Gyeongbokgung under imperial Japan

Soon after Japan officially annexed Korea in 1910, the colonial government decided that a new Government-General Building was needed, to replace the governor-general's headquarters built by Namsan in 1907. The palace grounds of Gyeongbokgung, the primary political centre of the former Joseon Dynasty, was designated as the location of a grand Government-General building that was to become the largest and most imposing building in the colony. Its historical location and modern architecture symbolised the end of the Joseon Dynasty and imperial Japan as a powerful and legitimate modern ruler of Korea. After careful planning, the construction started in 1916 and was completed a decade later in 1926.

While planning went ahead for the new Government-General Building, the palace grounds were used for celebrations and public events designed to legitimise colonial rule. In 1913, Gyeongbokgung hosted a commemorative celebration on the birthday of Emperor Meiji who had died the previous year. In 1915, the palace grounds were used as

⁸⁵ Lee Hai-Woong and Kim Hoon, "Joseon sidae Gojong-ui jilbyeong-e gwanhan gochal - Joseon wangjo sillok-eul jungsim-euro [A Research on the Disease of King Gojong in the Choseon Dynasty]". *The Journal of Korean Medical History* 24, 2 (2011), 125-34.

⁸⁶ Choi Yeong-ho and Yi Tae-jin, "The Mystery of Emperor Kojong's Sudden Death in 1919: Were the Highest Japanese Officials Responsible?" *Korean Studies* Vol. 35 (2011).

the site of the Joseon Industrial Exhibition, which was the first time in Korea's history that the palace was fully opened for the public. Unavoidably, a large number of historical palace buildings had to be demolished to make space for the Government-General Building. However, even more of the palace buildings were demolished for the 1916 exposition, both to make room for exhibition halls and because many buildings were considered dirty and dilapidated by the exhibition organisers. 123 palace buildings were demolished for the exposition, of which as many two thirds were put on auction and reconstructed at the properties of wealthy businessmen in Korea and Japan.⁸⁷

The Joseon Industrial Exposition was inaugurated by Governor General Masatake Terauchi in front of Gyeongbokgung's Geunjeongjeon throne hall, draped in Japanese flags, on 11 September 1915. It was a grand scale project intended to commemorate five years of colonial rule and to propagate a colonial future of modernity beneficial to the colonised. Large exhibition halls of European architecture exhibited about 40,000 industrial and cultural items produced by Koreans and Japanese in Korea, as well as about 8,300 products from Japan.⁸⁸ Industrial tools were placed together in chronological order to demonstrate not only Japanese technological superiority, but also to propagate the notion that Korea was rapidly progressing under Japanese rule. Entertainment and games were prepared to attract diverse crowds. The exposition lasted three months and had over one million visitors from all over Korea and Japan due to extensive official advertising and campaigning.⁸⁹

The juxtaposition of modern exhibition halls and traditional palace buildings simulated the visual function of the yet-to-be constructed Government-General Building. Its planned location, right in front of the Geunjeongjeon throne hall, was used as the site of the primary exhibition hall of the 1915 exposition. The exhibition hall featured two 25.5-meter-high towers, dwarfing the throne hall and other remaining palace buildings in

⁸⁷ Todd A. Henry, *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (LA: University of California Press, 2014), 97.

⁸⁸ Hong Kal, "Modeling the West, Returning to Asia: Shifting Politics of Representation in Japanese Colonial Expositions in Korea", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 47:3 (July 2005), 507 – 531.

⁸⁹ Yoonchun Jung, *Inventing the identity of modern Korean architecture, 1904-1929*, Ph.D. diss. McGill University, 2014.

comparison.⁹⁰ The old palace buildings, now blocked by large colonial buildings, came to symbolise the limitations of the Joseon Dynasty rather than its lost powers.

The Geunjeongjeon throne hall and Gyeonghoeru pavilion were preserved to present memories of Korea's past before colonial modernisation. In order to legitimise its rule, imperial Japan paired narratives of Japanese superiority with narratives of Koreans and Japanese having shared ancestry. Thus, Korean traditional culture was to be remembered as shared history, while Japanese contemporary culture was to be sought for a shared bright future. The juxtaposition of aged and comparably small Korean palace buildings and large-scale European style exhibition halls and subsequently the Government-General building reflects this Japanese colonial rhetoric. Traditional Korean art was also exhibited in the Art Museum built on site, many works being recent additions to Governor General Masatake Terauchi's private collection. After the end of the exposition, its whole area was used as exhibition space for the Art Museum until construction of the Government-General Building commenced in 1916.⁹¹

From its completion in 1926, the Government-General Building dominated Gyeongbokgung as a symbol of the colonial government's authority. Gwanghwamun, the main entrance gate of the palace, was moved to the east side as its angle and traditional Korean style was deemed unsuitable in front of the new government building.⁹² Thus, the Government-General Building blocked the view of all original palace buildings, rendering them as mere historical attractions in the park behind the seat of the colonial government. In Korea, it is commonly believed that Japan specifically considered the geomantic energies of Gyeongbokgung, and constructed the Government-General Building and relocated Gwanghwamun to deliberately block the geomantic energy flow. However, there are no known official documents to prove this myth.

The relocated Gwanghwamun gate was used as the main entrance for the second grand exposition held at Gyeongbokgung—the Korea Exposition of 1929. Despite economic recession, government campaigns ensured an attendance of over 1.5 million visitors from

⁹⁰ Henry, "Assimilating Seoul."

⁹¹ Yoonchun Jung, *Inventing the identity*.

⁹² Henry, "Assimilating Seoul".

all over the country.⁹³ After nationwide demonstrations against the colonial government in the March First Movement in 1919, it adapted a “Cultural Policy” to replace the ruling policy of forced assimilation. During the “cultural rule,” Korean culture was studied and selectively valued, and Japan-Korean “co-prosperity” was promoted to reduce opposition. The 1929 Korea Exposition reflected this, as most exhibition halls were reconstructed palace buildings, albeit inaccurately reconstructed in a form of “Koreannised” Japanese architecture.⁹⁴

The purpose of the exposition was officially to propagate Korean progress under colonial rule, but advertising Korean resources to attract more Japanese investors appeared like an obvious secondary agenda. From Gwanghwamun in the east, reconstructed “Korean” pavilions formed a long passage through the palace grounds ending in front of the original Gyeonghoeru pavilion. Behind it stood the Naichi-kan (Japanese Homeland Building), which was modern and maintained the symbolism of Japan as Korea’s more advanced “older brother”.⁹⁵ Like in 1915, the Korea Exposition was inaugurated at the Geunjeongjeon throne hall by the Governor General, in 1929 Saitō Makoto, while the Japanese national anthem was playing.

Avoiding deliberate use of European architecture as symbols of modernisation, and the theme of imperial Japan protecting Korean culture at the Korea Exposition foreshadowed the ideology of Pan-Asian co-prosperity.⁹⁶ This ideology aimed to portray Japan’s role in the Asia-Pacific War as defenders against Western imperialism, positioning themselves as protectors of Asian nations and their respective cultures. It was only after Japan’s defeat in the war in 1945 that Korea could regain its independence. For many Koreans with few or no memories of the colonial period, the Government-General Building may have represented post-colonial South Korean dictatorships more than Japanese colonialism.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Hong Kal, “Modeling the West”.

⁹⁵ Yoonchun Jung, *Inventing the identity*; Hong Kal, “Modeling the West”.

⁹⁶ Hong Kal, “Modeling the West”.

Appendix III Hypothetical tour narrative of Gyeongbokgung centered around Queen Myeongseong

The following is a theoretical discussion of a hypothetical dark tourism tour narrative for Gyeongbokgung designed to highlight the background of Korea's colonial occupation by Japan through memories of Queen Myeongseong. The aim is to demonstrate the manner in which official and unofficial tours of Gyeongbokgung, as well as comparable locations, could conceivably harness the narratives of historical figures to underscore the wider intricacies of colonial memory.

Narratives of the circumstances leading up to and resulting from Queen Myeongseong's assassination can potentially be highly useful for introducing difficult history relevant to Japan's colonial occupation of Korea to tourists at Gyeongbokgung. The assassination is already part of official palace narratives and would not appear out of place to most tourists. The assassination was planned by Japanese diplomat Miura because of the Queen's successful efforts to limit Japanese political power in Korea, but there is no evidence the Japanese government supported the brutal murder, which was carried out by a mix of Japanese and Koreans with different motives for participation. The murder is unjustifiable, but with sufficient historical background it becomes clear that the queen's murder was not simply a Japanese attack on Korea. Framed as a narrative of domestic and international conflicts over political influence and rule in Korea, the dramatic assassination can generate interest and channel tourists' attention to the complex political struggles which ended with Japan annexing Korea. Ultimately, the narrative would still portray Korea as a victim of Japanese colonialism aligned with existing local collective memory. However, at the same time, Queen Myeongseong's narrative could highlight complexities of the geopolitical climate through her relations to the Min clan, King Gojong, and the Daewongun as well as opposing views within Korea's elite regarding which foreign powers to welcome or hinder in Korea.

Existing official tours end by the Hyangwonji pond, and a hypothetical Queen Myeongseong tour could follow a similar route continuing to the queen's residence in Geoncheonggung. The route largely matches that of the queen's assassins according to Uchida's investigation, and guides could point this out to tourists to engage participants and enable visualisations of the assassins' mission.

The Daewongun is introduced for having reconstructed the palace at the start of standard official tours, but a broader picture of Joseon Korea could be painted if the Daewongun's agenda behind this reconstruction was elaborated on. The reconstruction was part of a power struggle to legitimise the rule of King Gojong, and the Daewongun eventually plotted against the queen and her clan for his own conservative political aims. It would be purposeful to reference the 1882 Imo incident, highlighting how anti-Chinese Koreans wanted the queen dead long before she was assassinated for her preference of Russia over Japan. The Imo incident, moreover, exemplifies the Min queen's dedication to her clan through memories of how the queen protected her nephew, Min Gyeomho, who had caused Korean soldiers to revolt by distributing spoiled food as delayed payments. Such significant details may also break misconceptions of the queen as an innocent supporter of the king, loved by all Koreans. Naturally, a Queen Myeongseong tour facilitating dark tourism must provide detailed and complex narratives of the queen, including positive descriptions of her as an able politician who protected Korea against Japanese imperial aggressions during her regency.¹

In addition to narratives of Gyeongbokgung during the 1592-98 Japanese invasions of Korea and the 1895 assassination of Queen Myeongseong (included in standard tours), a Queen Myeongseong tour should include narratives of Korea's political situation and international relations since the 1860s reconstruction of Gyeongbokgung. Importantly, narratives of the 1976 Treaty of Ganghwa, the 1882 Imo Incident, the 1884 Gapsin Coup, and the Sino-Japanese War are essential for understanding how both the queen and the dynasty itself ultimately fell due to imperial aggressions in a critical time of enforced internationalisation necessitating immediate modernisation. Highlighting these events can aid understanding of the conflicting perspectives within the Korean elite of the time and disentangle misconceptions of "righteous" nationalists and "traitorous" pro-colonial collaborators that persist in the collective memory of the fall of Joseon Korea. The life and death of Queen Myeongseong illustrates how Koreans worked against each other and cooperated with opposing foreign powers, including imperial Japan, despite sharing

¹ Narratives of Queen Myeongseong's political powers would also answer to occasional misogynists' perspectives from which the Gyeongbokgung Office has been criticised for not attributing significance solely to male regents. A "Queen Myeongseong tour" detailing her political activities could promote also Korean feminism.

similar intentions of strengthening Korea.

The Sujeongjeon, the building used by the pro-Japanese cabinet of Korea which passed the Gabo Reforms, is an ideal site to narrate how Japan's increasing political powers in Korea were welcomed by many educated Koreans who desired a Japanese-style modernisation but did not foresee the fall of their nation as a result. References to the Gapsin coup in which several family members of the queen were killed would exemplify precedents of pro-Japanese Korean nationalists and connect to narratives of Korea's vulnerable geopolitical situation after the first Sino-Japanese war. Depending on format and audience, it could be useful to describe how followers of the Donghak movement supported the pro-Japanese Gabo Reforms but had no desire for Japanese rule.²

It would be natural for narratives of a Queen Myeongseong tour to include multiple "flash forwards" to the colonial period. The purpose of her assassination was to enable imperial Japan to control Korea, and although the assassination initially worked against its purpose, it foreshadowed the colonial period to come as soon as Russia was defeated by Japan in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). By jumping to narratives of Gyeongbokgung and Korea under Japanese rule, it will be clearer what Queen Myeongseong fought against and (from a non-Korean perspective) how the colonial period is considered a national trauma. Narratives from the colonial period should include descriptions of Japanese expositions and the construction of the Japanese Government-General Building on the palace grounds to destroy Gyeongbokgung's function as a symbol of legitimacy of Joseon Korea and its royal family.

At the Geoncheonggung Residence, the guide may point out locations where the assassins entered from, the location of the Gwanmungak where witness Seredin-Sabatin from Russia was temporarily residing, and exact locations recorded as spots the queen was spotted, murdered, and carried before being burned. By this point, participants should have been told about the Hullyeondae and Korean participation in the assassination.

² For guided tours, the level of detail may be adjusted depending on the audience. It would be natural to mention the Donghak movement for Korean tour participants, but the amount of historical stakeholders may be reduced on guided tours for foreign audiences with limited or no pre-existing knowledge. However, a high level of optional details could be made accessible to all visitors in other formats, such as the audio-guide, a digital guiding app, or a guidebook.

The existence of contradictory records must be conveyed to tourists to emphasise that narratives at the site are interpretations of the past which are continuously moulded as new evidence are discovered. A crucial question with no clear answer is who delivered the fatal blows, and in contrast with existing official narratives, it does not appear impossible that a Korean soldier of the Hullyeondae, not a Japanese, cut down the queen. Such ambiguities in tourism narratives, including contrasting theories on the extent of the Daewongun's resistance against Miura's men, would make the historiography more transparent and challenge monumentalised perceptions of the assassins as a group of united anti-Korean Japanese mercenaries. The murder should be described as a political move planned by Miura and acted out by Japanese and Korean killers who were against the queen's policies—not as a sacrilegious murder-rape by heinous Japanese assassins as part of a plan to destroy the Korean spirit. The existence of this dissonance in public memory would be a valuable addition to tourism narratives not only to emphasise ambiguity of records, but because it speaks to the range of emotions the narratives may invoke in Koreans depending on their interpretations and dominant collective memories.

If tourists exit the Geoncheonggung residence through its east gate, they will stand in front of Noksan hill where the queen's body was cremated.³ Absent from current official narratives, it should be presented to visitors how Gojong was immediately forced to posthumously strip the queen of her royal title, and that she was not made empress nor given a funeral until two years later after King Gojong had emerged from his refuge in the Russian legation and proclaimed Korea an empire. Furthermore, narratives could include Gojong's decision to execute pro-Japanese Korean ministers, including prime minister Kim Hong-jip who was publicly dismembered in front of the palace. Visitors curious about the fate of the queen's assassins could be informed how Miura and 47 others were tried but not sentenced in Japan, due to the unequal 1876 Treaty of Ganghwa giving Japanese extraterritoriality in Korea. This narrative can be linked to those of subsequent unequal treaties enforced in 1905 and 1907, and ultimately the 1910 annexation of Korea by Japan. Finally, it would be meaningful to narrate how the colonial period ended in

³ The original foundation stones of the Jaseondang hall are also located right outside this gate, making it an ideal site to narrate how imperial Japan dismantled and sold many of the place buildings during the colonial period.

1945 and encourage tourists to consider how colonial memory and the dissonance it causes affect Korea and other formerly colonised countries today.

This hypothetical Queen Myeongseong tour utilises her shocking and violent death as a “hook” to create tension and intrigue around the history leading up to Japan’s colonisation of Korea, even for visitors to Gyeongbokgung with no prior interest or knowledge in East Asian colonial history. The result facilitates educational dark tourism with the potential to aid bystanders’ understanding of why Korean colonial memory holds collective trauma. It frames the narratives in ways that Japanese tourists may absorb without direct threats to their national identities. However, differently themed tours focusing mainly on the colonial period itself, with the queen’s assassination presented more briefly as context, may be desirable for visitor groups such as students or academics.

Appendix IV Seodaemun Prison – Historical Background

The following is more comprehensive overview of Seodaemun Prison’s history than the abbreviated version in [Chapter 4](#) of the main text.

IV.I Korea’s first modern prison system

Seodaemun Prison was a Japanese prison constructed in Korea in 1908—two years before Korea was officially colonised by imperial Japan. Japanese power in Korea had weakened after Miura’s plan to frame the Daewongun for the murder of Queen Myeongseong failed in 1895, but nothing stopped Japan from forcing Korea into the Japan-Korea Protectorate Treaty (Eulsa Treaty) in 1905 after victory in the Russo-Japanese war. The treaty gave Japan control over Korea’s international relations as well as power over Korea’s legal and judicial affairs, allowing Japanese policemen power in the country.⁴ Gojong, then officially Emperor of Korea, was opposed to Japanese rule and was in 1907 forced to abdicate by Japan in favour of his more controllable son, Sunjong. Immediately after, Japan made Sunjong sign the Japan–Korea Treaty of 1907 which stipulated Japanese control of Korean internal affairs, including the jurisdiction and operation of prisons. Construction of an extensive Japanese prison network in Korea began the same year, of

⁴ Bruce Cumings, *Korea’s place in the sun: a modern history*, updated edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005, first published in 1998), 161-68.

which Seodaemun Prison was the largest.⁵ By 1910, eight large main prisons had been built in Seoul, Gongju, Hamhung, Pyongyang, Haeju, Daegu, Busan, and Gwangju, as well as 14 additional branch prisons in smaller cities.⁶ The total number of inmates in this new Japanese prison network was 2,018 in 1908, 5,300 in 1909, and reached 12,249 in 1918.⁷

Imperial Japan exploited the perceived need to modernise colonised territories like Korea as justification for their expansion of power, and the Japanese prison system was showcased as a salient example of Korean modernisation and progress under Japanese rule.⁸ Under the traditional Korean system, crimes were often investigated by brutal torture of suspects who were sentenced to further physical abuse and/or death or exile. Various forms and degrees of flogging were the most common punishments, but public execution and dismemberment was also regular, with decapitated heads often displayed on stakes for several days after. In addition, private punishments were accepted for slaves and women accused of adultery. The yangban, or aristocrats, were generally untouched as most punishments could be avoided with substantial payments.⁹ The penal system of Joseon Korea was seen as inhumane and dysfunctional by major foreign powers, which is part of the reason that all foreign powers who entered treaties with Korea demanded extraterritoriality.¹⁰

Before losing its sovereignty to Japan, many members of the Korean elite considered penal reforms as essential. Major transformations began to be implemented with the Gabo reforms of 1894-96, and further reforms were introduced during Gojong's period as

⁵ Kim Samung, Nam Doyeong and Jeong Jinseok, *Seodaemun hyeongmuso 100nyeon hoegowa Jeonmang* (Seoul: Seodaemun hyeongmuso yeoksagwan, 2008), 4.

⁶ In his doctoral thesis, Michael L. Sprunger provides a thorough analysis of the Joseon Korean penal system from 1875 and how it changed under Japanese control. See Michael L. Sprunger, "Grafting Justice: Crime and the Politics of Punishment in Korea, 1875-1938" (Doctoral thesis, University of Hawaii, 2011), 188. For an extensive overview of Korea's modern criminal justice in the late Joseon Dynasty, see Do Myeonhoe, *Hanguk geundae hyeongsajaepan jedosa [A History of Modern Criminal Justice in Korea]* (Seoul: Pureun yeoksa, 2014).

⁷ Jin Woong Kang, "The Prison and Power in Colonial Korea," *Asian Studies Review*, 40:3 (2016), 413-426, 417.

⁸ Jin Woong Kang, "The Prison."

⁹ Sprunger, "Grafting Justice."

¹⁰ Another reason for demanding extraterritoriality may be attributed to the possibility and convenience, considering Korea's inexperience in diplomacy and vulnerability to unequal treaties. Foreign powers might have demanded extraterritoriality regardless of the actual state of the traditional penal system, as long as they could argue its inadequacy.

emperor (1897-07).¹¹ The Gabo reforms, which completely restructured Korea's government, replaced the traditional "minister of punishment" with a modern minister of justice.¹² The reforms were intended to improve treatment of prisoners and introduce long-term imprisonment as a more progressive form of punishment than inducing physical pain. Public dismemberment and the display of severed body parts was discontinued.

Despite efforts, Korean reforms were never fully implemented, and the country did not have sufficient prison cells to replace physical punishments with imprisonment. Due the tradition of predominantly using torture as punishment, the country's eight prisons were not made to hold more than a total of 300 prisoners—Seoul's maximum prisoner capacity being 100.¹³ A Japanese journalist who visited Seoul in 1905 wrote that its prison cells were crammed full of criminals convicted of similar offences, regardless of sex. According to the Japanese journalist it meant that sexual offenders such as male rapists and female adulterers commonly shared cells.¹⁴ Such public descriptions of an inhumane Korean penal system, possibly deliberately biased, made it even easier for Japan to argue that Japanese intervention was beneficial to the Korean people. Isabella Bird Bishop, who sympathised with Joseon Korean authorities and visited a reformed Seoul Prison in 1897, described it positively compared to those in "other unreformed Oriental countries", crediting foreign, primarily Japanese, advisors for improvements in Korea.¹⁵

The initial construction of Seodaemun Prison, then known as Gyeongseong Prison (Gyeongseong Gamok/Keijō Kangoku) was completed on 21 October 1908 close to Seoul's West Gate (Seodaemun) and Independence Gate (Dongnimmun), on grounds that until then had formed the residential Geumgye-dong village.¹⁶ The Independence Gate

¹¹ Do Myeonhoe, *A History of Modern Criminal Justice*, 118-252.

¹² Hahm Pyong-choon, "Reception and Modernization of Korean Law," *Introduction to the law and legal system of Korea*, ed. Sang Hyun Song (Kyungmunsa publishing, 1983), originally published in 1969. pp. 174-75.

¹³ Kim, Nam and Jeong, *Seodaemun hyeongmuso*, 5; Jin Woong Kang, "The Prison."

¹⁴ Enjōji Kiyoshi, *Kankoku no jitsujō* [Actual conditions in Korea] (Tokyo: Rakuseisha, 1906), preface, as cited by Sprunger in *Grafting Justice*.

¹⁵ According to Isabella Bird, there were 225 prisoners, all male, divided into comfortable cells with 12 to 18 prisoners each. Isabella Bird Bishop, *Korea and her Neighbours* (New York, Chicago, Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1897), 441-4.

¹⁶ Kim, Nam and Jeong, *Seodaemun hyeongmuso*, 3-4.

had been constructed by Seo Jae-pil one decade earlier to symbolise the end of Chinese suzerainty over Korea, but the adjacent construction of a large modern Japanese prison abused this space to signify Japanese power.¹⁷ It was not a remote location, and passersby could from outside the prison see into some of the cells above the walls and some made a habit of waving to visible prisoners.¹⁸ The prison had capacity to house 500 prisoners in 1908—almost double that of the total national capacity of the Joseon Korean prison system.¹⁹

Gyeongseong Prison soon reached maximum capacity, and in 1912, two years after Korea's formal annexation, another prison was built in Seoul's Mapo district.²⁰ As the new prison became Seoul's main prison, it was given the name Gyeongseong/Keijō Prison (Gyeongseong Gamok/Keijō Kangoku) while the original Gyeongseong Prison was renamed as Seodaemun Prison (Seodaemun Gamok/Seidaimon Kangoku). Seodaemun Prison was substantially expanded to hold 3,000 inmates in 1923 (and renamed as it known today as Seodaemun *Hyeongmuseo*/ Seidaimon *Keimusho*, the more modern term for prison used in Japan meaning penitentiary)²¹. At this time, the new Gyeongseong/Keijō Prison built in 1912 had half that capacity at 1,500.²² After Korea's liberation Seodaemun Prison was again renamed Gyeongseong Prison, and went through three more name changes before its closure in 1987. The two prisons are sometimes erroneously thought to be one and the same. Within this thesis, "Seodaemun Prison" refers to all incarnations of the first Japanese prison built in Seoul in 1908 as well as the current museum (Seodaemun Prison History Hall), while "Keijō Prison" refers to the second prison built in 1912.

IV.II Discrimination and violence in the guise of colonial modernisation

Imperial Japan was quick to display and celebrate its new facilities and enforced penal

¹⁷ Hyun Kyung Lee, *'Difficult Heritage' in Nation Building South Korea and post-Conflict Japanese Colonial Occupation Architecture* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 110-13.

¹⁸ Sprunger, "Grafting Justice," 254.

¹⁹ Kim, Nam and Jeong, *Seodaemun hyeongmuseo*, 5

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Seodaemun Prison History Hall, *The place of Independence and Democracy: Seodaemun Prison History Hall* (Seoul: Seodaemun Prison History Hall and Seodaemun Management Corporation, 2018), 6.

²² Sprunger, "Grafting Justice," 114.

reforms in Korea. Already in 1907, its “Report on Reforms included glossy pictures [of newly constructed law courts] that illustrated the legitimacy of its rule in Korea to readers around the world.”²³ The next report from 1908 included photographs for comparison of traditional Korean trial proceedings and those after Japanese reform—the latter showing Korean suspects in traditional clothing in a modern court hall with judges in European suits.²⁴ Korea had at the time 113 Japanese and 65 Korean judges.²⁵ The balance became further skewed after Japan’s official colonisation of Korea in 1910, and by 1916 the number of Japanese judges had risen to 165, while the number of Korean judges had dwindled to 32.²⁶ The prisons, as in Japan, were also Europeanised, following a panopticon design for surveillance in which long rectangular prison wards encircled an observation unit (from an arial perspective forming the shape of a propeller). Most inmates were made to work ten to 14 hours producing clothes and textiles (or war supplies during the war) for the Japanese empire. Although the system was discriminatory, Japan successfully portrayed itself to Euro-American powers as a legitimate ruler of Korea by emulating many aspects of Euro-American modernity and colonialism.

Japan’s penal system in Korea appeared as a great improvement on the surface, but inhumane treatment continued, this time imposed by a foreign power in the guise of modernisation. Japanese law, created post-Meiji Restoration based on the French Civil Code, was implemented in Korea in 1912, but not without additional discriminatory rules for Koreans. Imperial Japan contradicted its own rhetoric of modernisation by arguing that Koreans had a tradition of using physical violence as punishment and that it was purposeful that this continued because Koreans were said to be too “underdeveloped” to be motivated by modern punishments.²⁷ Thus, flogging was legally continued in Korea for Korean criminals, but could not be used on Japanese criminals because torture was

²³ Alexis Dudden, *Japan’s Colonization of Korea: Discourse and Power* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 102.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 103-05.

²⁵ Edward J. Baker, “Establishment of a legal system under Japanese rule,” *Introduction to the law and legal system of Korea*, ed. Sang Hyun Song (Kyungmunsa publishing, 1983), originally published in 1979. p. 190.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Jin Woong Kang, “The Prison,” 417-18.

legally banned in Japan in 1882.²⁸

From December 1910, the colonial police were given powers of summary judgement allowing them to flog Koreans without trial, sometimes resulting in fatal injuries.²⁹ By 1916, more criminals were sentenced to flogging than imprisonment (with 52,546 floggings officially recorded that year, of which 70% were based on summary judgements).³⁰ Consistent with propaganda claiming that flogging was a Korean tradition unsuitable for Japanese, in prisons, it was Korean staff that were made to carry out such punishments on their fellow nationals.³¹ The flogging of Koreans was finally abolished in 1920 as part of the *bunka-seiji*, or “cultural rule”, that Japan introduced after the Korean March First Independence Movement demonstrated that military rule with excessive violence had worked against its intended purpose of making Koreans loyal subjects.³²

During the colonial period, there were more Korean jailers than Japanese, although elite positions such as prison warders were generally staffed by Japanese.³³ According to Seodaemun Prison History Hall, 145 out of 339 employees at Seodaemun Prison were Korean (43%) in 1937.³⁴ Two out of 30 middle level officers were Korean, and both high level officers were Japanese. Working in the colonial prisons was mentally strenuous and dangerous, especially for Koreans. For example, in 1921, a Korean warder at Seoul’s Keijō prison killed himself with his warder’s pistol after being relieved of duty due to mental distress.³⁵ Korean warders were sometimes severely beaten by prisoners as well as by civilians on the street when wearing their uniform.³⁶

Life in colonial Korean prisons was dictated by draconian regulations based around a point system that rewarded prisoners for obedience and docility.³⁷ There were four levels of relative privilege that could be obtained based on prisoner conduct ratings, and

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Baker, “Establishment of a legal system,” 194-202.

³⁰ Chulwoo Lee, “Modernity, Legality, and Power in Korea Under Japanese Rule,” *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, edited by Gi-wook Shin (Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 32-33.

³¹ Dudden, *Japan’s Colonization*, 116.

³² Jin Woong Kang, “the Prison”, 419.

³³ Dudden, *Japan’s Colonization*, 116.

³⁴ Seodaemun Prison History Hall, *The place of Independence*, 97.

³⁵ The Dong-a Ilbo, “Danchong jasal [Suicide by handgun],” 22 July 1921, 3.

³⁶ Sprunger, “Grafting Justice,” 198.

³⁷ Chulwoo Lee, “Modernity, Legality, and Power”; Jin Woong Kang, “the Prison.”

obedient prisoners elevated their conduct level over time by obtaining points for compliance. The conduct rating dictated the amount of food provided, the number of days between baths, the colour of prison uniforms, the possibility of receiving underwear or a pen and notebook, exemptions from going to the workshop naked (prisoners with lower ratings had to jump over an obstacle naked to prevent them taking anything to or from the workstations), and qualifications for parole. Colonial authorities were concerned that their legitimacy and penal system could be undermined if political prisoners completed their sentences without undergoing ideological transformation. Consequently, prison officers were directed to convert each prisoner under their custody.³⁸ Framed as a prisoner rehabilitation program (like those in Europe), the point system was successfully used to pressure political prisoners to officially convert to Japanese imperial nationalist ideology.³⁹

Despite claims of colonial authorities that criminals were treated fairly, torture of suspects and prisoners was common throughout the period of colonial rule, before and after flogging was officially abolished. Such torture was first made publicly known through the “105 Persons Incident”, in which 105 out of about 700 suspects of an alleged assassination attempt on Governor-General Terauchi Masatake were sentenced to imprisonment in Seodaemun Prison.⁴⁰ The investigation largely targeted the independence activist organisation Shinminhoe (New People’s Association) and its supporters, which included a large number of Korean Christians taught by foreigners from Euro-American countries. The sentencing of 105 Korean suspects with connections to foreign missionaries despite lack of evidence caused controversy in the US, and many international spectators came to observe the appeal hearings. With international attention, the accused were provided with interpreters and allowed to detail how they had all confessed under extreme physical torture. However, the continuation of torture for confessions did not raise further controversy as Euro-American spectators were sufficiently satisfied that 99 of the accused 105 were acquitted due to the modern

³⁸ Jin Woong Kang, “the Prison,” 419-420.

³⁹ Chulwoo Lee, “Modernity, Legality, and Power,” 47.

⁴⁰ For a compact overview of the incident, see Yun Gyeongno, “Sasil, ireoke bonda 2 - 105-in sageon [Perceiving the facts 2 – The 105 Persons Incident]”, *Naeireul yeoneun yeoksa* 6, 2001, 97-107. Yun Gyeongno’s comprehensive research on the 105 Persons Incident is available in Yun Gyeongno, *105-in sageongwa sinminhoe yeongu* (Seoul: Hansong University Press, 2012).

European appeals proceedings.⁴¹

Seodaemun Prison is the most infamous torture site of suspects and political prisoners of the 1919 March First Independence Movement, which continued after flogging was abolished in March 1920. One of the most well-known victims was independence activist Yu Gwansun who died from torture in Seodaemun Prison in the autumn of 1920, aged 18, and is nationally commemorated as a patriotic martyr.⁴² Torture in prisons was common throughout the colonial period and was reported by newspapers when fatal, for example by *Dong-a Ilbo* which reported on 27 fatal cases from 1932 to 1934.⁴³ Abolishing flogging did not end systematic violence in prisons, but replacing flogging with imprisonment exacerbated the extreme overcrowding in prison cells which were already above capacity.⁴⁴ Political prisoners further increased after the Peace Preservation Law was enacted in 1925 to allow efficient and lengthy arrests of anyone deemed to participate in “anti-Japanese” activities—most of whom were communists, socialists, and/or Korean nationalists.⁴⁵

During the colonial period, executions were carried out at Seodaemun, Pyongyang, and Daegu Prison.⁴⁶ Prisoners sentenced to death were hung from the neck for ten minutes after which their death would be confirmed. This was presented as a civilised form of punishment in comparison to the “barbaric” beheadings of Joseon Korea.⁴⁷ Official colonial records on Seodaemun executions have been lost, but many can be confirmed in sources such as colonial newspapers. For the period from 1908 to 1917, at least 58 members of “righteous armies (*uibyeong*)” were executed at Seodaemun Prison.⁴⁸ The “righteous armies” (or collectively “the righteous army”), were civilian militias that

⁴¹ Dudden, *Japan's Colonization*, 117-129; Jin Woong Kang, “the Prison.”

⁴² See for example Guy Podoler, “Revisiting the March First Movement: On the Commemorative Landscape and the Nexus between History and Memory,” *The Review of Korean Studies* 8 (2005): 137-154.

⁴³ Jin Woong Kang, “the Prison,” 423.

⁴⁴ Sprunger, “Grafting Justice,” 84-89.

⁴⁵ Chulwoo Lee, “Modernity, Legality, and Power,” 42-51.

⁴⁶ Park Kyung-mok, “Iljegangjeomgi Seodaemun hyeongmuso sugamja hyeonhwanggwa teukjing [A study on the Status and Characteristics of Prisoners at Seodaemun Prison during the Japanese Colonial Period],” *Journal of Korean Modern and Contemporary History*, vol 78 (2016), 75-114.

⁴⁷ Dudden, *Japan's Colonization*, 113.

⁴⁸ Yang Seoksuk, “Iljeha Seodaemun hyeongmuso yeongu: uibyeong Tujaenggwa 105in sageoneul jungsimeuro”, Doctoral thesis, Sungshin Women's University, as cited by Park Kyung-mok, “Iljegangjeomgi”, 105.

formed in the aftermath of Queen Myeongseong's assassination to resist Japanese influence and imperialism. Executions continued throughout the colonial period, exemplified by the execution of 18 members of the Gando Communist Movement over the period of two days in July 1936.⁴⁹

IV.III Prisoners in colonial Seodaemun Prison

Complete records of colonial Seodaemun Prison's prisoners and their crimes have not been found, but it can be estimated that the prison's total number of prisoners for the colonial period was between 65,000 and 94,000.⁵⁰ Numbered prisoner record cards with prisoner numbers have been found for 4,837 individuals who were interned in Seodaemun Prison between 1919-1944. The prisoner record cards in question, which featured photographic portraits of detainees and a synopsis of their offenses, were exclusively generated for those deemed to necessitate heightened monitoring. This group primarily consisted of political offenders, particularly independence activists, who accounted for approximately 88% of the extant record cards from Seodaemun Prison.⁵¹ Most of the prisoners with record cards were in their twenties (57.7%), and while 25 were sentenced to life imprisonment, the majority (53%) served between 1-4 years in Seodaemun Prison. Seodaemun Prison included a relatively small building for female prisoners, and 180 (4%) of discovered prisoner record cards belonged to women.

31 (0.6%) of the known Seodaemun Prison record cards belong to Japanese prisoners, all of whom were political offenders either supporting Korean independence or otherwise conducting political activities against imperial Japan.⁵² These include prominent Japanese communists who worked with Koreans, such as Isogaya Sueji of the Hungnam

⁴⁹ Donga Ilbo, "Gangongsageonui sahyeongsu 18-myeong sahyeongsilhaeng" (Execution carried out of 18 prisoners from the 'Gando communist incident'), 24 June 1936, 2.

⁵⁰ Park Kyung-mok, "Iljegangeomgi."

⁵¹ Colonial authorities created records of all prisoners, not only for those assigned record cards, but most of the general records are assumed to have been destroyed at the end of the colonial period.

⁵² Cultural Heritage Committee, 2018 nyeondo munhwajae wiwonhoe (geundae munhwajaebugwa) je 9 cha hoeuijaryo [2018 Materials for the 9th meeting of the Cultural Heritage Committee (Modern Cultural Heritage Division)], 18 September 2018, p. 24. Accessible at http://english.cha.go.kr/cmm/fms/BoardFileDownload.do?jsessionid=vK8uQF57cFnHEG1DaHAqR5UqERW HXvxWSObHy0lpd0BtxOBC0UtqYHrEGCizBzOL?atchFileId=FILE_00000000034559&fileSn=1&dwIdHistYn=Y&bbsId=BBSMSTR_1019 (last accessed 22 March 2023).

Nitrogenous Fertilizer Plant and Miyake Shikanosuke who was a professor at the Keijō Imperial University.⁵³ As prison record cards were not created for most non-political prisoners, the ratio of Korean to Japanese prisoners with prison cards would not reflect the overall ratio of Korean to Japanese prisoners in the facility.

The prisoner numbers on existing record cards range from 1 (August 1919) to 65,193 (October 1944), leading Seodaemun Prison History Hall Director Park Kyung-mok to estimate the prison had a total of approximately 94,000 inmates in the colonial period based on calculations of average numbers of prisoners per year. This way of calculation leads to a very high estimate, considering that many criminals were flogged rather than imprisoned prior to 1920, and that the number of prisoners rose significantly with the 1919 independence movement. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that Seodaemun Prison was a regular main prison, not reserved solely for political criminals. For example, in 1936 it was observed that out of 150 female inmates in Seodaemun Prison, 119 were convicted for murder or arson.⁵⁴ The prison record cards are not a reliable source for estimating the proportion of political and non-political offenses, or the distribution of prisoners based on their nationalities.

As will be discussed, some official narratives at today's Seodaemun Prison History Hall imply that the prison was originally built to imprison members of the "righteous armies". However, these were just a fraction of those imprisoned there. Most members of "righteous armies" were not arrested but massacred by police and soldiers. Japan reported that clashes around Korea from July 1907 to December 1908 resulted in 14,566 deaths of insurgents, compared to 179 deaths of Japanese police and soldiers.⁵⁵

⁵³ Kim Gyeong-il, "Jibaewa yeondaoui saieseo: Jaejoilbonin jisigin Miyake Sikanoseuke [Between Subjugation and Solidarity: Miyake Shikanosuke, a Japanese Intellectual in Colonial Korea]", *Sahoewa yeoksa* (105) 2015, 287-318; Inoue Manabu, "Ri Cheyu to Miyake Shikanosuke no kaikō - Kimu Iruson kōnichi yūgekitai ni tsuranaru tatakai" [The encounter between Yi Jaeyu and Miyake Shikanosuke: A battle connected to the Kim Il-sung anti-Japanese guerrilla unit], 1 December 2008, *Chōsen Shinpō*. <http://korea-np.co.jp/j-2008/06/0806j1201-00001.htm>

⁵⁴ Yi Chong-mo, "Seodaemun yeoja gamok bangmun'gi: sarin joein jaeil mantta [Record of a visit to Seodaemun Prison women's ward: most are murderers]," *Yeoseong* 1, no. 6 (September 1936): 322-323, as cited by Sprunger, "Grafting Justice," 219.

⁵⁵ Baker, "Establishment of a legal system," 209.

IV.IV Illuminating colonial memory to cast a shadow over post-colonial history

After Korea's liberation from imperial Japan in 1945, Seodaemun Prison was in continued use by subsequent authorities until 1987, when it was closed and mostly demolished in time before the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Before being turned into a heritage site, Seodaemun Prison was post-colonially known as Seoul Prison (1945-61), Seoul Penitentiary (1961-57), and Seoul Detention Centre (1967-87).⁵⁶ It is no secret in Korea that post-colonial Seodaemun Prison continued to imprison large numbers of political criminals (such as communists and democracy activists), but collective memories and evaluations of post-colonial dictatorships and the *minjung* democracy movement are still divided and disputed within the country. While post-colonial history is not the focus of this thesis, it is essential to recognise how the moulding of official Korean colonial memory has been partly guided by the intention to forget connections between colonial and post-colonial authorities and to construct a strong national identity.⁵⁷

Hyun Kyung Lee and Russell Burge have separately provided extensive summaries of Seodaemun Prison's post-colonial history, including the prison's transformation into a heritage site and museum opened in 1998.⁵⁸ The number of inmates in Seodaemun Prison increased greatly during the 1945-48 rule of the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) as the ideological conflict imposed on the Korean peninsula produced a large number of political offenders. Many political prisoners, including survivors of the 4.3 Jeju Massacre, were executed in Seodaemun Prison without trial during the first months of the Korean War, before Seoul was temporarily captured by the DPRK.⁵⁹ Subsequently, DPRK forces released the prisoners of the South Korean government and imprisoned their own political enemies in Seodaemun Prison. Seodaemun's prisoner population liberated by DPRK in the summer of 1950 was about 8,500—more than double the peak number during the colonial period.⁶⁰ After the Korean

⁵⁶ In 1987, Seoul Detention Centre was moved to Uiwang, Gyeonggi-do. See Seodaemun Prison History Hall, "The Place of Independence...", 4-7.

⁵⁷ See for example Carter J. Eckert, "Exorcising Hegel's Ghosts: Toward a Postnationalist Historiography of Korea," In *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, edited by Gi-wook Shin (Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 363-78.

⁵⁸ Hyun Kyung Lee, 'Difficult Heritage', 105-158.; Russell Burge, "The Prison and the Postcolony: Contested Memory and the Museumification of Sŏdaemun Hyŏngmuso," *The Journal of Korean Studies*, 2017, Vol. 22, No. 1, 33-67.

⁵⁹ Su-kyoung Hwang, *Korea's Grievous War* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 57.

⁶⁰ Burge, "The Prison and the Post-colony," 39.

War, President Rhee Syngman, and military dictators Park Chung-hee and Chun Doo-hwan continued to imprison political prisoners, many of whom were democracy activists, until the prison's closure. Importantly, the post-colonial Seodaemun Prison, like other Korean prisons, employed Korean warders from the colonial period and post-colonial prisoners were not treated very differently to those of preceding colonial authorities. The systems of surveillance, violence, and regulation of privileges based on behaviour, which included rationing of food, were not abolished. Furthermore, unjust torture and hanging of political prisoners persisted.⁶¹

The value of colonial sites of memory was rarely recognised in Korea before the turn of the millennium, but Seodaemun Prison was uniquely acknowledged as such at a time when the country's former military dictatorship faced strong public resistance and international attention.⁶² The year before the 1988 Seoul Olympics, Chun Doo-hwan closed Seodaemun Prison and ordered that it be turned into a heritage site of colonial memory before demolishing over 90% of its buildings.⁶³ It was registered as National Historical Site No. 324 in 1988. Eventually, post-colonial features such as facades of white tiles, high guard towers, and pro-democratic graffiti on cell walls were destroyed to restore (or reimagine) colonial memory.⁶⁴

The Independence Park, including Seodaemun Prison, the Independence Gate and statues commemorating the struggle for independence, was opened in 1992 under management by the Seoul Metropolitan Government. Policy changes three years later transferred management of Seodaemun Prison to Seodaemun-gu (Seodaemun district local authorities), which planned and executed the opening of the Seodaemun Prison History

⁶¹ For example, on 9 April 1975, eight students were executed by hanging in Seodaemun Prison 18 hours after being convicted by a lower court. The executed victims were acquitted in 2010, and it was officially acknowledged that they had been forced to give false confessions during torture. The case has become known as the Inhyeokdang incident. Although usually not mentioned on official tours of the prison, one official volunteer guide mentioned this case on a Korean-language tour of the prison (14 June 2023) and claimed that such a mass hanging on false evidence was unprecedented. For more on the incident and the eventual acquittal, see for example Annie I. Bang, "Acquitted 32 years after execution," *The Korea Herald*, 5 April 2010. <https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20070124000017>

⁶² Park Kyung-mok Interview.

⁶³ Burge, "The Prison and the Post-colony," 37-8.

⁶⁴ Informal conversation with former political prisoner who served time in Seodaemun Prison in 1987, introduced to me by memory activists in Seoul, 2022.

Hall in 1998.⁶⁵ At this time, post-colonial memory had been erased from official narratives, and two of three exhibition floors were filled with mannequins of grinning Japanese warders torturing half-naked and bloody Korean independence activists.

IV.V Recent efforts to approach post-colonial memory and historical truthfulness

Seodaemun Prison History Hall exemplifies how the dissonant memory politics of alternating conservative and liberal national governments affect the continuous moulding and reshaping of official memory at heritage sites and museums. Within this context, Korean conservative memory politics strive to accentuate the positive contributions of post-colonial authoritarian regimes while downplaying their violent actions against their own populace. In contrast, liberal governments seek to expose the atrocities committed by these post-colonial authoritarian regimes and emphasise the struggle for democracy waged against them. Seodaemun Prison was partially preserved as a heritage site for colonial memory under the rule of military dictator Chun Doo-hwan, with the intention of facilitating the erasure of the prison's postcolonial history. However, the influence of subsequent liberal governments has contributed to the evolution of the prison museum's narrative, allowing for a more inclusive portrayal that encompasses the memories of democracy activists who were unjustly mistreated as political prisoners under post-colonial Korean leadership.

The prison museum's current director, Park Kyung-mok, assumed this position in 2004, under the liberal presidency of Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2008). Carrying forward the initiatives initiated during the preceding Kim Dae-jung government, Roh's administration made genuine strides to recognise the historical violence perpetrated by post-colonial governments and implement measures for transitional justice. Additionally, Kim Dae-jung's efforts to improve inter-Korean relations were continued, thereby further reducing the perception of a communist threat as severe enough to warrant governmental violence against countless individuals supposedly associated with enemy ideology. During Roh Moo-hyun's presidency, Park Kyung-mok, the new director of Seodaemun Prison planned significant shifts in the prison museum's exhibitions and narrative framework,

⁶⁵ Hyun Kyung Lee, *'Difficult Heritage'* 128-30.

which began to be implemented in 2009, coinciding with major restorations of prison buildings.

Director Park Kyung-mok welcomed this study and participated in a research interview providing valuable data.⁶⁶ Upon assuming his position in 2004, he concurred with prominent criticisms of the exhibitions' disregard for post-colonial history and excessive utilisation of violent imagery and effects at the time. The majority of potentially shocking mannequins and effects were removed in 2009. Director Park provides three main reasons for reducing the portrayal of violence.⁶⁷ 1) The historical authenticity of the specific scenes could not be confirmed as they were based on interpretations by curators rather than primary sources, 2) the violent scenes emanated anti-Japanese sentiment detrimental to the educational potential of the History Hall, and 3) it was desired to make the exhibitions accessible for younger children unprepared for visual representations of extreme violence.

Having visited Seodaemun Prison in 2010, 2015, and 2022, it is noticeable how remaining displays of torture have gradually decreased, leaving only one graphic display in 2022 (a mannequin representing an independence activist undergoing water torture while suspended from their feet). The violent displays had mirrored those exhibited in the Independence Hall of Cheonan (also created by order of Chun Doo-hwan during his military dictatorship), which arguably also suppressed traumatic post-colonial memory with images of a more traumatic colonial period. Displays of excessive Japanese torture were finally removed from the Independence Hall in 2020 for similar reasons as in the case of Seodaemun Prison.⁶⁸

Since Park Kyung-mok became director, post-colonial memory has also been introduced in official narratives such as onsite information panels, but colonial memory still encompasses 80 to 90% of exhibitions and explanations.⁶⁹ Burge's observation from 2017, that post-colonial narratives are "removed from the main exhibition both in their physical

⁶⁶ 21 June 2022.

⁶⁷ Park Kyung-mok interview.

⁶⁸ Informal conversation with official guide at the Independence Hall, June 2022.

⁶⁹ Park Kyung-mok interview.

location and in their lack of direct incorporation into the larger History Hall narrative,”⁷⁰ is still precise at the time of writing this thesis. Director Park states that narratives of independence activists and democracy activists should be connected as one story as both movements shared the same “spirit (jeongshin)” and that work is underway to visualise currently lacking post-colonial memory.

The grounds of the demolished detention building, by far the largest building in the prison’s history, was being excavated and examined next to us as I interviewed Director Park in 2022. He stated that post-colonial narratives are more difficult to present because documents are lacking, and records of former prisoners are protected for 70 years by privacy laws. However, even the simple but highly significant fact that five former Korean presidents have been imprisoned at the site (Park Chung-hee in 1948, Lee Myung-bak in 1964, Moon Jae-in in 1975, Kim Young-sam in 1979, and Kim Dae-jung in 1980) has never been presented in any exhibition. In addition to a lack of known details, such as which buildings they served their sentences in (demolished or restored), Director Park acknowledges that relevant post-colonial narratives are difficult to present because they are still highly sensitive and contested within Korean society. Nonetheless, displays of post-colonial history are gradually being increased.

⁷⁰ Burge, “The Prison and the Postcolony,” 37-8.

Appendix V Takashima and Hashima – Historical Background and collective memories forced labour

The following is more comprehensive overview of Takashima and Hashima’s modern history and collective memories of forced labour than the abbreviated versions in [Chapter 5](#) of the main text.

V.I Historical Background

V.I.I Introduction

Takashima Coal Mine and Hashima Coal Mine are both component parts of the Sites of Japan’s Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining (hereafter, the Meiji Industrial Sites) which were World Heritage inscribed in 2015. From 1939 to 1945, during the Asia-Pacific War, Koreans and others were forced to work under dangerous conditions in these mines and in other sites now inscribed as the Meiji Industrial Sites. Mitsubishi had purchased both Takashima and Hashima islands during the Meiji period, and the islands’ coal mines were operated as two branches of the same mine, namely “Takashima Coal Mine”. Therefore, the historical background and official history of the two islands are examined together in this chapter. Unless otherwise specified, within this thesis “Takashima Coal Mine” refers to the mine and its branches on Takashima Island only, excluding Hashima.

The islands of Takashima and Hashima have been selected for case studies based on their World Heritage-inscribed coal mines, which share difficult memories of human rights infringements in the Meiji-Period and Korean forced labour during the Asia-Pacific War. The islands serve for a purposeful comparison as they have shared history but differ significantly in terms of tourism popularity and potential tourism experiences. The popular Hashima is an abandoned island dominated by a landscape of concrete, while the lesser-known Takashima is an inhabited island with lush vegetation and a sandy beach managed by locals. Furthermore, Hashima is central to Korean collective memory of Korean forced labour, while Takashima is often forgotten. Takashima’s coal mine was the first mine in Japan to be mechanised with European technology, and the Takashima and Hashima mines were the first in the country to experiment with Korean labour forces shortly after the end of the Meiji period. Comparing the two islands demonstrates how tourism is a significant factor to Japanese memory politics, and that memory politics at

tourism sites have potential to influence the collective memory of both descendants of colonisers and the colonised. Moreover, the islands' differences allow for examination of how dark tourism can potentially be applied in different ways to highlight memories of wartime forced labourers in Nagasaki's undersea coal mines.

Takashima is a small island with a 6km perimeter located about 18km from Nagasaki port. It has been inhabited for over 800 years.¹ Like Hashima, Takashima currently belongs to Nagasaki City (since 2005). In the 1960s, more than 20,000 people lived on the island, but the population dropped rapidly after Mitsubishi closed the Takashima coal mine in 1986.² In 2020 the population of Takashima was 359 people.³ Takashima Coal Mine is often referred to in singular form, but it consists of separate entrances and mining tunnels of which 11 were operational at some point between 1869 and 1945.⁴ Similarly, Hashima Coal Mine consists of a network of undersea mining tunnels.

Hashima Island is located about 3km from Takashima Island. It is best known by its nickname, "Battleship Island (Gunkanjima/Gunhamdo)." It is sometimes referred to as "Gunkanjima" also in English. The nickname originates from Hashima's resemblance at the time to the Japanese Battleship Tosa which was built at the Nagasaki Mitsubishi Shipyard in 1920. The small island with a perimeter of 1.2km was completely abandoned after Mitsubishi closed its coal mines in 1974.

V.I.II The pioneering mechanisation of the Takashima Coal Mine

According to local legend, the first discovery of coal on Kyushu is attributed to Takashima. It is said to have been discovered around the turn from the 17th to the 18th

¹ Mori Shūzō, "Takashima tankō ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu: sekitan hakken kara Mitsubishi no shoyū made [A study of Takashima Coal Mine: From the discovery of coal to Mitsubishi ownership]", *Hōsei shigaku* 26 (1974): 94-106; Nagasaki City Hall, Kaku chiku no rekishi gaikyō to keikan gaikyō (Takashima) [Overview of the history and landscape of each district (Takashima)] (2021). <https://www.city.nagasaki.lg.jp/sumai/660000/667000/p004155.html> (accessed 5 August 2021).

² Kimura Shisei, "Komonzu toshite no sangyō isan: Nagasaki shi takashima machi ni okeru gunkanjima katsuyō wo jirei toshite [Industrial Heritage as Social Commons: A Case Study on the Industrial Tourism of "Gunkanjima" in Nagasaki City]," *Kyōto shakaigaku nenpō: KJS* 15 (2007): 141 – 168 (Recited citation from "Gunkanjima jissoku chōsa shiryōshū 1984" by Akui and Saga.)

³ Love Local Japan, Takashima Navi (2021), <http://takashima.nagasaki.jp/takashimanavi/top.html> (accessed 5 August 2021)

⁴ Kimura, "Industrial Heritage as Social Commons".

century by a man whose name, “Goheita”, is still used in local dialect as the word for “coal” (and as the name of Takashima’s only hotel).⁵ Commercial coal extraction commenced on the island soon after. The coal was not only utilised locally as a source of household fuel but also transported to the Setouchi region for its application in salt production.⁶

Verifiable records reveal that Takashima and its mine had been owned and managed by daimyō (feudal lords) of the Saga Domain (Saga-han, a.k.a. Hizen-han) since 1804.⁷ In 1858, the depth of the Takashima mine was only about 30 meters below sea level. Workers, including many women and children, had minimal clothing and equipment and could only extract a fraction of the coal possible to obtain after mechanisation allowed seawater to be pumped out of deeper tunnels.⁸ The Saga Domain had successfully fought against the shogunate and welcomed foreign technology and business partners from overseas. In fact, the domain had established schools of engineering and medicine staffed by Dutch teachers since the early 1850s.⁹ In 1868, the year of the Meiji Restoration, European coal mining technology was implemented in Takashima’s Hokkei Pit with the assistance of Scotsman Thomas Blake Glover. Despite this, the mechanisation process remained partial, and the managers continued to rely on the exploitation of low-skilled manual labour for coal extraction.

At the time of its mechanisation, the mine was managed co-operatively by the Saga Domain and Glover. It remained Japan’s first and only modern colliery until 1888 when Mitsui followed by mechanising the Miike Coal Mine on mainland Kyushu.¹⁰ By the end of the eighteenth century, Takashima Coal Mine and Miike Coal Mine had become the two most successful in Japan, both employing hundreds of labourers.¹¹ However, Glover

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Mori, “Takashima Coal Mine”; Nagasaki City Hall, Overview.

⁷ Kimura, “Industrial Heritage as Social Commons”, 151.

⁸ Himeno Junichi, “Shoki Takashima tankō no nichī-ei gōben kaisha to o-yatoi gaikokujin no yakuwari sairon - Sekai isan ‘Meiji Nippon no sangyō kakumei’ no bunseki shikaku [Reconsidering the Role of ‘Employed Foreigners’ in the Joint Venture between Japan and Britain in Early Takashima Colliery: An analytical view into the World Heritage of ‘Japan’s Meiji Industrial Revolution’]”, *Nagasaki Gaidai ronsō* 21 (2017): 3.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ John McMaster, “The Takashima Mine: British Capital and Japanese Industrialization,” *The Business History Review* 37, 3 (1963): 217-239; Himeno, “Reconsidering the Role”, 5.

¹¹ Murakushi Nisaburō, “Coal Mining”, *The Developing Economies* 17,4 (1979): 461-2.

had by this time already gone bankrupt as continuous mining accidents and Takashima labour riots undermined his ability to meet repayment obligations to his investors.

Thomas Blake Glover was an adventurous entrepreneur who immigrated to Nagasaki from Aberdeen in 1859 at the age of 21. He initially accumulated wealth through arms trade and import of European battleships.¹² Glover became the first foreigner to be awarded the Order of the Rising Sun in 1908 and is today known as “the Scottish samurai” in Scotland.¹³ He is still a well-known and respected historical figure in Japan. Glover’s former mainland Nagasaki residence (also a component of the World Heritage inscribed Meiji Industrial Sites) is the oldest remaining European house in the country and has been one of the most popular Nagasaki tourist attractions long before its UNESCO recognition.

The Saga Domain also procured ships and arms from Glover, who had gained a reputation for his skilful negotiations with Japanese officials. Gaining their trust, Glover became an agent exporting Takashima coal for the Saga Domain sometime in the 1860s.¹⁴ The Saga Domain, which lacked the necessary funds and direct connections to British companies, formalised an agreement with Glover in June 1868 to quickly modernise Takashima coal mining with European technology. The agreement was highly favourable for the Saga Domain as it not only entailed Glover arranging both funds and machinery, but also stipulated that profits would be shared equally for seven years before the Saga Domain would obtain complete ownership of the then industrialised mine.¹⁵

Glover did not have sufficient funds at hand and made deals with other foreign investors, presuming he could pay off his debts quickly with profits from the modernised mine¹⁶. However, not only did the price of coal fall, but in addition, coal extraction was obstructed by riots and frequent mining accidents due to gas leaks, explosions, and flooding. Debts and salaries could not be paid, and the mine was bought from the Saga Domain at a fraction of its value by the Meiji government in 1874.

¹² Olive Checkland and Sydney Checkland, “British and Japanese Economic Interaction Under the Early Meiji: The Takashima Coal Mine 1868-88”, *Business History* 26, 2, (1984): 139-155.

¹³ Aberdeen City Council, *Scottish Samurai Trail* (pamphlet, 2020).

¹⁴ Checkland and Checkland, “British and Japanese”.

¹⁵ McMaster, “The Takashima Mine”.

¹⁶ Checkland and Checkland, “British and Japanese”.

The Meiji government, desiring exclusive Japanese ownership of the Takashima mine, sold it to Gotō Shōjirō after 10 months. Gotō, a highly influential former samurai and prominent early Meiji politician, had the previous year left the government in protest over the *seikanron* decision not to invade Korea in 1873,¹⁷ and the government likely sold him the mine hoping it would appease him.¹⁸ Meanwhile, accidents persisted, and a devastating cholera outbreak claimed the lives of hundreds of low-skilled miners, leading many survivors to riot or flee the.¹⁹ Despite the mines' mechanisation, the Saga Domain, Glover, the Meiji Government, and elite businessman Gotō all failed to make the mine sufficiently profitable due to its extremely dangerous working conditions.

The struggling mines were eventually purchased by Mitsubishi in 1881, along with the British machinery and equipment that the Japanese court had deemed could not be reclaimed by Glover and his investors.²⁰ Glover, who had experienced a significant loss of wealth, accepted a position within Mitsubishi as a servant and advisor at the Takashima mines.²¹

In the case of Hashima, coal mining activities by fishermen began as early as 1810. Due to the challenges of mining in undersea tunnels, ownership of the island changed hands multiple times before Mitsubishi purchased it in 1890. Building upon the experience and technology gained from Takashima, Mitsubishi operated Hashima Coal Mine and achieved financial success until its closure in 1974. By 1897, Hashima surpassed Takashima in terms of coal extraction, becoming the most significant branch of Mitsubishi's Takashima mining complex.²² Initially covering only about 0.02 km² in 1890, Hashima underwent six artificial expansions between 1897 and 1907, increasing its

¹⁷ Jinbutsu jiten bakumatsu ishin fūunden, Gotō Shōjirō no kaisetsu – Yūnō na chiesha de atta Tosa hanshi [About Gotō Shōjirō – A skilled and wise member of the Tosa domain], (2021).

<https://jpreki.com/gotous/> (accessed 5 August 2021)

¹⁸ Miura Toyohiko, “Rōdōkan shiron (VI) – 20-seiki shotō no nippon no rōdōkan [A Review of Attitudes Towards Labour (VI) -Attitudes towards labour at the beginning of the 20th century in Japan]”, *Rōdō kagaku* 70,7 (1994): 326; Checkland and Checkland, “British and Japanese”, 144-5.

¹⁹ McMaster, “The Takashima Mine”; Checkland and Checkland, “British and Japanese”.

²⁰ Himeno, “Reconsidering the Role”.

²¹ Checkland and Checkland, “British and Japanese”, 150.

²² Kimura Shisei “‘Gunkanjima’ wo meguru heritēji tsūrizumu no genjō to kadai [Developing industrial heritage tourism in Japan: A case study of ‘Gunkanjima’]”, *Shakai jōhō* 19,2 (2010): 226.

size threefold.²³

V.I.III Adapting systems of violent and discriminatory labour management

As mechanisation during the Meiji era enabled deeper mining and higher coal production, the need arose for new labour management systems to train and control larger numbers of low-skilled miners. Drawing from earlier labour practices from elsewhere in the country, such as those prevalent during the Edo period which involved prison labour and forced labour of marginalised groups like the homeless and Christians, management systems were adapted and transformed. Instead of moving away from violent and discriminatory practices, the systems developed during the Meiji era relied on the exploitation of vulnerable labourers through deceptive coercion, debt bondage, and the implementation of violent punishments for any violations of labour contracts.

The unique joint management of Takashima and its mine by Europeans and Japanese established a precedent for the coal mining management strategies employed by the Japanese during the 20th century, predating Mitsubishi's acquisition. Since there were not enough residents on the island to work in the mine, labourers were recruited from the mainland and trained after their arrival.²⁴ The technical aspects of the mine, as well as the training of low-skilled labourers, were planned and managed by British and other European technicians and overseers, many of whom lived in luxurious European bungalows on the island or in mainland Nagasaki.²⁵ However, language and cultural barriers complicated the training of the Japanese low-skilled workers, who were treated as disposable.²⁶ Just during the first preparation phase in 1868 alone, when the Takashima Hokkei Pit shaft was sunk, six labourers who had been lured with rewards of alcohol lost their lives in accidents, and many more injured themselves by improper use of European

²³ Atsuko Hashimoto and David J. Telfer, "Transformation of Gunkanjima (Battleship Island): from a coalmine island to a modern industrial heritage tourism site in Japan," *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 12, 2, (7 April 2016): 107-124.

²⁴ Ōyama Shikitarō, "Takashima tankō ni miru meiji zenki no oyakata seido no jittai [The actual conditions of the oyakata seido/ naya seido/ bunkhouse system at the Takashima mine in the early Meiji era]," *Ritsumeikan Keizaigaku* 4, 2 (1955): 178-221.

²⁵ Checkland and Checkland, "British and Japanese"; Himeno, "Reconsidering the Role".

²⁶ Himeno, "Reconsidering the Role", 7.

double-sided mining picks.²⁷

Low-skilled contracted Japanese workers of the Saga Domain and Glover's Takashima Coal Mine lacked basic rights under the "bunkhouse system" (*naya seido*). Like *takobeya* labour in Hokkaido, it entailed bunkhouse foremen confining contracted workers in basic barracks or sheds with bunkbeds and providing rations and equipment needed for survival which costs were subtracted from the already miniscule salaries.²⁸ Contracted labourers worked day- or nightshifts six days a week amongst frequent accidents.²⁹ Ranking below the foremen were recruiters who satisfied the continuously increasing demand for low-skilled low-paid miners by convincing impoverished people to sign "no leave" contracts for dangerous mining labour.³⁰ This system of recruitment and labour, common for coal mines during the Meiji era, is known for high death rates and similarities to traditional prison labour. The viewpoint that these bunkhouse foremen of the Takashima Coal Mine and elsewhere had been violent capitalists akin to leaders of organised crime become prevalent in Japanese society in the 1930s.³¹

When the Meiji government oversaw the mine for 10 months before the sale to Gotō, convicted criminals were sent to Takashima for prison labour to keep up production.³² Prison labour appear to have ended on Takashima under the management of Gotō, but inhumane treatment of low-skilled labourers continued. In a letter to Glover's investors, Gotō stated that his miners were "animals like beasts or birds which begin to seek for food or drink when they feel hungry or thirsty and know today but not tomorrow".³³ This was a common Japanese view of miners throughout the Meiji period, reflected even in the 1908 novel "The Miner" by Natsume Sōseki in which miners are described as "half-beast, half-humans (*hanjū hanjin*)".³⁴

²⁷ Checkland and Checkland, "British and Japanese", 146-7.

²⁸ *Buritanika kokusai daihyakkajiten*, *Naya-seido* [Bunkhouse system], Kotobanku online database (n.d.). <https://kotobank.jp/word/%E7%B4%8D%E5%B1%8B%E5%88%B6%E5%BA%A6-108547> (accessed 5 August 2021)

²⁹ Himeno, "Reconsidering the Role".

³⁰ Checkland and Checkland, "British and Japanese".

³¹ Murakushi, "Coal Mining", 478.

³² Miura, "Attitudes Towards Labour", 326.

³³ Checkland and Checkland, "British and Japanese", 149.

³⁴ As cited in Miura, "Attitudes Towards Labour", 324.

V.I.IV Inhumane treatment of labourers in the evolving bunkhouse system

After Mitsubishi Corporation bought the Takashima Coal Mine in 1881, and added the Hashima branch in 1890, it quickly became its largest and most profitable business.³⁵ However, this success was achieved through extreme labour exploitation, causing Mitsubishi's coal mines and the bunkhouse system used on both islands to become a topic of national controversy.

Investigative journalist Matsuoka Kōichi went undercover as a coal miner on Takashima and exposed the inhumane working conditions in an 1888 article for the political magazine "Nihonjin".³⁶ The article revealed that around 3000 miners were confined on the island and subjected to constant monitoring and physical punishment by overseers who always carried wooden poles for this purpose. The miners worked 12 hours a day in hot tunnels with little oxygen and no breaks, and the freedom of movement was so restricted outside working hours that they could not even go to the island's post office. Recruiters also swindled illiterate and impoverished workers into signing contracts for mining on Takashima, and objections to work were punished by public torture, sometimes resulting in death. Matsuoka's article sparked a national debate involving high-ranking politicians and elites, leading to an official investigation and the conclusion that Mitsubishi needed to improve working conditions on the island.³⁷

The Nagasaki Labour Union published research findings in 1972 which revealed that under Mitsubishi's management during the Meiji era, attempted escapees were subjected to inhumane torture. A sometimes-fatal punishment involved hanging labourers upside down over a small fire until they screamed, followed by gagging and the insertion of firewood into their rectums.³⁸ Coal miner Yamamoto Sakubei's famous collection of paintings and diaries, UNESCO inscribed as Memory of the World in 2011, includes

³⁵ Mitsubishi Corporation, *Our Roots – A history of rising to the challenge – Yanosuke Plays Pivotal Role in Purchase of Takashima Coal Mine* (n.d.). <https://www.mitsubishicorp.com/jp/en/mclibrary/roots/vol11/> (accessed 5 August 2021)

³⁶ Ōyama, "The actual conditions", 183-6.

³⁷ Miura, "Attitudes Towards Labour"; Ōyama, "The actual conditions".

³⁸ Nagasaki rōdō kumiai undōshi hensan iinkai. *Nagasaki rōdō kumiai undōshi monogatari*. Online edition (1972): Chapter 2. <http://ntikurou.server-shared.com/story.htm> (accessed 5 August 2021).

depictions of similar cruel torture of rule-breakers by their overseers. For example, “miseshime 5 (kanpu seisai)” portrays how women deemed to have partaken in adultery on Takashima in the Meiji and early Taishō eras were stripped naked and tied up with legs apart in public by overseers who made passing coal miners whip the women’s genitals.³⁹

Inhumane treatment was not limited to humiliating and life-threatening torture. Bunkhouse foremen created official contracts with Takashima residents and shipowners who committed to help preventing the escapes of the foremen’s “living assets (shintai zaisan)”.⁴⁰ Moreover, Mitsubishi has been accused of systematically burning groups of live cholera victims to stop the spread on Takashima in the summer of 1885.⁴¹ That year, 561 cholera-caused deaths were recorded on the island.⁴² “Nihonjin” reported that due to accidents, illness and abuse, a total of 1,251 workers died on Takashima between 1885 and July 1887.⁴³

Although the bunkhouse system was officially ended in 1897, it continued in a less brutal but similar form on Takashima and Hashima until 1941, when labour conscription and wartime foreign forced labour became the primary means of coal extraction.⁴⁴ After the end of the Meiji era in 1912, Mitsubishi constructed company houses of much higher standards than the bunkhouses.⁴⁵ Until the start of the Asia-Pacific War, the need for violent punishments diminished as highly increased wages motivated miners to willingly enter into working contracts, despite the awareness of the prevalent occurrence of fatal accidents.⁴⁶ During this period, high-earning miners were still considered low-class

³⁹ Yamamoto Sakubei, *Miseshime 5 (kanpu seisai)* [public punishment 5 (punishment of adulteress)] (1965). http://www.y-sakubei.com/world_appl/gallery.html?mode=view&pnum=13&cat=10 (accessed 5 August 2021).

⁴⁰ Contract between Takashima bunkhouse foremen and Takashima local representatives (1885). Published in Ōyama, “The actual conditions”, 187-91.

⁴¹ Nagasaki rōdō kumiai undōshi hensan iinkai, “undōshi monogatari”.

⁴² Takeuchi Yasuto, Mitsubishi Takashima tankō e no Chōsenjin kyōsei renkō [Korean forced mobilisation to Mitsubishi’s Takashima coal mine]. *Zainichi chōsenjinshi kenkyū* 33, (2003): 21-50. Accessed at <http://www.pacohama.sakura.ne.jp/kyosei/takasima.html> (5 August 2021)

⁴³ Miura, “Attitudes Towards Labour”, 327.

⁴⁴ Nishihara Jun & Saitō Hiroshi, “Sangyō no risutorakucharingu-ki ni okeru tankō heizan to san-kaisō tankō rōdōsha no kisū [Closure of the coal mine during industrial restructuring and reactions of the three-tiered coal mine labourers]”, *Jinbun chiri* 54, 2 (2002): 111; Ōyama, “The actual conditions”, 216-8.

⁴⁵ Kimura, “Industrial Heritage”, 152-3.

⁴⁶ Murakushi, “Coal Mining”.

citizens by the general Japanese society.⁴⁷ Work in the mines continued to be extremely dangerous, and it made international news when a large explosion killed 307 workers in Takashima Coal Mine's Kakise shaft in 1906.⁴⁸

After the bunkhouse system was officially abolished, a modified management system was implemented and referred to as the "hamba-system". The term refers workers' group accommodation, "hamba", literally "food place". Hamba-foremen still controlled the food, wages, and punishments of labourers such as physical torture when deemed necessary. Testimonies indicate that also in the 1930s, Japanese labourers were recruited and sent to Hashima with advance debts for their stay in the bunkhouses (*naya/hamba*) and were beaten by the foremen in designated torture rooms of concrete. Rule-breakers were also assigned particularly dangerous working locations in the mines as a form of punishment.⁴⁹

As Takashima's bunkhouse system had become a national controversy, Mitsubishi developed Hashima as a more humane and functioning mining society supporting both single miners in group accommodation and families in family apartments. Concrete high-rise apartment buildings and education, service, and entertainment facilities such as an elementary school, a hospital, a cinema, a shrine, a temple, a pachinko gambling arcade, as well as various stores were built to accommodate a large number of coal miners and their families.⁵⁰ Group accommodation was still basic and extremely cramped, but not all single workers lived in literal bunkhouses, as for example the basements of apartments complexes were also used for this purpose.

In Japan, the differences between the bunkhouse system and the hamba system are disputed. For example, Encyclopedia Nipponica describes the hamba-system as distinct and more advanced than the violence-based bunkhouse system, while the encyclopaedia Daijisen states that *naya-seido* (bunkhouse system) is synonymous with *hamba-seido*

⁴⁷ Nishihara and Saitō, "Closure of the coal mine", 111-2.

⁴⁸ New York Times, "250 JAPANESE KILLED.: Explosion in the Takashima Coal Mine Near Nagasaki". 29 March 1906, The New York Times; Takeuchi, Korean forced mobilisation to Mitsubishi's Takashima.

⁴⁹ Ueno 1960, as cited by Itō Daiki, "Nagasaki gunkanjima ni okeru dāku tsūrizumu: 'manazashi' no kōchiku ni chakumoku shite [Dark tourism in Gunkanjima, Nagasaki: Focusing on the construction of the tourist gaze]", *Hyōgo chiri* 63 (2018): 62.

⁵⁰ Kimura Shisei, "Developing industrial heritage tourism".

(hamba-system).⁵¹ While acknowledging post-Meiji improvements, my use of the term “bunkhouse system” encompasses the “hamba-system” unless otherwise specified. Note that the accommodation of wartime foreign forced labourers was referred to as “hamba,” but that living conditions and treatment by bunkhouse foremen during wartime were more akin to those of the Meiji era than the pre-war hamba-system.

V.I.V Pre-war experimentation with Korean labour on Takashima and Hashima
Takashima and Hashima coal mines became unique points of reference for the wartime Japanese government when it started to forcefully mobilise Korean labourers in September 1939, in accordance with the National Mobilization Law.⁵² Mitsubishi already had decades of experience using Korean labour to increase coal extraction in their mines on these islands, and thus Mitsubishi’s reports were valuable to officials for making the mobilisation of Koreans and their labour more effective, as many other companies found it difficult to manage their new Korean labour forces.⁵³

A 1940 report from Takashima recommended recruitment of Koreans directly from Korea, preferably those with no previous experience working in mines as they were less likely to have “seditious tendencies” (*sendō-sei*).⁵⁴ The same report also highlighted the perception that, after receiving training, Korean labourers were neither “superior” nor “inferior” to Japanese labourers but were useful for “work in difficult spots that would not please Japanese labourers.”

⁵¹ Kotobanku online database, “Hamba Seido [Hamba system]” (n.d).
<https://kotobank.jp/word/%E9%A3%AF%E5%A0%B4%E5%88%B6%E5%BA%A6-118592> (accessed 5 August 2021).

⁵² Nagano Susumu and Kim Min-Young, “Senzen, Nippon sekitan sangyō ni okeru ‘Chōsenjin rōdōsha inyū’ no keika - 1940-nen (Shōwa 15 nen) ‘Chikuho sekitan kōgyōkai’ no shiryō wo chūshin toshite [The pre-war process of introducing Korean labourers to Japan’s coal industry - focus on 1940 documents from ‘Chikuho coal mining association’]”, *Saga daigaku keizai ronshū* 24, 4 (1991): 75-109; Takazane Yasunori, “Nagasaki to Chōsenjin kyōsei renkō : chōsa kenkyū no seika to kadai [Nagasaki and the forced mobilisation of Koreans: results and issues of the investigative research]”, *Ōhara shakai mondai kenkyūjo zasshi* 687(2016): 1-14; Takeuchi Yasuto, Mitsubishi kōgyō takashima tankō - Hashima tankō e no kyōsei renkō [Forced mobilisation to Mitsubishi Heavy Industry’s Takashima and Hashima Coal Mines]. Edited text based on lecture from 9 July 2017. Available online at http://www.eks.c.u-tokyo.ac.jp/event_back/170709/170709_takeuchi.pdf (accessed 5 August 2021).

⁵³ Nagano and Kim, “The pre-war process”.

⁵⁴ Coal Mining Industry Association report from 1940 (Shōwa 15-nen sekitan kōgyōkai dai 2-gō A-a-11-147), as cited by Nagano and Kim, “The pre-war process”, 86.

After Japan's colonial occupation of Korea in 1910, coal mines on Takashima and Hashima became the first in Japan to employ large numbers of Koreans. Mitsubishi systematically recruited and mobilised Korean workers from 1917.⁵⁵ By May 1918, there were 264 Korean workers on Takashima and 70 on Hashima.⁵⁶ In total, 3,336 labourers were employed in the mines on both islands that year, indicating that approximately ten percent of the workforce were Korean.⁵⁷ Although Mitsubishi stationed recruiters on the Korean peninsula from 1929, the number of Korean workers on the two islands did not fluctuate significantly in the pre-war years, with the total number of recorded Korean workers on both islands being 350 in 1935.⁵⁸ It was possible for Korean miners recruited before the Asia-Pacific War to receive promotions and to permanently settle in relatively comfortable company housing with their Korean families, and it can be estimated that about 500 Korean colonial subjects lived on the two islands pre-war.⁵⁹

While the situation of these Korean employees was different from that of wartime forced labourers, records show they endured discrimination including being assigned some of the most dangerous jobs in the mines.⁶⁰ Violence, including physical torture, was sometimes applied to enforce harsh and dangerous labour tasks or to punish attempted escapees. Furthermore, pre-war recruiters used deceitful tactics promising salaries of which sometimes only small fractions were actually paid.⁶¹

Mitsubishi's pre-war Korean coal miners are not generally considered to have been forced labourers by either Korea or Japan. It is important to emphasise that while discrimination was a problem, pre-war Korean labourers had freedom of movement and were eligible for the same privileges as Japanese colleagues. Furthermore, the general safety of Mitsubishi coal miners was improved significantly from the late 1920s before again

⁵⁵ Nagano and Kim, "The pre-war process", 86, 90; Shibata Hirotohi, "'Kioku' no mujintō Gunkanjima - Haikō no shima Nagasaki-ken Hashima [The deserted island of memories, Battleship Island - The abandoned mining island in Nagasaki Prefecture, Hashima]", *Senshūdaigaku shakai kagaku kenkyūjo geppō* No. 566-567 (2010): 69.

⁵⁶ Shibata, "The deserted island of memories", 69.

⁵⁷ Takeuchi, Korean forced mobilisation to Mitsubishi's Takashima.

⁵⁸ Takeuchi, Takashima and Hashima Coal Mines.

⁵⁹ Takeuchi, Korean forced mobilisation to Mitsubishi's Takashima.

⁶⁰ Nagano and Kim, "The pre-war process", 86, 90.

⁶¹ Takeuchi, Korean forced mobilisation to Mitsubishi's Takashima.

heavily deteriorating during the Asia-Pacific War.⁶² Within this thesis, only wartime labourers are defined as *forced labourers*. However, it is also important to note that some victims of colonial exploitation consider also pre-war Korean coal miners in Japan to have been forced labourers. Ku Yon-chol, whose father worked in the Hashima Coal Mine since the early 1930s firmly asserts that his father was a forced labourer from day one, arguing that Japan's discriminatory and illegal colonial rule robbed impoverished farmers like his father of other opportunities and forced them to accept dangerous work in Japan.⁶³

V.I.VI Wartime foreign forced labour

During the Asia-Pacific War, the demand for labour increased significantly due to the high production requirements to support Japan's war efforts. Additionally, many Japanese labourers were conscripted as soldiers, which resulted in them leaving their places of work, further exacerbating the need for new labourers. Japan's National General Labour Mobilisation Law, implemented in 1938, was adjusted in 1939 to allow Japanese companies to mobilise labourers from Korea with the aid of colonial police and authorities from September that year. Takeuchi Yasuto, one of the most prominent and widely cited Japanese researchers of Japanese colonial forced labour issues, estimates that about 800,000 Koreans were forced to work in Japan during wartime.⁶⁴ Although Koreans made up the majority of foreign forced labourers in Japan, captured Chinese civilians and Allied POWs were also subjected to forced labour in Japanese factories and mines, including several component sites of the Meiji Industrial Sites. No POWs were forced to work on Takashima or Hashima.

Records show that in June 1944, a total of 204 Chinese labourers were forcibly sent to Hashima, of whom 15 did not survive until the end of the war.⁶⁵ One month later, another 205 Chinese labourers were sent to Takashima, where another 15 died.⁶⁶ Like their

⁶² Sachiko Sone, "Japanese Coal Mining: Women Discovered", *Women Miners in Developing Countries: Pit Women and Others*, Edited by Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt and Martha Macintyre (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing 2006): 51-72

⁶³ Ku Yon-chol interview.

⁶⁴ Takeuchi Yasuto, *Meiji Nippon no sangyō kakumei isan / kyōsei rōdō Q&A* [Meiji Japan's heritage of the industrial revolution / Forced labor Q&A] (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 2018).

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 102-3.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 88-89.

Korean counterparts, Chinese forced labourers worked in fatal conditions and were confined in bunkhouses (hamba) where they were frequently beaten.⁶⁷ Chinese victims at Mitsubishi's Hashima, Takashima, and Sakitojima coal mines were officially recognized as forced labourers by the Nagasaki District Court in 2007.⁶⁸ Mitsubishi Materials issued an apology and reached an agreement with Chinese groups representing 3,700 victims who were forced to work at these and other sites during wartime. As part of the deal, surviving victims or their descendants were compensated with 100,000 Chinese Yuan each.⁶⁹

The number of Korean workers on Takashima and Hashima increased manifold during the Asia-Pacific War. An analysis of existing records reveals that around 4,000 Korean forced labourers were mobilised to work on the two islands during the war.⁷⁰ Available records do not provide separate figures for Mitsubishi's branches on Takashima and Hashima, but it is estimated that more than 2,000 Koreans worked on Takashima and over 1,000 on Hashima.⁷¹

Korean wartime forced labour under colonial Japan, or Korean "labour conscription," went through three phases as labour demand increased: "recruitment (boshū)" from September 1939 to February 1942, "official mediation (kan-assen)" until September 1944, and "conscription (chōyō)" until the end of the Asia-Pacific War in August 1945.⁷² It is a common misunderstanding that during the "recruitment" period Japanese companies recruited Koreans without active help from the military government. In fact, Japanese and Korean colonial bureaucrats and the police in Korea were actively involved in recruitment

⁶⁷ Ibid, 20-21.

⁶⁸ Uematsu Seiji, "'Shakai-shi rōdō-shi' ga ketsuraku shite iru Sangyō isan jōhō sentā tenji" ["Industrial Heritage Information Centre exhibition lacking 'social history and labor history'"], *Shūkan Kinyōbi Online*, 5 November 2020. <http://www.kinyobi.co.jp/kinyobinews/2020/11/05/news-82/>

⁶⁹ Julian Ryall, "South Korea court ruling on Mitsubishi reopens old wounds with Japan". Deutsche Welle (DW) 10 August 2017. <https://www.dw.com/en/south-korea-court-ruling-on-mitsubishi-reopens-old-wounds-with-japan/a-40044146> (accessed 14 March 2021).

⁷⁰ Takazane, "Nagasaki and the forced mobilisation", 13; Takeuchi, Takashima and Hashima Coal Mines.

⁷¹ Takeuchi, *Q&A*, 86-88.

⁷² David Palmer, "Foreign Forced Labor at Mitsubishi's Nagasaki and Hiroshima Shipyards: Big Business, Militarized Government, and the Absence of Shipbuilding Workers' Rights in World War II," in Marcel van der Linden and Magaly Rodríguez García, eds, *On Coerced Labor: Work and Compulsion after Chattel Slavery* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 169-77; Takazane, "Nagasaki and the forced mobilisation"; Tonomura Masaru, *Chōsenjin kyōsei renkō* [Forced mobilization of Koreans], (Tokyo: Iwanami shinsho, 2012); William Underwood, "Names, Bones and Unpaid Wages (1): Reparations for Korean Forced Labor in Japan," *The Asia-Pacific Journal / Japan Focus* vol. 4 issue 9, 4 September 2006.

to Japan as well as in clamping down on the heavy opposition from local Korean village leaders attempting to protect their much-needed farmers and labourers.⁷³ Legally, Koreans could decline recruitment, but with pressure from authoritarian colonial police, declining was usually unthinkable.

Kosako Masayuki worked as a supervisor on Hashima from 1939 to 1954. He told *Asahi Shimbun* in 1973 how he went on recruitment trips to Korea that in reality forced Koreans over to Japan to work in coal mines against their will.⁷⁴ With the help of local colonial authorities, he rounded up 40 to 50 Koreans from each village where he went, and only the few who managed to jump off the train on its way to the Korean port were spared from forced labour on Hashima.

During the “official mediation” period from 1942 to 1944, the Korean Labour Association oversaw the recruitment of workers for Japanese companies.⁷⁵ Police and local authorities cooperated to fill labour quotas, and village “lotteries” were sometimes held to select Korean labourers against their will. Police enforced the mobilization.⁷⁶

Choe Jangseop was one of a number of former Korean forced labourers whose testimony is documented in the book *If You Listen Carefully to Gunkanjima: Records of Korean and Chinese Forced into Labour at Hashima*, compiled by Japanese and Zainichi community researchers based in Nagasaki.⁷⁷ Choe Jangseop was 14 years old in 1943 when Korean officials took him from his school and put him on the train to Busan port. He did not attempt escape due to his captors’ promises of a better life in Japan, but ended up in a hot, humid, and dark Hashima cellar dormitory shared with 40 other Korean forced labourers. Provided only inhumanly small rations, he worked 12- and 16-hour shifts in mine tunnels too hot to wear anything else than a loin cloth and soon sustained permanent injuries from a cave-in. Choe Jangseop’s testimony includes descriptions of forcefully mobilised

⁷³ Tonomura, *Forced Mobilisation*, 81.

⁷⁴ *Asahi Shimbun* Nagasaki edition, “Gunkanjima. Shūsen ni kidzuki kansei. Sabetsu sareta Chousen Chuugokujin” [“Battleship Island. Shouts of joy after realizing the war is over. The discriminated Koreans and Chinese”]. 25 October 1973, p. 1.

⁷⁵ Palmer, “Foreign Forced Labor,” 170.

⁷⁶ Tonomura, *Forced mobilisation*, pp. 112-16.

⁷⁷ Nagasaki zainichi Chōsenjin no jinken wo mamoru kai, *Gunkanjima ni mimi wo sumaseba: Hashima ni kyōseirenkō sareta Chōsenjin Chūgokuin no kiroku* [If you listen carefully to Gunkanjima: Records of Korean and Chinese forced into labor at Hashima] (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 2016), 40-47.

Koreans publicly whipped with rubber straps until their skin peeled off, as well as how the different, separated, class of Koreans who arrived before wartime had opportunities to temporarily leave the island. When the war ended, Choe Jangseop was taken to Nagasaki to clean up in the aftermath of the nuclear blast before finally returning home with only 50 yen, having never received his promised salary.

During the third phase, “conscription” from 1944 to 1945, Japanese government authorities selected Koreans for work, officially as labour conscripts. Japanese military police in Korea supervised the mobilization process, which included physical violence against Korean resisters. Jeong Boksu, already a Korean forced labourer in Japanese coal mines on Sakhalin since 1943, was forcefully transferred to Takashima in 1944 around the time the so-called “conscription” period started.⁷⁸ He had been taken from Korea in 194 to Sakhalin, and his Korean family followed two years later. When Jeong Boksu and 409 other Korean men on Sakhalin were sent to Japan and divided between Hashima and Takashima coal mines, families remained on Sakhalin and did not regain freedom of movement even when this territory was returned to the Soviet Union.⁷⁹

Koreans on Takashima were treated like prisoners, forced to work in hot and dangerous undersea tunnels with insufficient food. Jeong Boksu’s actually paid salaries amounted to pocket money used to buy cigarettes on the island.⁸⁰ According to other Korean survivor testimonies from Takashima, labourers were confined and guarded in simple barracks from which they could hear the screams of their peers being tortured.⁸¹ Salaries of Korean conscripted labourers on Takashima and Hashima were sent to Japanese savings accounts that could not be accessed at the time Koreans were released due to the banks being “closed”.⁸²

Koreans who were forcibly mobilised under the National General Labour Mobilisation Law during wartime were subjected to even harsher abuses than those who were already living on the island and forced to continue working. Ku Yon-chol, a witness of forced

⁷⁸ Takeuchi, *Q&A*, 90.

⁷⁹ Takeuchi Yasuto, *Chōsa: Chōsenjin kyōsei rōdō – Tankō shu* [Korean Forced Labour Investigation: Coal Mines Volume] (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha: 2013), 277-78.

⁸⁰ Takeuchi, *Q&A*, 90.

⁸¹ Takeuchi, *Takashima and Hashima Coal Mines*, 6.

⁸² Takazane, “Nagasaki and the forced mobilisation”, 8.

labour who lived with his family on Hashima as a child from 1938-45 while his father worked in the mines, reports enduring ethnic discrimination, but notes that his family was able to continue living in family apartments during the war. In contrast, Koreans who arrived during the war were confined in extremely cramped group accommodations and were unable to obtain permission to leave the island. Suzuki Fumio, an ethnic Korean whose father worked in the Hashima Coal Mine as a pit foreman (“corporal”) when the war began, stated that he and his family were able to obtain a permit to visit the mainland temporarily, allowing their indefinite escape.⁸³ However, for forced labourers mobilised during the war, the only means of escape was by swimming over 4km in rough sea at night-time to Nomozaki peninsula, which usually resulted in drowning.

While only men worked in Mitsubishi’s coal mines on Takashima and Hashima, illiterate and impoverished or otherwise vulnerable women were coerced and deprived of freedom in order to serve as sex slaves for labourers on the islands.⁸⁴ “Comfort stations” for the Japanese army are well-known, but several coal mine owners including Mitsubishi on Hashima and Takashima created lesser-known “special comfort stations (Tokubetsu ianjo)” with “comfort women” for Japanese and Korean labourers in order to “encourage increased production and reduce escapes” during wartime.⁸⁵ Korean “comfort women” on Hashima and Takashima were segregated and confined in brothels or wartime “special comfort stations” for Korean labourers, with no hope of escape. This operation started before other forms of wartime forced labour, as indicated by the account of an 18-year-old Korean “barmaid (shakufu)” who committed suicide on Hashima by drinking cresol in 1937.⁸⁶ Cresol was commonly used as a disinfectant in Japanese “comfort stations,”

⁸³ Suzuki Fumio (1933-2019) claimed that he had no recollection of witnessing forced labour or ethnic discrimination on Hashima. He was the only Korean survivor of wartime Hashima who supported Japan’s denial of forced labour and discrimination on the island. Nevertheless, Suzuki testified that his father’s working conditions during the war were so hazardous that he and his family had to flee the island. He also acknowledged that deceiving Mitsubishi was necessary to facilitate their successful escape. See Suzuki Fumio, edited video interview, 5 August 2020. <https://www.gunkanjima-truth.com/en-US/article/Mr-Fumio-Suzuki-former-resident-of-Hashima-Island>

⁸⁴ Whether or not all women confined in Japanese “comfort stations” or “brothels” during wartime can be classified as victims of sexual slavery is disputed. Takeuchi Yasuto, for example, argues that the deceptive and coercive nature of recruitment and subsequent loss of freedom of movement cannot be described as voluntary sex work. However, it should be noted that even some members of Nagasaki’s Korean community do not believe all Korean women providing sex for money on the islands during wartime were coerced or otherwise forced to do so (Kang Seong Choon, Mindan Interview).

⁸⁵ Takeuchi, *Investigation: Coal Mines*, 265-67.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

and drinking it was a well-known way of committing suicide among Korean “comfort women”.⁸⁷

V.I.VII Mitsubishi’s withdrawal and relocation of cremated remains

Most foreign workers left the islands after Japan’s defeat in the war and were replaced by Japanese former soldiers and other Japanese repatriates from lost territories.⁸⁸ By 1960, Hashima was inhabited by approximately 5,300 people—a population density said to be nine times that of Tokyo at the time.⁸⁹ In the 1960s and 70s, residents of Hashima endured overpopulation but enjoyed an otherwise high standard of living. High salaries compensated for dangerous working conditions, as accidents continued. In 2013, when I visited Hashima under the guidance of former resident Sakamoto Dōtoku, he recounted how an alarm would sound every time a worker died in an accident. This would prompt children to run towards the mine’s entrance to see whose father’s remains were being carried out.

As demand shifted from coal to oil, Mitsubishi closed Hashima’s mines in 1974, and the island was abandoned almost instantly. Remains of people who died on Hashima had been enshrined there, but when the island was abandoned, remains unclaimed by the families of the deceased were moved to an underground ossuary on Takashima named Senninzuka (Thousand-person tomb).⁹⁰ The Senninzuka ossuary was made in 1920 and already contained a mix of unnamed human bones, possibly including older unknown remains unearthed by Mitsubishi and moved from somewhere else on the island during the mines’ development.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Yoshimi Yoshiaki and Yang Ching-ja, “Zainichi no moto Nippon-gun ‘ianfu’ no kaiso – Son Shindo-san no shōgen” [“Recollections of Korean former military ‘comfort woman’ residing in Japan - Song Sinto’s testimony”], *Chūō daigaku ronshū* no. 40, Feb. 2019.

⁸⁸ Hashimoto and Telfer, “Transformation”.

⁸⁹ Nagasaki-ken Kankō Renmei, Gunkanjima [Battleship Island] (n.d.). <https://www.nagasaki-tabinet.com/guide/51797> (accessed 14 March 2021).

⁹⁰ Kim Hyo Soon, “Remains of Unidentified Korean Conscripted Laborers Remain at Takashima Island”. Part of “Remembering and Redressing the Forced Mobilization of Korean Laborers by Imperial Japan” by Kim Hyo Soon and Kil Yun Hyung, *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 7-3-10 (2010); Takazane, “Nagasaki and the forced mobilisation”.

⁹¹ Nagasaki rōdō kumiai undōshi hensan iinkai, “undōshi monogatari”, Chapter 3.

The international coal market kept contracting, and catastrophic explosions that claimed the lives of numerous miners remained a persistent problem in the Takashima mines also after the war. The last major explosion in 1985 contributed to the inevitable decision to close the mines in 1986.⁹² After the closure, the population of Takashima started to rapidly decrease to fractions of previous levels, with permanent Mitsubishi employees being the first to leave.⁹³

By the 1970s when human remains from Hashima were added to the Senninzuka mix of cremated remains, the Senninzuka, located in a steep hill with no clear path through thick vegetation, was already unknown to most of Takashima's locals.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, in 1988, Mitsubishi made the peculiar decision to relocate these remains yet again, this time to the nearby Takashima Konshōji Temple (a.k.a. Kinshōji Temple, based on a common reading of its Japanese characters⁹⁵). Local footage broadcasted by the Nagasaki Broadcasting Company in the 1970s showed that the urns from Hashima were labelled with the names of both Korean and Japanese labourers when they were first interred in the Senninzuka ossuary. However, when the remains were moved to the Konshōji temple, the original urns were emptied, and the contents were placed in 115 cup-sized jars, only a few of which were labelled and only with Japanese names.⁹⁶ The Senninzuka ossuary was subsequently sealed with concrete.

Families of Korean labourers whose remains have been lost, as well as related associations, have found the relocation of the remains suspicious. Mitsubishi has responded by stating that the remains are of unknown origin, but that the company assumes (without providing any explanation) that the remains moved did not include those of Korean labourers. Mitsubishi claims that the sole reason for moving the remains to the temple was a desire to observe local customs.⁹⁷ The sealed Senninzuka ossuary

⁹² Sankei News, “‘Sekai isan’ kankoku, Gunkanjima Takashima wo iku – ‘Kankoku no hanpatsu, rifujinda’ - Jimoto jūmin kara ikari no koe [Warned against travel to ‘World Heritage’ Battleship Island and Takashima – ‘Korean opposition is irrational’ – Furious voices of former residents]. 13 May 2015, *Sankei News*. <https://www.sankei.com/article/20150513-A5KEEX3M5ZPYZE7MWTFRHRGRDI/> (accessed 5 July 2021)

⁹³ Nishihara and Saitō, “Closure of the coal mine”.

⁹⁴ Nagasaki rōdō kumiai undōshi hensan iinkai, “undōshi monogatari”, Chapter 3.

⁹⁵ 金松寺

⁹⁶ Kim Hyo Soon, “Remains”.

⁹⁷ Takazane, “Nagasaki and the forced mobilisation”.

may still contain remains of Korean labourers, if not all were put into unnamed urns in Konshōji temple.

In 1988, the same year Mitsubishi sealed the Senninzuka ossuary, the company erected a memorial for deceased miners by Takashima's Shinto shrine. The memorial denied the memory of forced labour by stating that Japanese, Korean and Chinese labourers "transcended race and nationality to share one heart in tending the flame of coal mining and sharing joy and sorrow together [...]"⁹⁸. The inscription infuriated Korean survivors, and when Mitsubishi refused to alter it despite protests from numerous Japanese civil groups, the plaque with the engraved text was smashed to pieces. Mitsubishi then replaced the text with a flower relief.⁹⁹

Bereaved Korean families and Korean and Japanese associations have previously pushed for Mitsubishi to investigate the remains and reveal details of their origin, but the company has refused. In 1992, Mitsubishi stated that such an investigation on human remains may harm the dignity of the spirits.¹⁰⁰ The denial of access to family members' remains has caused personal trauma and perpetuates intergenerational transfer of the collective trauma of Japanese colonialism to younger generations of Koreans.¹⁰¹

V.II Collective memory of Takashima and Hashima - World Heritage inscription and the official forgetting of foreign forced labour

Japan's official memory of Takashima and Hashima has been deliberately shaped and refined over time, as part of the country's efforts to prepare for and respond to the World Heritage inscription of the Meiji Industrial Sites in 2015. While a thorough examination of this intricate process cannot be accommodated within the confines of this thesis, it can be found in my two-part article titled "Katō Kōko's Meiji Industrial Revolution – Forgetting Forced Labor to Celebrate Japan's World Heritage Sites," which has been partially utilised as the basis for this chapter.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Translation from Kim Hyo Soon, "Remains".

⁹⁹ A picture of the original plaque and text can be found for example in Takeuchi, Q&A, 95.

¹⁰⁰ Kim Hyo Soon, "Remains"; Takazane, "Nagasaki and the forced mobilisation".

¹⁰¹ Takazane, "Nagasaki and the forced mobilisation".

¹⁰² Johnsen, "Katō Kōko's Meiji Industrial Revolution" Part 1 and 2.

V.II.I The Outstanding Universal Value of Takashima and Hashima

In 2001, Mitsubishi Materials transferred ownership of the decrepit Hashima to the local Takashima government.¹⁰³ Since the closure of the Takashima mines, the Takashima community has been in dire need of opportunities to create new industries and jobs, which Hashima could have provided as a tourism site under Takashima's ownership. Although plans to make Takashima a base for Hashima tourism were discussed and created, they were not implemented due to unsolvable issues related to dissonant memories of wartime foreign forced labour.¹⁰⁴ Following the merger of Takashima's government with that of Nagasaki City in 2005, Nagasaki City assumed ownership of Hashima.

Local efforts to World Heritage inscribe Hashima was already underway before plans for a serial nomination materialised. In 1999, former Japanese residents of Hashima led by Sakamoto Dōtoku had launched a campaign to inscribe the island as a World Heritage site. Sakamoto lived on Hashima as a child from the 1960s to 1974.¹⁰⁵ The goal of his campaign was to preserve the island and to raise awareness of its importance as a significant site of memory that deserves respect.¹⁰⁶ It was not uncommon for people to illegally disembark on Hashima to explore, and to graffiti and loot its derelict concrete high-rise buildings, still complete with many of the former residents' possessions. Hashima island was not opened for tourism until 2009, but it had been rediscovered in the 1980s and since featured in Japanese popular entertainment for its atmospheric landscape of urban ruins.¹⁰⁷ Hashima since became known as an iconic abandoned island also in Euro-American countries, especially after featuring in the James Bond movie *Skyfall* in 2012 as the antagonist's secret base.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Mitsubishi Materials, *History of Mitsubishi* (2021).

<http://carbide.mmc.co.jp/magazine/article/vol07/16242> (accessed 24 March 2021).

¹⁰⁴ Kimura, "Industrial Heritage as Social Commons".

¹⁰⁵ I participated in a tour of Hashima in 2013 guided by Sakamoto in which he narrated personal memories from his childhood on the island. See also Deborah P. Dixon, Mark Pendleton and Carina Fearnley, "Engaging Hashima: Memory Work, Site-Based Affects, and the Possibilities of Interruption," *GeoHumanities*, 2:1 (2016) 167-187.

¹⁰⁶ Ide Interview. Several Japanese former residents wished for Hashima to be preserved as a site of memory of its former (post-war) community and opposed romanticisation of its ruinous scenery and urban exploration detrimental to its fragile buildings.

¹⁰⁷ See for example Japanese movies "Jun" (1980), "The Kamikaze Adventurer" (1981), "Dioxin from Fish!" (1991), and "Attack on Titan" (2015), as well as music videos including B'z's "My Lonely Town" (2009), and internationally popular Japanese video game "Forbidden Siren 2" (2006).

¹⁰⁸ Joshua Synenko, "Geolocating popular memory: Recorded images of Hashima Island after *Skyfall*."

Sakamoto's efforts to have Hashima listed as a World Heritage site were unsuccessful because the island failed to meet UNESCO's requirement of demonstrating Outstanding Universal Value (hereafter, OUV). OUV is defined as "cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity."¹⁰⁹ Arguably, Hashima could demonstrate OUV if its colonial history and wartime foreign forced labour was acknowledged, but powerful politicians and many former Japanese Hashima residents oppose historical narratives of Japan as a wartime perpetrator.

The Meiji Industrial Sites were successfully World Heritage inscribed in 2015 due to the persistent efforts of Katō Kōko, an urban renewal expert intrinsically linked to Japan's ruling party, the Liberal Democratic party (LDP). Since 2005, Katō worked with elite Kyushu businessmen and politicians as well as with the central government to facilitate a serial inscription of multiple industrial sites that together could satisfy the requirement for OUV, without presenting colonial and wartime history. Ultimately, 23 component sites relevant to Japan's Meiji era industrialisation were recognised to demonstrate "the first successful transfer of Western industrialism to a non-Western country."¹¹⁰ Katō claims that this transfer was "complete" in 1910, excluding the colonial occupation of Korea from the narrative.¹¹¹ Eight of the inscribed component sites have a history of wartime foreign forced labour that was not acknowledged in Katō's recommendations for World Heritage inscription (see Table 2 below).

Table 2 – Meiji Industrial Site components with a history of wartime Korean forced labour

Popular Communication 16(2), 8 November 2017: 141-153.

¹⁰⁹ Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (WHC.19/01 - 10 July 2019), Paragraph 49. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/compendium/100>

¹¹⁰ World Heritage Committee, WHC.15 /39.COM /19, Decisions adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 39th Session, Bonn, Germany, 28 June - 8 July 2015, 222. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/39COM>

¹¹¹ Visitors to Katō's Industrial Heritage Information Centre in Tokyo are informed that "the transfer of Western industrialisation" to Japan was complete when "the world first acknowledged Japan as an industrial nation" at the Japan-British Exhibition held in London in 1910. However, upon asking the official guide (trained by Katō), it was confirmed that there are no known existing records of anyone associated with the London exhibition expressing any form of such acknowledgement (11 July 2022).

| Site Component | Location | Owner |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Hashima Coal Mine | Hashima Island, Nagasaki | City of Nagasaki (previously Mitsubishi Materials Corporation) |
| Takashima Coal Mine | Takashima Island, Nagasaki | |
| Mitsubishi No.3 Dry Dock* | Nagasaki Shipyard | Mitsubishi Heavy Industries |
| Mitsubishi Giant Cantilever Crane* | | |
| Mitsubishi Former Pattern Shop | | |
| Miike Coal Mine and Miike Port | Ōmura and Arao | Nippon Coke and Engineering |
| The Imperial Steel Works* | Kita-Kyushu (Yahata) | Nippon Steel Corporation |
| Hashino Iron Mining and Smelting Site | Kamaishi | City of Kamaishi (previously Nippon Steel Corporation) |

* - Sites still in operation

Both Hashima and Takashima coal mines were natural inclusions in the serial nomination of the Meiji Industrial Sites, but for different reasons. Economic benefits serve as a significant motivation for many countries seeking World Heritage site listings. The inscription of sites can lead to enhanced economic gains through increased tourism, job creation, and improved infrastructure.¹¹² Precedents in Japan linking World Heritage inscriptions to increased tourism is not limited to the country's many listed temples and shrines, but also include the "Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape" inscribed in 2007.¹¹³ Hashima's popularity due to its unique and iconic visual appearance spoke to its tourism potential as a World Heritage site. Unsurprisingly, tourist numbers rose steadily as the World Heritage inscription process proceeded, before dramatically increasing after successful inscription in 2015.¹¹⁴

It was natural to include Takashima coal mine in the inscription because its history as Japan's first mechanised mine justifies the inscription of Hashima as a significant site of memory of Meiji-era industrialisation. As the pioneering Takashima is the most

¹¹² UNESCO, "Socio-economic Impacts of World Heritage Listing" (n.d.). <https://whc.unesco.org/en/socio-economic-impacts/> (accessed 23 June 2023).

¹¹³ Ide Akira, *Higeki no sekai isan – Dāku tsūrizumu kara mita sekai* [World Heritage of tragedy: The world seen through dark tourism] (Tokyo: Bunshun shinsho, 2021), 75-79.

¹¹⁴ David Palmer, "Gunkanjima / Battleship Island, Nagasaki: World Heritage Historical Site or Urban Ruins Tourist Attraction?" *The Asia-Pacific Journal / Japan Focus*, vol. 16, issue 1, no. 4, Jan. 1, 2018.

significant of the two islands to a narrative of Meiji-era coal mine mechanisation, it would not be justifiable to only inscribe Hashima coal mine with this historical focus. However, no Meiji-era buildings remain on Takashima and what remains of the World Heritage inscribed Hokkei pit is nothing but a sealed hole in the ground. There is not much to preserve or display at the Hokkei Pit, and the mine's history as the first in Japan with a British water pump is insufficient for enticing mainstream tourism. Hashima's coal mine is also sealed and visually unimpressive from the outside, but unlike the inhabited Takashima, it is surrounded by iconic and picturesque—to some even sublime—ruins which are included in virtually all promotion of the World Heritage site.

V.II.II Behind the memory politics of the Meiji Industrial Sites

In July 2015, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and Korea ultimately accepted the World Heritage inscription of the Meiji Industrial Sites on the condition that Japan acknowledged that “a large number of Koreans and others [...] were brought against their will and forced to work under harsh conditions in the 1940s at some of the sites.”¹¹⁵ Japan stated it was “prepared to incorporate appropriate measures into [an] interpretive strategy to remember the victims such as the establishment of [an] information center.”¹¹⁶ Immediately after, Kishida Fumio, who served as Foreign Minister of Japan at the time, held an extraordinary press conference stating that the phrase “forced to work” did not mean “forced labour.”¹¹⁷ Japan ratified the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Forced Labour Convention of 1930, but argues that Koreans under colonial rule were legally conscripted as Japanese nationals and that POW's forced to work were not forced labourers due to POW labour being legal in wartime. Chinese forced labourers are ignored in these defensive claims, and so is the ILO which asserted in 1999 that “the massive conscription of labour to work for private industry in Japan under such deplorable conditions was a violation of the [1930 Forced Labour] Convention.”¹¹⁸

The National Congress of Industrial Heritage, founded by Katō Kōko in 2013, was after

¹¹⁵ WHC.15 /39.COM /INF.19, pp. 222.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Extraordinary Press Conference by Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, 5 July 2015. https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/kaiken/kaiken4e_000181.html

¹¹⁸ ILO, Observation (CEACR) - adopted 1998, published 87th ILC session (1999).

https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO::P13100_COMMENT_ID:21721

the successful inscription in 2015 tasked by the government with gathering information on the history of foreign labourers at the Meiji Industrial Sites for the promised information centre. However, its chairman, Kojima Yorihiro, was in 2015 also on the board of directors of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, a number of significant members within the National Congress of Industrial Heritage had previously held leadership positions within the corporate conglomerates culpable of wartime forced labour.¹²⁰ Acknowledging victims could lead to defamation and lawsuits, while celebratory historical interpretations can constitute as highly significant marketing for these company groups. On the other hand, successfully producing and presenting celebratory stories of these companies' contributions to Japan's "miraculous" modernisation could greatly boost their public relations. Comparing Table 2 above and Table 3 below indicates potential conflicts of interest among members. Unsurprisingly, the National Congress of Industrial Heritage has not acknowledged any evidence of wartime forced labour or ethnic discrimination at the Meiji Industrial Sites.¹²¹

Table 3 – NCIH members with potential conflicts of interests

¹¹⁹ Johnsen, "Katō Kōko's Meiji Industrial Revolution..., Part 2."

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Cabinet Secretariat of Japan, State of Conservation Report - Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding, and Coal Mining (Japan) (ID: 1484), 30 January 2023

| Role within the NCIH | Name | Previous roles in conflict with revealing forced labor history |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Chairman | Kojima Yorihiro | Started Mitsubishi Corporation career in 1965, becoming company President (2004–2010), Chairman (2010–2016), Advisor to the Board of Directors (2016–2020); Board of Directors for Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (2010–2016) |
| Honorary Chairman | Imai Takashi | Military student at the Imperial Japanese Naval Academy during wartime. Started Nippon Steel Corporation career in 1952, and became company President (1993–98), Chairman (1998–2003), and Honorary Chief Board Advisor (2003–n.d.) |
| Director (1 of 16) | Ījima Shirō | Head of Nagasaki Shipyard as the Director of Ship and Marine headquarter of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (n.d.–2010), Direct assistant to company President (2010–n.d.) |
| Director (1 of 16) | Yagi Jūjirō | Started Nippon Steel Corporation career in 1965, and served as company Vice President and Director of Engineering (2003–2005) |
| Councilor on Board of Trustees | Marukawa Hiroyuki | Former Nippon Steel Corporation employee. Head of Nippon Steels' public relations center in 2008 |
| Advisor | Hayashida Hiroshi | Advisor to Nippon Steel Engineering (subsidiary of Nippon Steel Corporation) in 2015 |

The Industrial Heritage Information Centre opened in Tokyo in June 2020, with Katō Kōko as its executive director. Katō Kōko has been funded by the Japanese government, after its denial of wartime forced labour, to collect evidence of the wartime working conditions of foreign labourers and to present the “full story” of the Meiji Industrial Sites in the information centre as required by UNESCO. Katō Kōko had served as Special Advisor to the Cabinet in charge of industrial heritage inscription and tourism promotion when preparing the centre (2015-2019).¹²² Not only does the centre not exhibit any evidence of forced labour, but it also actively attempts to distort history by claiming that discrimination did not occur because Japanese and Koreans worked together as “family”. The centre presents celebratory narratives of Meiji-Japan’s technological advancement, while distorting the experiences of labourers, including those of Japanese low-skilled labourers.

Although wartime foreign forced labour occurred at eight of the 23 Meiji Industrial Sites,

¹²² Nihon Keizai Shimbun, “Naikaku kanbō san'yo ni Katō-shi ninmei sangyō isan tōroku ni muke [Katō appointed as Special Advisor to the Cabinet – Towards Industrial heritage inscription]”, 2 July 2015.

Hashima, being a popular tourism site, has received the most attention from both revisionists and their critics. One of the information centres' three exhibition zones is dedicated to Japanese memory of wartime Hashima, or rather, to Japanese denial of foreign victims of the island. The information centre's Hashima zone features large portraits and edited video interviews of former Japanese Hashima residents selected by Katō Kōko. Based on their own childhood memories, these elderly former residents deny that forced labour and ethnic discrimination occurred on the island. The testimonies of foreign victims or Japanese who were adults during wartime are not featured. The "testimonies" denying forced labour history are also featured on a revisionist website edited by Katō named "the Truth of Gunkanjima" which is funded by the Japanese government through the National Congress of Industrial Heritage.¹²³

On my visit to the Industrial Heritage Information Centre on 11 July 2022, the Chief Guide who himself is a former Hashima resident, Nakamura Yōichi, introduced Hashima as an island victimised by fabricated Korean accusations. One of his arguments were that Korean labourers had access to "brothels" managed by Koreans, and could thus not have been forced labourers. He claimed that because the boss of the Korean "brothel" was a Korean, the women could not have been victims of sexual slavery. Nakamura suggested that testimonies of Korean labourers may have been edited after their death, falsely claiming that there were no Koreans with personal memories of forced labour at Hashima still alive at the time. Nakamura named Ku Yon-chol as a false witness of forced labour, stating that Ku's father would not have sent for his family to live on Hashima if Koreans were abused. In order to justify the denial of Ku's testimonies, Nakamura falsely claimed that wartime Hashima was no different from pre-war Hashima. Nakamura further claimed that the centre had sent "countless letters" to Ku to establish a dialogue about his experience. I soon after directly confronted Ku Yon-chol with these claims. He was not aware that his name was being abused, and stated that he has not received a single letter from anyone related to the Tokyo information centre.¹²⁴ A video attempting to defame

¹²³ National Congress of Industrial Heritage, The Truth of Gunkanjima, homepage. <https://www.gunkanjima-truth.com/l/en-US/> (accessed 25 June 2023).

¹²⁴ See Nikolai Johnsen, "Coming to terms with Korean forced-labor history." *Korea JoongAng Daily*, 14 October 2022. <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2022/10/14/national/diplomacy/hashima-korea-japan/20221014164953231.html> (last accessed 10 March 2023).

Ku and deny his memories is featured on the “Truth of Gunkanjima” website, clearly signalling that Katō and the National Congress of Industrial Heritage have no desire for genuine dialogue with Ku Yon-chol.¹²⁵

Inquiring about the nature of Chinese wartime labour on the island, Nakamura ignored official court rulings and stated that the Chinese labour was “too light (karui)” to be considered forced labour. Katō Kōko, who personally trained the guides, has never attempted dialogue with victims and has consistently implied to Japanese media that the forced labour history of the Meiji Industrial Sites has been fabricated by Koreans.¹²⁶

After inspecting the Industrial Heritage Information Centre in June 2020, UNESCO expressed “strong regrets” over Japan’s failure to honour the agreement of acknowledging foreign victims forced to work at the industrial World Heritage sites. Japan was given a deadline of December 2022 to rectify its historical distortions, but it responded in January 2023 that “[i]t has endeavoured to base its interpretation on objective facts, such as by properly exhibiting primary sources of clear provenance and testimonies verified to have a degree of credibility.”¹²⁷ In other words, Japan insisted that the memory of selected former Hashima residents refutes forced labour history at the Meiji Industrial Sites while testimonies of foreign victims are deemed to have no “degree of credibility”. I asked several official guides at the Industrial Heritage Information Centre in June 2023 about changes or additions to narratives of foreign labourers after UNESCO’s warning and deadline the year before, but they were not aware of any relevant adjustments having been made.

V.II.III Korean collective memory of wartime forced labour in Japan

In contemporary Korean collective memory, Hashima represents a notorious emblem of wartime forced labour and Korean hardship during the colonial period. The Japanese case

¹²⁵ National Congress of Industrial Heritage, “Video Message ‘Who is Yeon Cheol Koo?’” <https://www.gunkanjima-truth.com/l/en-US/article/Video-Message-%E2%80%9CWho-is-Yeon-Cheol-Koo-%E2%80%9D>

¹²⁶ Johnsen, “Katō Kōko’s Meiji Industrial Revolution, Part 1”; “Part 2”.

¹²⁷ Cabinet Secretariat of Japan, State of Conservation Report - Sites of Japan’s Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding, and Coal Mining (Japan) (ID: 1484), 30 January 2023, p. 3. (https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/sangyousekaiisan/seikaiisan_houkoku/221130.html)

study sites, in contrast to the Korean cases, are frequently addressed in the mass media of both nations, which may pose potent national identity threats to many Koreans and Japanese beyond those who personally visit those sites. Therefore, it becomes imperative to this case study to examine the Korean collective memory of wartime Korean forced labour in Japan.

The documentation of vernacular memories of Korean forced labour began in the early 1960s through the research of Pak Kyongsik at the Chongryon-affiliated Korea University (Chōsen Daigakkō) in Tokyo. Testimonies have since been continuously compiled and published by researchers and activists in Japan and Korea.¹²⁸ Collective memories of Korean forced labour in Japan entered the spotlight of both the Korean and Japanese public in the 1990s when former victims filed lawsuits against Japanese companies. This resulted in Japanese high court recognition of forced labour history, but the right to claim compensation was denied because the 1965 Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea held that all matters of war compensation had been resolved.¹²⁹ Since 2007, Korean news reports condemned Japanese efforts to inscribe Hashima and its Mitsubishi coal mine as UNESCO World Heritage without acknowledging foreign forced labour history recognised by the high court.¹³⁰

Lawsuits were also filed in Korea against culpable Japanese companies, but the Korean court initially recognised Japan's claim that rights for compensation were lost with the 1965 treaty. However, Korea's Supreme Court ordered retrials in 2012, after ruling that imperial Japan's conscription of Korean labourers was retroactively in breach of the South Korean constitution. Korea deems the Japanese colonial occupation itself to have been illegal, and the Korean constitution of 1948 states that special legislation can be

¹²⁸ See for example Kim Hyo Soon, "Remains"; Erik Ropers, "Testimonies as Evidence in the History of *kyōsei renkō*", *Japanese Studies*, 30,2 (2010): 263-282.

¹²⁹ Miki Y. Ishikida. *Toward Peace: War Responsibility, Postwar Compensation, and Peace Movements and Education in Japan*, E-book (Lincoln: iUniverse, 2005), 38-9.

¹³⁰ Cheon Gwang-am, "Il, Jeonjaengbeomjoe yeoksajiu-gi hana [Japan, another erasure of war crime history]", *Donga Ilbo*, 15 August 2007. <https://www.donga.com/news/article/all/20070815/8478206/1> (accessed 24 March 2021); Yonhap, "Il Gangje-jingyongja sukseu segyeyusan deungjaechujin nollan [Japan – Controversy surrounding efforts to nominate forced labourers' accommodation for inscription], *Yonhap News*, 15 August 2007. <https://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=104&oid=001&aid=0001726634> (accessed 24 March 2021).

enacted to punish illegal acts prior to Korea's liberation in 1945.¹³¹

By 2012, the Commission on Verification and Support for the Victims of Forced Mobilisation under Japanese Colonialism in Korea had recognised around 220,000 Korean forced mobilisation survivors since 2005.¹³² There was a peak in the second half of 2012 in Korean news reports on Japanese efforts to World Heritage inscribe World Heritage without acknowledging that many Koreans had been forced to work there and died as a result. Mitsubishi Materials apologised and reached a compensation deal with Chinese plaintiffs but is yet to recognise Korean victims.

Following the 2012 Korean Supreme Court ruling, the Korean government launched an investigation into Japanese companies accused of utilising Korean forced labour, which in 2013 resulted in an official announcement that there had been 1,493 such Japanese “war crime companies (*Jeonbeom gieop*)”, of which 299 still existed.¹³³ Mitsubishi, Mitsui and Sumitomo were named as the three prominent *zaibatsu* (Japanese conglomerates) of which the majority of “war crime companies” were subsidiaries.

The same year, the Commission on Verification and Support for the Victims of Forced Mobilization under Japanese Colonialism in Korea investigated Hashima's forced labour history for the Korean government.¹³⁴ The investigation report is centred around the analysis of cremation records found on Hashima, and the recorded testimonies of 15 Korean survivors. The report documents extreme abuse of Korean labourers in the form of forced mobilisation, torture, inhumane living and working conditions, inadequate rations, and forced labour in the most toxic and otherwise dangerous parts of the mines.

Mitsubishi Materials Corporation faced lawsuits in 2015 also from former Chinese forced

¹³¹ Noriko Kokubun, “Korean Courts Order Japanese Firms to Compensate Wartime Laborers: Background to the Rulings”, *Nippon.com*, 7 February 2014. <https://www.nippon.com/en/in-depth/a02703/> (accessed 26 March 2021).

¹³² Ko Han-sol, “[Interview] A Japanese supporter of S. Korea's forced labor victims”. *Hankyoreh*, 15 May 2019. http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/894044.html (accessed 26 March 2021).

¹³³ Im Gi-chang, “Joseon-in gangje dong-wonhan hyeonjon Iljeonbeomgi-eom 299gae” [299 Japanese war crime companies that used Korean forced conscript labour still in existence], *Yonhap News*, 29 August 2012. <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20120829073800004> (accessed 26 March 2021).

¹³⁴ Yun Jihyeon, *Basic Investigation through Death Records into Conditions of Korean Victims of Forced Mobilization to the Hashima Coal Mine*. Seoul: Commission on Verification and Support for the Victims of Forced Mobilization under Japanese Colonialism in Korea (2012).

labourers, including victims of Hashima and Takashima. Mitsubishi Materials apologised and concluded a deal with Chinese groups representing 3,700 victims to compensate victims or their descendants with 100,000 Chinese Yuan each.¹³⁵ The company had the same year offered apologies to American POWs forced to work in other coal mines. Mitsubishi Materials expressed intent to also apologise to POWs from other countries, but regarding Korean forced labourers it was stated that the related legal situation is “different”, and no apologies have been issued from the company.¹³⁶ This exclusion of Korean victims was widely reported in Korea as explicit discrimination by Japan and Mitsubishi Materials in 2015, and again the year after when the agreement of compensating Chinese victims was finalised.

V.II.IV Official demands for compensation and fluctuating Korea-Japan relations

The Korean Supreme Court’s final decision on the Korean forced labour issue came in October 2018, under Moon Jae-in’s presidency. It stated that the forced mobilisation of Korean workers was illegal, inhumane, and violated the workers’ human rights.¹³⁷ Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Nippon Steel Corporation were ordered to compensate plaintiffs with amounts ranging from 80 to 150 million Won each, but the Japanese companies did not recognise the Korean ruling. Over 70 Japanese companies were facing similar lawsuits in Korea, prompting the Japanese government to instruct them not to settle with Korean plaintiffs.¹³⁸ Abe Shinzō, at the time serving as Prime Minister of Japan, commented that the Korean Supreme Court’s 2018 ruling is “in clear violation of international law and [...] fundamentally breaks down the legal framework for Japan-

¹³⁵ Ryall, “South Korea court ruling on Mitsubishi”.

¹³⁶ Jeong Seong-jin, “Il Misseubisi, jung gangje-noyeong sagwa... Hangung-man jeoe [Japanese Mitsubishi, apology for Chinese forced labour... Only Korea left out]”, *SBS News*, 24 July 2015. https://news.sbs.co.kr/news/endPage.do?news_id=N1003090481&plink=ORI&cooper=NAVER (accessed 14 March 2021).

¹³⁷ Seokwoo Lee and Seryon Lee, “Yeo Woon Taek v. New Nippon Steel Corporation,” *American Journal of International Law* 113, 3 (2019): 592 – 599.

¹³⁸ Cho Ki-weon, “Japanese government tells companies to not compensate Korean victims of forced labor”, *Hankyoreh*, 2 November 2018.

http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/868610.html (accessed 26 March 2021).

South Korea relations.”¹³⁹

In July 2019, Japan imposed export restrictions on Korea regarding specific chemicals essential for Korea’s lucrative semiconductor manufacture, and weeks later removed the country from Japan’s “whitelist” of preferred trading nations, prolonging crucial export processes by months.¹⁴⁰ Officially, Japan claimed this was necessary citing concerns that South Korea’s export control measures were lacking and could “cause sensitive substances and technology to end up in rogue nations such as North Korea.”¹⁴¹ In a news briefing, an official of the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry commented that “South Korea has failed to show any satisfactory measures to resolve the forced labour issue,” and that this has damaged mutual trust to the extent that meaningful dialogue for establishing proper export controls is not possible.¹⁴² The Japanese export restrictions were widely perceived to be a direct response to the Korean Supreme Court rulings on forced labour compensation from culpable Japanese companies.¹⁴³

Following Japan’s announcement of export restrictions, the Korean public swiftly initiated a nationwide “Boycott Japan campaign,” commonly known as “No Japan.” This grassroots movement encouraged Koreans to refrain from traveling to Japan and to abstain from purchasing any Japanese products.¹⁴⁴ Lists of Japanese products and replacement products produced anywhere else than Japan were circulated to shop owners, and a “Boycott Japan logo” created by a Korean digital designer went viral and was used

¹³⁹ Takenaka Kiyoshi, “Japan’s Abe renews call on South Korea to keep promises to mend ties,” *Reuters*, 24 October 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-southkorea-idUSKBN1X308N> (accessed 24 March 2021).

¹⁴⁰ David Ho, “Why South Korea is no longer on Japan’s approved export list,” *Al Jazeera*, 28 August 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2019/8/28/why-south-korea-is-no-longer-on-japans-approved-export-list> (accessed 24 March 2021).

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Yamazaki Makiko and Ju-Min Park, “Japan to tighten tech material exports to South Korea in wartime labor row,” *Reuters Technology news*, 1 July 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southkorea-japan-laborers-idUSKCN1TW144> (accessed 20 August 2021)

¹⁴³ Eugene Song, “South Korean Consumers’ Attitudes toward Small Business Owners Participating in the 2019 Anti-Japan Boycott,” *Soc. Sci.* 9, 5 (2020): 74; Obe Mitsuru & Kim Jaewon, “Inside the lose-lose trade fight between Japan and South Korea,” *Nikkei Asia*, 31 July 2019. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/The-Big-Story/Inside-the-lose-lose-trade-fight-between-Japan-and-South-Korea> (accessed 24 March 2021).

¹⁴⁴ SBS News, “Il Gyeongje bopoge ppullan sobija-deul... ‘Ilje bulmae listeu’ nawatta [Consumers’ active economic retaliation against Japan... ‘Boycott Japan list’ have emerged]”, *SBS News*, 3 July 2019. https://news.sbs.co.kr/news/endPage.do?news_id=N1005336880&plink=ORI&cooper=NAVER (accessed 24 March 2021).

nationally in demonstrations as well as by businesses signalling their participation in the campaign.¹⁴⁵ After few weeks more than half the population of South Korea was participating in the campaign, and consumers were actively avoiding making purchases from businesses that did not support the campaign. Japan had been the number one exporter of goods to Korea but had fallen to no. 28 by November 2019.¹⁴⁶ Korea-Japan relations plummeted, reaching perhaps the lowest point since normalisation in 1965.¹⁴⁷ Koreans who ignored the campaign were criticised by other Koreans, in person and on social media. The campaign demonstrated how Korean collective memory of forced labour and colonial suffering had been strengthened in opposition to Japanese memory politics.

Official Korean memory politics also appears to have played a significant role in encouraging national engagement in the No Japan campaign and in enhancing collective memories of colonial forced labour. During Roh Moo-hyun's progressive presidency from 2003 to 2008, the Korean government confiscated the wealth and property of several Koreans who had collaborated with imperial Japan. The government's Committee to Investigate the Truth of Pro-Japanese Anti-National Activities published investigation results that identified collaborators and labelled them as "anti-national" traitors.¹⁴⁸ The Korean term for "pro-Japanese collaborator", *chinilpa*, means "those friendly with Japan," and is still used derogatorily today against Koreans who do not consider Japan responsible for colonial suffering. This politicised memory climate poses a dual identity threat to those who did not participate in the Boycott Japan campaign. Firstly, there is the categorisation threat of being labelled as a *chinilpa*. Secondly, there is the acceptance

¹⁴⁵ Kang Sinu, "(Inteobu) 'Boikot Jaepaen' logo jejakja 'han moksori naeunde doumdwaesseumyeon' [(Interview) 'Boycott Japan' logo creator- 'It was my contribution hoping it would help']", Seoul Gyeongje, 19 July 2019. <https://www.sedaily.com/NewsView/1VLR7ANDGK> (accessed 24 March 2021).

¹⁴⁶ Kim Seungkweon, "'No Jaepaen' 5gaewol cha... Jeomjeom sarajineun Ilbon jepumdeul ['5th month of 'No Japan'... Japanese products are disappearing more and more]", *Beuritji Gyeongje*, 20 November 2018. <http://www.viva100.com/main/view.php?key=20191120010007053> (accessed 24 March 2021).

¹⁴⁷ Alexandra Sakaki, "Japan-South Korea Relations - A Downward Spiral", *SWP Comment No. 35*, August 2019. Translated by Meredith Dale. <https://www.swp-berlin.org/10.18449/2019C35/> (accessed 24 March 2021); Adam Withnall, "Japan lashes out at South Korea as worst relations in decades threaten North Korea peace talks," *The Independent*, 23 August 2019. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/japan-south-korea-intelligence-deal-north-nuclear-weapons-peace-shinzo-abe-a9076271.html> (accessed 24 March 2021).

¹⁴⁸ Jeong-Chul Kim, "On forgiveness and reconciliation: Korean 'collaborators' of Japanese colonialism", *Routledge Handbook of Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia*, Edited by Mikyong Kim (Abingdon & NY: Routledge, 2015): 159-72.

threat of one's value as a Korean being undermined by the national in-group for not standing up against discrimination from Japan.¹⁴⁹

The recent memory politics of Korean governments have been inconsistent. President Mun Jae-in of the Democratic Party of Korea (2017-2022) vehemently opposed Japanese claims that all matters pertaining to wartime forced labour had been resolved. However, both his right-wing predecessor, Park Geun-hye, and successor, Yoon Suk Yeol, were willing to overlook the victims' plight to improve Korea-Japanese relations and economic cooperation. In 2015, two years before her impeachment, Park Geun-hye controversially reached an agreement with then-Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzō to “finally and irreversibly” resolve the “comfort women” issue.¹⁵⁰ The official agreement re-traumatised survivors, whose opinions were ignored, and was subsequently nullified by Mun Jae-in.¹⁵¹ In March 2023, ahead of the first Korea-Japan summit in 12 years, Yoon Suk Yeol's government announced a “solution” to the forced labour issue in the form of “voluntary” contributions from Korean companies to Korean victims.¹⁵²

President Yoon's “solution,” which once again disregarded the victims' voices and was opposed by a significant portion of the Korean public, was welcomed by Japan which reinstated Korea to its “whitelist” of preferred trading nations. However, diverse groups within the Korean and Japanese public continue to support the victims in their fight for Japanese recognition and a genuine apology.¹⁵³ A prominent and recent example is the creation of a temporary exhibition named “The Story of Victims Behind the Wartime Industrial Heritage” at the official War Memorial of Korea (June to September 2023), which revealed the extent of foreign forced labour at the Meiji Industrial Sites and the

¹⁴⁹ Nyla R. Branscombe, Naomi Ellemers, Russel Spears and Bertjan Doosje, “The context and content of social identity threat,” *Social identity: Context, commitment, content*, edited by Nyla Ellemers, Russel Spears and Bertjan Doosje (Oxford: Blackwell Science, 1999): 35–58.

¹⁵⁰ Jack Kim and Ju-min Park, “South Korea, Japan agree to irreversibly end 'comfort women' row,” *Reuters*, 28 December 2015. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-southkorea-comfortwomen-idUSKBN0UB0EC20151228> (accessed 25 June 2023).

¹⁵¹ See Miki Dezaki and Momoko Hata. *Shusenjo: Comfort Women and Japan's War on History* (United States: No Man Productions LLC 2019), Film.

¹⁵² The Hankyoreh, “Yoon's ‘solution’ to forced labor issue is historically regressive,” Editorial, 7 March 2023. https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/english_editorials/1082559.html (accessed 25 June 2023).

¹⁵³ Al Jazeera, “South Korea restores Japan to trade white list amid warming ties,” 24 April 2023. <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2023/4/24/south-korea-restores-japan-to-trade-white-list-amid-warming-ties> (accessed 25 June 2023).

Sado Mines¹⁵⁴ and displayed video recordings of victim testimonies. The exhibition material was created with the cooperation of researchers, private museums and NGOs from Korea, Japan, and the United States.¹⁵⁵

V.II.V Hashima as a symbol of Korean forced labour and colonial suffering

Despite Hashima's approximately 1,000 Korean forced labourers constituting only a fraction of the estimated 800,000 Koreans forced to work in Japan during wartime, media-focus on Hashima as a controversial heritage site popular with tourists have made the island the most representative site of Korean forced labour in contemporary Korean collective memory. The Korean search Engine Naver returns more than one thousand Korean news articles published since 2010 that include both keywords "Hashima" and "Jiokseom" (Hell Island), which indicates how firmly Hashima is established in Korean collective memory as a site of colonial suffering. However, not all depictions accurately reflect historical truths, which can create opportunities for historical denialists to cast doubt on the personal memories of victims. This complicates efforts to research and raise awareness about related historical events, as well-researched facts may appear as understatement of Japanese war crimes when compared to the deeply rooted Korean collective memory, which is partly based on misleading information and a mix of fact and fiction.

While the general history of wartime forced labour in Japan is well-known in Korea, specific sites other than Hashima are not. However, Takashima and its Senninzuka tomb has also been made known to the Korean public through the highly popular entertainment TV program *Muhan Dojeon* (Infinite Challenge). On the episode aired 15 September 2015, Seo Kyoung-Duk and Korean reggae singer Haha visited both Hashima and Takashima Island, revealing to the Korean audience how Mitsubishi's Senninzuka had been concealed by vegetation and forgotten. After the episode aired, Seo Kyoung-Duk was contacted by a large number of Korean viewers who wanted to travel to the Senninzuka to commemorate Korean victims of forced labour. As a result, he returned to

¹⁵⁴ See Johnsen, "The Sado Gold Mine".

¹⁵⁵ Visited on 10 June 2023.

Hashima with volunteers who cleared the hidden path of vegetation and created a YouTube video with detailed instructions on how to reach it.¹⁵⁶ Although the Muhan Dojeon episode successfully highlighted the existence of Takashima and its forgotten tomb, it has been criticised for presenting an overly simplistic and dichotomous relationship between suffering Korean forced labourers confined underground and Japanese perpetrators enjoying a pleasant and comfortable lifestyle on the islands.¹⁵⁷

Hashima became known to the Korean public earlier than Takashima. In 1991, The Pacific War Victims Association (of Korea) requested and obtained official lists from the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare of approximately 100,000 Koreans who worked in Japan between 1925-1945, which was matched with discovered cremation details of 122 Koreans that died on Hashima during this period.¹⁵⁸ The same year, the *Hashima hangugin huisaengja yujokoe* (Association for bereaved families of Korean Hashima victims) was formed in Korea and a group of Korean family members of Hashima victims visited and embarked on the island.¹⁵⁹ In 1992, it was publicised in Korean news media that a total of 500 Koreans had been estimated to have worked on Hashima between 1925-1945¹⁶⁰—a very low estimate that misleadingly implied an extremely high death rate when presented together with records of 122 Korean deaths.

In 2003, Korean author Han Susan published his popular five-volume fact-based fiction novel *Kkamagwi* about Koreans forced to work on Hashima during the Asia-Pacific

¹⁵⁶ Seo Kyoung-Duk Interview; Shidae Cheongnyeon, “Takashima Gongyangtap [Takashima memorial]”. YouTube video posted 19 October 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMleKRMcxYw> (last accessed 11 March 2023)

¹⁵⁷ Yoojin Choi, “Industrial miracle or Hell Island? Gunkanjima, television, and nationalism in South Korea and Japan”, *Popular Culture and the Transformation of Japan–Korea Relations*, Edited by Rumi Sakamoto and Stephen Epstein (Routledge E-book, 2020): chapter 9.

¹⁵⁸ Yonhap, “Ilje Hashima tangwang jeongyong samangja myeongdan jeot gonggae [Name list of conscripted workers at Hashima coal mine that died under Japanese colonial rule made public for the first time]”, *Yonhap News*, 30 October 1991.

<https://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=102&oid=001&aid=0003514950> (accessed 29 April 2021).

¹⁵⁹ Kimura, “Industrial Heritage as Social Commons”, 149.

¹⁶⁰ Mun Yeongsik, “Hanguk jeongyong samangja yugajok, Il-e yugol banhwan cheonggu [Families of Koreans who died during conscripted labour request Japan to return their remains]”, *Yonhap News*, 18 February 1992,

<https://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=104&oid=001&aid=0003584998> (accessed 29 April 2021).

War.¹⁶¹ The author, who worked with human rights activists in Nagasaki including Oka Masaharu to collect data, holds that all descriptions of abuse endured by Koreans in the book are based on historical facts.¹⁶² *Kkamagwi*, which resurrected “Hell Island” as a familiar name for Hashima in Korea, maintained public attention and was adapted for a theatrical play of the same name in 2016.¹⁶³

According to the Korean government, seven Korean Hashima survivors were reported to be alive in 2015.¹⁶⁴ Among these survivors, Bak Jungu, Choe Jangseop, Kim Hyeongseok, and Yi Inu have been extensively featured in Korean media over the past decade. Their testimonies, covered by Korean media, have made their memories on Hashima of forced labour, discrimination, and severe abuse domestically well-known.

Although Korean news reports regarding forced labour on Hashima and other sites are generally reliable, occasional erroneous representations by Korean sources portray wartime Hashima as resembling a Nazi death camp rather than acknowledging its wartime history of utilising foreign forced labour in support of Japan’s wartime efforts. A significant example is the frequent misquoting of the official 2012 Korean investigative report based on Hashima cremation records. The original report states that out of the 122 Korean deaths recorded between 1925 and 1945, 27 deaths could be confirmed to be that of Korean victims of forced labour.¹⁶⁵ Not all Korean workers on Hashima since 1925 can be said to have been mobilised against their will, as the pre-war recruitment of Korean labourers for Hashima may not always have been dependant on elements of coercion. Two of the Korean survivor testimonies analysed in the report describe voluntary employment on Hashima turned into forced labour in the final years of the war by forced

¹⁶¹ The novel’s shortened Japanese edition released as “Gunkanjima” in 2009 was also well-received in Japan selling 40,000 copies. See Shin Junbong, “‘Pongnyeok nanmuhan Gunhamdoneun Ilbon gungukju-ui apjuktoen gonggan-ieotta’ [The extremely violent Battleship Island was a space of compressed Japanese militarism]”, *JoongAng Ilbo*, 13 August 2017. <https://news.joins.com/article/21840245> (accessed 29 April 2021).

¹⁶² Han Susan, Interview with Han Susan by Kim Gwangil, *The Chosun Ilbo*, 10 June 2003. https://www.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2003/06/10/2003061070302.html (accessed 29 April 2021).

¹⁶³ Seo Seungjin, “Jingyongui han... Han Susan soseol ‘Kkamagwi’ mudae [the han of conscripted labour... Han Susan’s novel ‘Kkamagwi’ adapted for the theatrical stage]”, *Kookmin Ilbo*, 3 November 2016. <http://m.kmib.co.kr/view.asp?arcid=0923637531> (accessed 29 April 2021).

¹⁶⁴ Yun Yongmin, “Geullojeongsindae simin moim, 3~7il il gangjejingyong chiyok tapsa [Women’s labour force citizen meeting, forced conscription survey in Japan from 3rd to 7th]”, *News 1*, 1 June 2015. <https://www.news1.kr/articles/?2258449> (accessed 4 May 2021).

¹⁶⁵ Yun Jihyeon, Basic Investigation through Death Records, 279.

contract renewals.¹⁶⁶ Out of the recorded 122 deaths, an additional 27 (22.1%) were that of Korean children under the age of five, which included stillborn babies.¹⁶⁷ However, many of Korea's major news outlets such as Yonhap News, KBS News, JoongAng Ilbo, The Kukmin Ilbo, and The Seoul Shinmun have, citing this investigation, erroneously reported that 122 Korean forced labourers or conscripted labourers died on Hashima between 1925 and 1945.¹⁶⁸ The 122 Korean deaths have also been erroneously reported to have all occurred in the wartime period from 1943-1945 by trusted news sources such as (the inconsistent) KBS News, Busan Ilbo, News 1 Korea, Herald Gyeongje and Asia Gyeongje.¹⁶⁹

Entertainment media that mix facts with fiction to induce emotional responses from their audiences for a stronger impact may also feed Korean collective memory with historically

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 356-357.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 319.

¹⁶⁸ See for example Choi Young-yun, "Oegyo-bu 'Il Gunham-do jeon-si 'ganghan yugam' jeondal... si-jeong jokku' [Ministry of Foreign Affairs – 'Japan's Battleship Island exhibition brings out 'strong negative feelings' ... calls for correction']", *KBS News*, 24 July 2020. <http://news.kbs.co.kr/news/view.do?ncd=4478458&ref=A>; Seo Seung-uk, "Tto Han dwitwongsu jin Il... Gunham-do jeon-sihamyeo 'Joseon-in chabyeol daeu eopseotda' [Japan backstabbed Korea yet again... Claims 'there was no discrimination against Koreans' in Battleship Island exhibition]", *JoongAng Ilbo*, 14 June 2020. <https://news.joins.com/article/23801019>; Jo Gyeong-gi, "'Mudo' ye-go-pyeone teung-janghan Hashima-seom 'jiok-seom' euro pullyeo... Ilje-gangjeom-gi han-guk-in nodong-ryeok sut'al jangso [Hashima Island appearing in the Infinite Challenge trailer is called 'Hell Island' ... A place of labour exploitation of Koreans during Japanese occupation]", *Kookmin Ilbo*, 30 August 2015. <http://news.kmib.co.kr/article/view.asp?arcid=0009803648&code=61181111&cp=nv>; Kim Jeong-eun, "'Il gamok-seom' han-in samangja 122myeong [122 Koreans died on 'Japanese prison island']". *Seoul Shinmun*, 5 October 2012. <http://www.seoul.co.kr/news/newsView.php?id=20121005011010>; Yonhap, "'Ilje 'gamok-seom' Hashima gangje-dongwon shiltae-bogoseo gonggae [Investigation report of forced labour on Japanese colonial 'prison island' Hashima made public]", *Yonhap News*, 4 October 2012. <https://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=100&oid=001&aid=0005849196> (all accessed 29 April 2021).

¹⁶⁹ See for example Hwang Hyeon-taek, "'Il Abe, ibeonen 'Gunham-do jeonshi-gwan' bangmun... 'Joseon-in chabyeol pibang mullichyeoya' [This time Japan's Abe visited the 'Battleship Island exhibition hall' ... 'We must eradicate defamation regarding discrimination of Koreans']", *KBS News*, 23 October 2020. <http://news.kbs.co.kr/news/view.do?ncd=5032249&ref=A>; Kang Jong-gyu, "'Milmul sseolmul – 'Jiok-seom' [High and low tides – 'Hell Island']", *Busan Ilbo*, 5 October 2012. <http://www.busan.com/view/busan/view.php?code=20121005000092>; Jang Yong-seok, "'Il 'Gunham-do' taepung pihae... Geonmul gidom muneojyeo [Japan's "'Battleship Island' damaged by typhoon... Building pillars collapse]", *News 1 Korea*, 10 September 2020. <https://www.news1.kr/articles/24054698>; Yi Chang-ho, "'Yi Chang-ho kallom_ Ilbon 'Gunham-do' reul tonghae bon ilbon-ui wiseon [Yi Chang-ho Column_ Japan's hypocrisy seen through Japanese 'Battleship Island']", *Herald Gyeongje*, 22 June 2020. <http://news.heraldcorp.com/view.php?ud=20200622000303>; Yi Sang-guk, "'Gunham-do jiokdo paektu-chekeu' - Chukgu-jang 2bae myeonjeok Gunham-doeseo joseon-in 122myeong ttejugeum ['Battleship Island Hell Island fact check' - Mass death of 122 Koreans on Battleship Island which is the size of two football fields]", *Asia Gyeongje*, 29 July 2017. <http://www.asiae.co.kr/news/view.htm?idxno=2017072915395766581> (all accessed 29 April 2021).

inaccurate images. A prominent example is the 2017 feature film *Gunhamdo* (The Battleship Island) directed by Ryoo Seung-wan and starring renowned Korean actors Hwang Jung-min, So Ji-sub, Song Joong-ki and Lee Jung-hyun. The movie, which was seen by over 3 million Koreans within four days of its cinematic release, depicts large numbers of Korean forced labourers on Hashima dying gruesome deaths in accidents and at the hands of Japanese overseers. In the film's climax, Korean forced labourers collectively tear apart a large imperial Japanese Rising Sun flag for use as ropes for their fictional mass escape from the island. The film utilises nationalistic narratives and imagery with high potential to affect the emotions and collective memory of its audience, contributing to the reconstruction of "Hashima as a place for Koreans to commemorate the forced labour victims and shame the Japanese [...]".¹⁷⁰ *Gunhamdo* was sold to 155 countries, and in order to "promote historical awareness," special screenings were arranged in Seoul and Paris for UNESCO members, international diplomats and related stakeholders.¹⁷¹ However, hopes for this nationalistic blend of fact and fiction to raise global awareness of Korean forced labour history appears largely unfulfilled.

Appendix VI Survey and Data Analysis

VI.I Methodology

VI.I.I Quantitative Data

Quantitative data were collected from Koreans by the Seodaemun Prison History Hall in Seoul by survey in the form of on-site questionnaires with Likert-scale statements and closed-ended questions. The target population was potential Korean visitors to dark tourism sites in Japan relevant to Korean suffering. Seodaemun Prison is an iconic dark tourism site of Korean suffering, and Koreans by this site were deemed to be potential visitors to dark tourism sites with relevant history in Japan. The survey did not only target Koreans who knew the term "dark tourism," but all Koreans who were aware of tourism

¹⁷⁰ Deborah Dixon, "From Becoming-Geology to Geology-Becoming: Hashima as Geopolitics", *Political Geology*, edited by Adam Bobbette and Amy Donovan (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 159; Ryoko Nakano, "Heritage Soft Power in East Asia's Memory Contests: Promoting and Objecting to Dissonant Heritage in UNESCO", *Journal of Contemporary Eastern Asia* 17, 1 (2018): 60.

¹⁷¹ Kim Hui-seon, "'Gunham-do' Pariseo Yuneseuko oegyogwan shisahoe... 'gukchejeok gwanshim chokgu' [Special Paris screening of 'the Battleship Island' for UNESCO and diplomats... 'Seeking interest internationally']", *Yonhap News*, 31 July 2017.

<https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20170731057500005?input=1195m> (accessed 29 April 2021).

in Korea, with colonial narratives, describable as dark tourism according to definitions discussed in the literature review. Permission to distribute the questionnaire was obtained in advance from Director Park Kyung-mok of the Seodaemun Prison History Hall.

This research sought to examine the target population's knowledge and interest in vernacular and official colonial memories of their national ingroup (South Korea) and outgroup (Japan), and how highlighting different related narratives may or may not influence their desire to visit historical places of war and colonial memories in the country of their national other. In addition, data on visitor attitudes towards co-existence of dissonant narratives at relevant tourism sites were sought. As potentially significant variables, general opinions on the Japanese government and people, as well as on UNESCO's responses to controversial narratives at World Heritage sites in Japan were also collected. While the case studies define the spatial boundaries of regions to be examined, potential Korean visitors include large parts of the total Korean population, which is why statistical survey data is needed.¹⁷²

The initial research plan included a three-months' stay in Japan and a parallel survey aimed at potential Japanese visitors to dark tourism sites in Korea. Due to Japan's exceptionally strict entry requirements intended to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during my 2022 fieldwork period, fieldwork in the country was impossible to plan. A 30-day Japanese visa was successfully obtained in July, but collection of qualitative data was prioritised due to the time limitations.

VI.I.II Questionnaire Survey

The questionnaire, a form of survey, was selected for quantitative data collection because of its properties as “a systematic method for gathering information from (a sample of) entities for the purposes of constructing quantitative descriptors of the attributes of the larger population of which the entities are members”.¹⁷³ The carefully designed

¹⁷² John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Fifth edition (LA: Sage, 2018), 206-11; Anthony James Veal, *Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism: A Practical Guide*, Third edition 2006, (Essex: Pearson education, 1992), 283.

¹⁷³ Robert M. Groves, Floyd J. Fowler, Jr., Mick Couper, James M. Lepkowski, Eleanor Singer, and Roger Tourangeau, *Survey Methodology* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2004), 2.

questionnaire provided statistical data essential for inferring how different dark tourism developments may affect Korean travellers' willingness to visit Japan. The questionnaire utilised attitude statement Likert-scales, which are commonly used to collect ordinal data that measure the level of respondents' agreement to a multitude of related topics that may include "questions of a philosophical or political nature".¹⁷⁴ Additional non-Likert scale questions were added to collect data on the variables of gender, age, occupation, relevant visitation history, and family home region. Finally, an optional comment section was added at the end of the questionnaire.

The questions and statements were developed based on the literature review, and a draft questionnaire (pilot test) was tested by four Korean test-respondents from my network to assess needs for improvements.¹⁷⁵ With feedback from the pilot test, Korean formulations in the questionnaire was refined for clarity, and the questions and statements were condensed and reduced from a number of 40 to 33 to prevent impatience or refusal to participate due to questionnaire volume.

Most of the Likert-scale statements regarding views of Japan were framed negatively (i.e. "the Japanese government *cannot* be trusted" rather than "the Japanese government *can* be trusted"). Some guidelines suggest that such framing should be avoided as it may influence responses. However, based on the literature review, discussions with the Korean participants of the pilot test, and my own observations in Korea it was deemed that, in this case, positive framing of statements regarding opinions on Japan could potentially influence responses to a higher degree. The reason is that Korean respondents with a low opinion of Japan's official interpretations of colonial history may feel urged to overstate disapproval of Japan to the visibly foreign researcher if they experience the statements to be biased in Japan's favour.

The final questionnaire was anonymous and self-administered, but personally distributed by the researcher who ensured no traceable personal data is collected in the survey. The first 100 questionnaires were distributed together with a volunteering PhD candidate from

¹⁷⁴ Charles Teddlie and Abbas Tashakkori 2009. *Foundations of Mixed Methods Research: Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. (LA: Sage, 2009), 203; Veal, *Research Methods*, 265.

¹⁷⁵ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 216.

SOAS University of London. The purpose of the survey was explained with full transparency to respondents, and details of its use was printed on the distributed questionnaires. As only untraceable anonymous data was collected, separate consent forms or collection of audio-recorded consent from survey respondents was omittable according to research guidelines.¹⁷⁶

It was essential that the sample method reached a high percentage of respondents from the target population, while significant exclusions of distinctive members of this population was avoided.¹⁷⁷ Respondents from the target population were selected by Seodaemun Prison based on simple random convenience sampling. Myself and my voluntary assistant always asked the first possible respondents seemingly fitting the sample frame to participate in the survey, avoiding selection of respondents on any other basis to maintain randomness of the samples and thus representability of the populations.¹⁷⁸ However, visitors who were clearly in haste, or who would otherwise obviously be inconvenienced by the researcher, were not approached for both ethical and practical reasons. Many people visited the prison with a high number of young children, but such groups were not approached if only one adult was present. It was made clear for respondents that only Koreans aged 18 and above were eligible for participation.

Regarding sample size, the collection 250 questionnaires were estimated to result in sufficient data for analysis. Sample size decisions for questionnaires must be made case-by-case based on the needs and limitations of the research, as there are no definitive answers to ideal sample sizes in survey methodology.¹⁷⁹ The above sample size decision of 250 respondents was based on available time and finances valued against acceptable error margins and includes estimates of unusable questionnaires due for example to flawed or incomplete responses. Collected complete and usable data from 200 respondents would produce 95% confidence intervals for variability attributable to sampling with a maximum margin of error of approximately $\pm 7\%$.¹⁸⁰ Doubling the

¹⁷⁶ SOAS Research & KE Delivery, Code of Practice for SOAS staff and students: Using Personal Data in Research. Available online at <https://www.soas.ac.uk/infocomp/dpa/dparesearch/file150710.pdf> (accessed 13 January 2021).

¹⁷⁷ Floyd Jackson Fowler Jr., *Survey Research Methods*. Fifth edition, (LA: Sage, 2004), 17.

¹⁷⁸ Veal, *Research Methods*, 285-6.

¹⁷⁹ Fowler, *Survey Research Methods*, 37-9.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 33-6; Veal, *Research Methods*, 290.

sample size would decrease the margin of error to approximately $\pm 5\%$, but this margin reduction is not essential for producing valid research data. As the questionnaires were personally distributed and collected by myself and anything unclear could be explained on the spot, a high rate of complete responses was expected.¹⁸¹ The distribution of 250 questionnaires ultimately resulted in a satisfactory number of 223 complete and valid responses.

The survey was cross-sectional, meaning data for each population were collected over a single period of time.¹⁸² A resource-consuming longitudinal survey conducted at multiple points in time could have been useful for observing attitude changes in the populations, but such observations were unviable for the limited research period and not required for answering the research questions. Three days were needed to distribute and collect the 250 questionnaires. 29, 161, and 60 questionnaires were distributed and collected, respectively, on 15, 20 and 21 August 2022.

VI.II Survey questions and response ratios

| A1 The Japanese government cannot be trusted | | |
|---|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Disagree | 2 | 0.9% |
| Neutral | 14 | 6.3% |
| Agree | 42 | 18.8% |
| Strongly agree | 165 | 74% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| A2 Japanese companies that used wartime forced labour can still not be trusted today | | |
|---|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Strongly disagree | 2 | 0.9% |
| Disagree | 3 | 1.3% |
| Neutral | 19 | 8.5% |
| Agree | 51 | 22.9% |
| Strongly agree | 148 | 66.4% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| A3 Japanese people should not be trusted | | |
|---|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Strongly disagree | 7 | 3.1% |
| Disagree | 50 | 22.4% |
| Neutral | 79 | 35.4% |
| Agree | 48 | 21.5% |
| Strongly agree | 39 | 17.5% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

¹⁸¹ Fowler, *Survey Research Methods*, 66-68.

¹⁸² Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 211.

| A4 UNESCO's influence or sense of responsibility is too low | | |
|--|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 0.4% |
| Disagree | 18 | 8.1% |
| Neutral | 52 | 23.3% |
| Agree | 103 | 46.2% |
| Strongly agree | 49 | 22% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| A5 The Japanese government sees Korea and Koreans as inferior | | |
|--|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Disagree | 12 | 5.4% |
| Neutral | 21 | 9.4% |
| Agree | 92 | 41.3% |
| Strongly agree | 98 | 43.9% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| A6 Japan is still an enemy country of Korea | | |
|--|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Strongly disagree | 12 | 5.4% |
| Disagree | 40 | 17.9% |
| Neutral | 62 | 27.8% |
| Agree | 74 | 33.2% |
| Strongly agree | 35 | 15.7% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| B1 UNESCO is responding sufficiently to Japan's history distortions | | |
|--|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |

| | | |
|-------------------|-----|-------|
| Strongly disagree | 54 | 24.2% |
| Disagree | 108 | 48.4% |
| Neutral | 31 | 13.9% |
| Agree | 19 | 8.5% |
| Strongly agree | 11 | 4.9% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| B2 I expect that Japan will correct their history distortions after being warned by UNESCO | | |
|---|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Strongly disagree | 71 | 31.8% |
| Disagree | 85 | 38.1% |
| Neutral | 21 | 9.4% |
| Agree | 28 | 12.6% |
| Strongly agree | 18 | 8.1% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| B3 UNESCO should cancel Japan's industrial World Heritage sites if no significant changes are made by December 2022 | | |
|--|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 0.4% |
| Disagree | 3 | 1.3% |
| Neutral | 21 | 9.4% |
| Agree | 42 | 18.8% |
| Strongly agree | 156 | 70% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| B4 If the Korean wartime victims are recognised in the World Heritage sites' official history, I'd be more inclined to visit Japan | | |
|---|--|--|
|---|--|--|

| | Number | Percent |
|-------------------|--------|---------|
| Strongly disagree | 5 | 2.2% |
| Disagree | 16 | 7.2% |
| Neutral | 40 | 17.9% |
| Agree | 107 | 48% |
| Strongly agree | 55 | 24.7% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

B5 If the Korean victims of wartime forced labour are officially recognised, Japanese people would protest

| | Number | Percent |
|----------------|--------|---------|
| Disagree | 40 | 17.9% |
| Neutral | 51 | 22.9% |
| Agree | 94 | 42.2% |
| Strongly agree | 38 | 17% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

C1 As a Korean, it is painful to know that foreigners who visit Japanese heritage sites where Korean forced labourers worked and died are not told about this history

| | Number | Percent |
|-------------------|--------|---------|
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 0.4% |
| Disagree | 1 | 0.4% |
| Neutral | 11 | 4.9% |
| Agree | 35 | 15.7% |
| Strongly agree | 175 | 78.5% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

C2 Even if Korean victims are recognised, Hashima should never be used as a tourism site (관광지). It should be forbidden out of respect for the victims

| | Number | Percent |
|--|--------|---------|
|--|--------|---------|

| | | |
|-------------------|-----|-------|
| Strongly disagree | 11 | 4.9% |
| Disagree | 52 | 23.3% |
| Neutral | 52 | 23.3% |
| Agree | 29 | 13% |
| Strongly agree | 79 | 35.4% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

C3 If foreigners visiting Korea are interested in history, I would recommend not only beautiful sites, but also educational sites related to colonial history

| | Number | Percent |
|----------------|--------|---------|
| Disagree | 1 | 0.4% |
| Neutral | 10 | 4.5% |
| Agree | 47 | 21.1% |
| Strongly agree | 165 | 74% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

C4 If foreigners visiting Korea are not interested in history, it does not matter if they do not hear about the colonial period

| | Number | Percent |
|-------------------|--------|---------|
| Strongly disagree | 71 | 31.8% |
| Disagree | 90 | 40.4% |
| Neutral | 36 | 16.1% |
| Agree | 21 | 9.4% |
| Strongly agree | 5 | 2.2% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

D1 There are times when I visit sites related to Korean death and tragedy to learn about history

| | Number | Percent |
|----------|--------|---------|
| Disagree | 7 | 3.1% |
| Neutral | 15 | 6.7% |
| Agree | 104 | 46.6% |

| | | |
|----------------|-----|-------|
| Strongly agree | 97 | 43.5% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| | | |
|----------------|-----|-------|
| Strongly agree | 110 | 49.3% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| D2 There are times when I visit sites related to Korean death and tragedy to pay my respect and commemorate victims | | |
|--|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 0.4% |
| Disagree | 12 | 5.4% |
| Neutral | 21 | 9.4% |
| Agree | 104 | 46.6% |
| Strongly agree | 85 | 38.1% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| D5 I have often heard the term "dark tourism" | | |
|--|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Strongly disagree | 20 | 9% |
| Disagree | 57 | 25.6% |
| Neutral | 37 | 16.6% |
| Agree | 68 | 30.5% |
| Strongly agree | 41 | 18.4% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| D3 There are times when I visit sites related to Korean death and tragedy just because of my friends/family | | |
|--|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Strongly disagree | 5 | 2.2% |
| Disagree | 47 | 21.1% |
| Neutral | 34 | 15.2% |
| Agree | 101 | 45.3% |
| Strongly agree | 36 | 16.1% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| E1 If the Japanese government recognises the Korean victims and corrects official history at the site, I may want to visit Hashima | | |
|---|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Strongly disagree | 4 | 1.8% |
| Disagree | 18 | 8.1% |
| Neutral | 25 | 11.2% |
| Agree | 101 | 45.3% |
| Strongly agree | 75 | 33.6% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| D4 If travelling abroad, I would consider visiting sites of other peoples' death and tragedy | | |
|---|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 0.4% |
| Disagree | 8 | 3.6% |
| Neutral | 16 | 7.2% |
| Agree | 88 | 39.5% |

| E2 If the chance arises, I would like to visit Hashima even now. If I need historical interpretations, I will find it myself | | |
|---|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Strongly disagree | 9 | 4% |
| Disagree | 29 | 13% |
| Neutral | 44 | 19.7% |
| Agree | 89 | 39.9% |
| Strongly agree | 52 | 23.3% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| E3 Even if the Japanese government does not recognise the victims, I would consider travelling to Hashima if guided by a knowledgeable Korean guide | | |
|--|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Strongly disagree | 14 | 6.3% |
| Disagree | 27 | 12.1% |
| Neutral | 41 | 18.4% |
| Agree | 97 | 43.5% |
| Strongly agree | 44 | 19.7% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| E6 In order to join a Hashima tour by a private actor, that tells the full story of forced labour on the island, I am open to pay a small travel tax to the Japanese government | | |
|--|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Strongly disagree | 45 | 20.2% |
| Disagree | 33 | 14.8% |
| Neutral | 54 | 24.2% |
| Agree | 70 | 31.4% |
| Strongly agree | 21 | 9.4% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| E4 Even if the Japanese government does not recognise the victims, I would consider travelling to Hashima on a non-government Japanese tour for paying respect and commemorate the Korean victims | | |
|--|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Strongly disagree | 22 | 9.9% |
| Disagree | 30 | 13.5% |
| Neutral | 43 | 19.3% |
| Agree | 84 | 37.7% |
| Strongly agree | 44 | 19.7% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| Gender | | |
|---------------|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Male | 108 | 48.4% |
| Female | 115 | 51.6% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| Age | | |
|-------------|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| 19~29 | 37 | 16.6% |
| 30~39 | 50 | 22.4% |
| 40~49 | 98 | 43.9% |
| 50 and over | 38 | 17% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| E5 Even if the Japanese government does not recognise the victims, I would consider travelling to Hashima if my friends or family planned the trip and invited me | | |
|--|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Strongly disagree | 38 | 17% |
| Disagree | 57 | 25.6% |
| Neutral | 45 | 20.2% |
| Agree | 62 | 27.8% |
| Strongly agree | 21 | 9.4% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| Seodaemun Prison History Hall visiting experience? | | |
|---|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Yes | 190 | 85.2% |
| No | 33 | 14.8% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| Japan travel experience | | |
|--------------------------------|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Yes | 125 | 56.1% |
| No | 98 | 43.9% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| Have you previously heard about Hashima (Battleship Island) which is part of the Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution? | | |
|---|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Not sure | 14 | 6.3% |
| Yes, I know | 209 | 93.7% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----|-------|
| Clerical/technical | 64 | 28.7% |
| Sales and Service | 10 | 4.5% |
| Common Labour | 5 | 2.2% |
| Self-employed | 12 | 5.4% |
| Housewife | 25 | 11.2% |
| Student | 16 | 7.2% |
| Specialist/ Freelance | 33 | 14.8% |
| Other | 28 | 12.6% |
| Total | 223 | 100% |

| Job category | | |
|---------------------|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Management | 30 | 13.5% |

| Home regions of respondents' parents | | | |
|---|------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| | One parent | Two parents | Total number of parents |
| Seoul | 13 (5.8%) | 27(12.1%) | 67 (15%) |
| Gyeonggi-do | 13 (5.8%) | 26 (11.7%) | 65 (14.6%) |
| Chungcheong-do | 16 (7.2%) | 22 (9.9%) | 60 (13.5%) |
| Jeolla-do | 16 (7.2%) | 42 (18.8%) | 100 (22.4%) |
| Jeju-do | 1 (0.4%) | 2 (0.9%) | 5 (1.1%) |
| Gyeongsang-do | 17 (7.6%) | 45 (20.2%) | 107 (24%) |
| Gangwon-do | 4 (1.8%) | 14 (6.3%) | 32 (7.2%) |
| North Korea | 2 (0.9%) | 2 (0.9%) | 6 (1.3%) |
| Other | 0 (0%) | 2 (0.9%) | 4 (0.9%) |
| | | | 446 (100%) |

VI.III Survey analysis

The quantitative survey data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. SPSS is a survey analysis software popular amongst students and professionals, and is recommended in popular research textbooks.¹ Basic descriptive statistics are expected to visualise the most essential data for this research. These statistics will provide answers regarding potential changes of the will of Koreans visit Japan in relation to dark tourism developments. Explanatory (or inferential) analysis was applied to further detail and visualise findings and to discover significant relations

¹ For example Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*; Veal, *Research Methods*.

between multiple variables. Relevant null hypotheses were created and rejected based on collected survey data, providing crucial parts of answers to the research questions.²

The qualitative data collected in the optional comments section were coded and analysed qualitatively utilising NVivo software. Qualitative data were not quantified for analysis, but findings from qualitative and quantitative data were compared and triangulated through side-by-side analysis.³

As all respondents identified as either male or female, the gender category of “other” was removed from the data set and analysis. There were five selectable age groups, but as only nine respondents marked their age group as “60 and above,” this group was collapsed and merged with the group “age 50 to 59” and renamed as “50 and above.” The question about knowledge of Hashima had three options, “not sure,” “yes, I know,” and “yes, I have been there,” but as only two respondents answered they had been there this group was collapsed and merged with “yes, I know.”

The questionnaire also asked participants to note the birth area of each of their parents (Seoul, Gyeonggi-do, Chungcheong-do, Jeolla-do, Jeju-do, Gyeongsang-do, Gangwon-do, North Korea, Japan, other). A skewed distribution was anticipated, but some areas like Jeju and North Korea was represented only by the parents of a few respondents making them invalid for analysis. The idea behind the question was to explore relations between respondents’ evaluation of the Likert-scale statements and the birth area of their parents, considering Korean political regionalism and assuming factors like the political influence of parents. In the case of Jeolla-do and Gyeongsang-do, well-known for their opposite political polarisations, both parents of 42 respondents had their hometowns in the former, while both parents of 45 respondents had their hometowns in the latter. However, a Mann-Whitney test found no statistical significance between these two groups in relation to any of the Likert-scale statement responses in the questionnaire, making the variable redundant for the purpose of this research.

Descriptive statistical analysis of the questionnaire results produced highly valuable and

² Teddlie and Tashakkori, *Foundations of Mixed Methods*, 225-7.

³ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 301.

revealing data because the survey questions relate directly to the research questions. In addition, inferential statistical analysis visualises trends of the sample and infers hidden properties of the population. Descriptive and inferential data is explored and combined in the following analysis. The five levels of agreement for each of the Likert-scale statements (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree) are often collapsed into three levels (disagree, neutral, agree) for clarity in the analysis. When only a ratio for how many agreed is given, it is the total ratio of “agree” and “strongly agree.” The Likert-scale data are considered as ordinal, not interval, and non-parametric tests were applied accordingly.

VI.III.I Sample population

The survey resulted in the collection of valid and complete questionnaire responses from 223 Korean respondents over 18 years of age, randomly approached outside Seodaemun Prison. As illustrated in Table A below, the ratios of male and female respondents were nearly even. There were also similar numbers of respondents who had visited Japan and respondents who had not. Because this variable was hypothesised to have a high level of correlation to respondents’ willingness to visit the Japanese case study sites, as well as to their image of Japanese people and government, a high number of respondents in each group was beneficial for producing robust detailed data.

As the survey was conducted near the visitor’s entrance to Seodaemun Prison, some respondents were on their way inside for the first time, while some others passed without intention to visit. At the time of survey participation, 85.2% had already visited the former prison at least once. 93.7% of respondents reported that they knew about Hashima Island. This skewed distribution was anticipated, and the questionnaire was designed for a population sample of which the large majority had visited a Korean site of dark tourism (Seodaemun Prison), and which shared collective memories of wartime forced labour on Hashima and elsewhere.

Table A – Experience and knowledge

| Variables | Categories and populations | Total |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
|------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Gender | Male: 108 (48.4%) | Female: 115 (51.6%) | 223 (100%) |
| Japan travel experience | No: 98 (43.9%) | Yes: 125 (56.1%) | 223 (100%) |
| Seodaemun Prison visiting experience | No: 33 (14.8%) | Yes: 190 (85.2%) | 223 (100%) |
| Knowledge of Hashima | No: 14 (6.3%) | Yes: 209 (93.7%) | 223 (100%) |

The populations of the four age groups are similar except for age group 40 to 49, which is approximately twice the size of the three other groups (43.9% of the total respondents). As shown in Table B, the distribution of professions is skewed, with “clerical/technical” being the most populous (28.7%), and “common labour” the least (2.2%). Several job categories lacked younger respondents, while all students who responded were in the age group 19 to 29. The skewed distribution of the sample is considered a reflection of the target population. This distribution violates the assumptions of parametric statistical tests, but the data is well suited for non-parametric analysis.

Table B – Job category distribution

| Job category | | Age | | | | Total |
|-----------------------|--|-------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|
| | | 19~29 | 30~39 | 40~49 | 50 and over | |
| Management | | 0 | 11 | 13 | 6 | 30 |
| Clerical/technical | | 10 | 15 | 31 | 8 | 64 |
| Sales and Service | | 2 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 10 |
| Common Labour | | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Self-employed | | 0 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 12 |
| Housewife | | 0 | 5 | 14 | 6 | 25 |
| Student | | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 |
| Specialist/ Freelance | | 2 | 9 | 17 | 5 | 33 |
| Other | | 7 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 28 |
| Total | | 37 | 50 | 98 | 38 | 223 |

VI.III.II Levels of trust in Japan and UNESCO (A and B statements)

Responses to the first 11 statements (A1 to B5) produced data on respondents’ level of trust in Japan and UNESCO to rectify distorted history at the Meiji Industrial Sites, as

well as general trust in Japan's government and people. 92.8% of the sample population agreed with statement A1, "the Japanese government cannot be trusted," while 89.2% agreed with A2, "Japanese companies that used wartime forced labour can still not be trusted today." In comparison 39% agreed with statement A3 "Japanese people should not be trusted." Seodaemun Prison may have evoked or enhanced negative collective memories that affected the respondents' evaluations of the questionnaire statements. However, as only a minority agreed with the xenophobic general statement about Japanese people, the majority's mistrust in the Japanese government and companies with wartime forced labour history is unlikely to reflect xenophobia or racism.

Spearman's rank correlation was computed to assess statistically significant relationships between the age of respondents and their level of agreement to the questionnaire statements. For all three statements above, the level of agreement increased with the age of respondents (A1 $r = .203$, $p = .002$, A2 $r = .233$, $p < .001$, A3 $r = .279$, $p < .001$). For example, while only 5.4% of respondents in age group 19 to 29 "strongly agree" that "Japanese people should not be trusted," 39.5% of respondents over age 50 "strongly agree" with the same statement. Based on this, it is not surprising that a Kruskal-Wallis test assessing correlation with job categories found that students were the least mistrusting of the Japanese government, companies and people. All students in the sample population belong to the youngest age group, and a comparison between responses of students and everyone on the youngest age group did not result in significant differences.

The Mann-Whitney test unexpectedly found no association between respondent's travel experience in Japan and their evaluation of any of the first 11 statements. However, the same test visualised how respondents who had not heard about Hashima were much less likely to agree with statements of mistrust in the Japanese government, companies, and people. For example as shown in table C below, out of respondents who knew about Hashima (mean rank = 114.78), 16.7% agreed and 76.6% strongly agreed that Japan's government cannot be trusted, while the equivalent ratios for those who did not know Hashima (mean rank = 70.46) were 50% and 35.7% ($U = 881.5$, $p = .001$). The correlation should not be interpreted as causative, but it is interesting nonetheless for its implication that Koreans devoting less attention to local news media (in which Hashima has been a

recurring topic for about a decade), have a lower level of mistrust in Japan.

Table C Hashima knowledge and Japanese government trust crosstabulation

Have you previously heard about Hashima (Battleship Island) which is part of the Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution? * A1 The Japanese government cannot be trusted Crosstabulation

| | | | A1 The Japanese government cannot be trusted | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---------|-------|----------------|--------|
| | | | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
| Have you previously heard about Hashima (Battleship Island) which is part of the Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution? | Not sure | Count | 0 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 14 |
| | | % within Have you previously heard about Hashima (Battleship Island) which is part of the Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution? | 0.0% | 14.3% | 50.0% | 35.7% | 100.0% |
| | Yes, I know | Count | 2 | 12 | 35 | 160 | 209 |
| | | % within Have you previously heard about Hashima (Battleship Island) which is part of the Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution? | 1.0% | 5.7% | 16.7% | 76.6% | 100.0% |
| Total | Count | 2 | 14 | 42 | 165 | 223 | |
| | % within Have you previously heard about Hashima (Battleship Island) which is part of the Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution? | 0.9% | 6.3% | 18.8% | 74.0% | 100.0% | |

The large majority (85.2%) agreed that “the Japanese government sees Korea and Koreans as inferior.” Approximately half of the respondents (48.9%) still considered Japan an enemy country of Korea. Only 17.9% disagreed that “if the Korean victims of wartime forced labour are officially recognised, people of Japan would protest.” This data implies that most respondents have sensed racial discrimination from the Japanese government possibly perceived as anti-Korean, and that these respondents believe that Japanese people in general actively support their government’s official denialism of war crimes against Koreans.

About one fifth (20.6%) of respondents expected Japan to correct relevant history distortions after being officially warned by UNESCO. A ratio of 20% is perhaps somewhat high when examining the data above. However, considering that only 13% agreed that “UNESCO is responding sufficiently to Japan’s history distortions,” it becomes clear that most of the sample population holds both Japan and UNESCO responsible for the continuation of history distortions at the relevant Japanese World

Heritage sites. 88.8% agreed that UNESCO should cancel the World Heritage inscription of the Meiji Industrial Sites if no significant changes are made by UNESCO's inspection in December 2022. The outcome of this inspection is thus likely to affect many Koreans' evaluations of not only the Japanese government, but also of UNESCO itself.

When asked if the respondents would be more inclined to visit Japan in the case of official Japanese recognition of the Korean wartime victims relevant to Japan's industrial Heritage Sites, 9.4% disagreed, 17.9% were neutral, and 72.6% agreed. In this event, which appears unlikely in the near future, the Meiji Industrial Sites would per definition be official sites of dark tourism. No statistical significance could be found between level of agreement and variables such as age, gender, travel experience in Japan etc. Accordingly, the survey data reveals that official dark tourism developments at Japan's industrial World Heritage sites with Korean forced labour history would effectively increase Koreans willingness to visit Japan.

Gender had little significance in the respondents' evaluation of these 11 statements (A1 to B5). A Mann-Whitney test found statistical significance in the correlation between these statements and gender only for statement A2 and B4. Women agreed to a greater extent (mean rank = 119.28) than men (mean rank = 104.25) that "Japanese companies that used wartime forced labour can still not be trusted today (A2)" ($U = 5372.5, p = .037$). Men agreed to a greater extent (mean rank = 120.24) than women (mean rank = 104.27) with the statement "if the Korean wartime victims are recognised in the World Heritage sites' official history, I'd be more inclined to visit Japan (B4)" ($U = 5320.5, p = .047$). In general, Korean women and men trust Japan and UNESCO to the same, or near same extents.

The job category variable proved statistically significant in relation to responses to only a few of the total questionnaire statements. Apart from students, which responses reflect the young age group of the sample student population, the responses from the "management" job category stood out. For statements A1, A2 and A6 about not trusting the Japanese government (A1), not trusting companies with forced labour history (A2), and seeing Japan as an enemy country of Korea (A3), managers consistently agreed (A1 83.3%, A2 80%, A6 36.7%) significantly less than the sample's average (A1 92.8%, A2

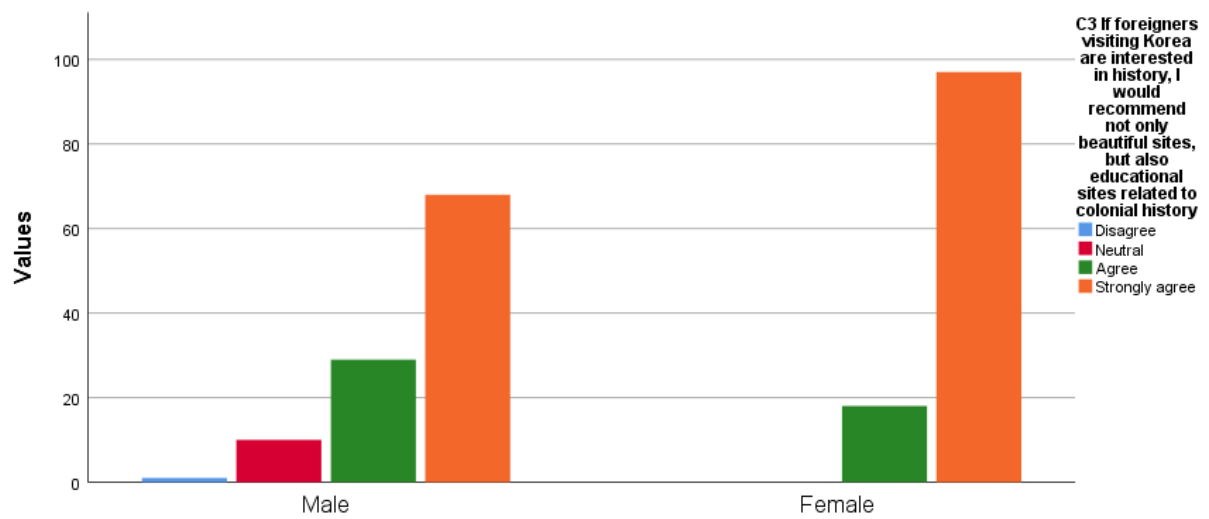
89.2%, 48.9%). The same is true for responses to statement B3 “UNESCO should cancel Japan's industrial World Heritage sites if no significant changes are made by December 2022” (Manager agree ratio 70%, sample average agree ratio 88.8%). Due to their work experience, the respondents in management positions may habitually lean towards more diplomatic viewpoints and solutions in complex conflicts.

VI.III.III Perspectives on foreigners and dark tourism (C statements)

The next four statements, C1 to C4, relate to Korean opinions on foreigners and tourism sites relevant to Japan’s colonisation of Korea. 15.7% and 78.5% of the sample agreed and strongly agreed, respectively (total 94.2%), with the statement “as a Korean, it is painful to know that foreigners who visit Japanese heritage sites where Korean forced labourers worked and died are not told about this history” (C1). 21.1% and 74% agreed and strongly agreed with the statement “if foreigners visiting Korea are interested in history, I would recommend not only beautiful sites, but also educational sites related to colonial history” (C3). Only 9.4% and 2.2% agreed and strongly agreed with the statement “if foreigners visiting Korea are not interested in history, it does not matter if they do not hear about the colonial period” (C4). From a Korean perspective considering Japan’s colonial occupation a dark and tragic period, thinking and learning about this period at tourism sites in Japan and/or Korea can be defined as dark tourism. One way to interpret this data, is that most Koreans believe dark tourism (whether they know this term or not) is essential, not only when visiting Japanese sites like those of the Meiji Industrial Revolution, but also for all foreign tourists who visit Korea without knowledge of Japanese colonialism. A Mann-Whitney test interestingly assessed that for statement C1 and C3, women (mean rank = 119.68 and 124.41) agreed even more than men (mean rank = 103.82 and 98.79), $U = 5327$ and 4783 , $p = .010$ and $< .001$), but no statistical significance was found in relation to gender for statement C4.

Table D – Recommendations for colonial memory sites by gender

Bar graph of C3 responses divided by gender



Responses to statement C2, “even if Korean victims are recognised, Hashima should never be used as a tourism site (*gwangwangji*)—tourism should be forbidden out of respect for the victims” is contradictory to the above, as 48.4% of the sample population agreed. This also contradicts responses to statement E1 in which case 78.9% agreed they may want to visit Hashima if its official history is corrected. Furthermore, computing Spearman’s rank correlation on E1 and B3, “UNESCO should cancel Japan's industrial World Heritage sites if no significant changes are made by December 2022” found a positive relationship ($r = .158$ $p = .018$), confirming that the majority of respondents see value in Hashima as a (dark) tourism site if its full history is acknowledged and presented to visitors. Native Korean speakers consulted after obtaining these results confirmed that the Korean word for tourism site, “*gwangwangji*”, is understood by many Koreans as a place associated with fun and leisure. Like its Japanese equivalent “*kankō*,” the Korean word can be literally translated as “observing the brightness,” a word which etymology reflects a traditional culture that did not value the ideas of dark tourism.⁴ As the Korean formulation of statement C2 is likely to have caused misunderstandings, received responses for C2 are considered invalid.

VI.III.IV Koreans and dark tourism (D statements)

Statement D1 to D5 were designed to obtain data on the Korean respondents’ relationship

⁴ Ide Akira, *Dāku tsūrizumu kakuchō - Kindai no sai-kōchiku [Dark tourism expansion: Reconstruction of modern history]* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha 2018), 228.

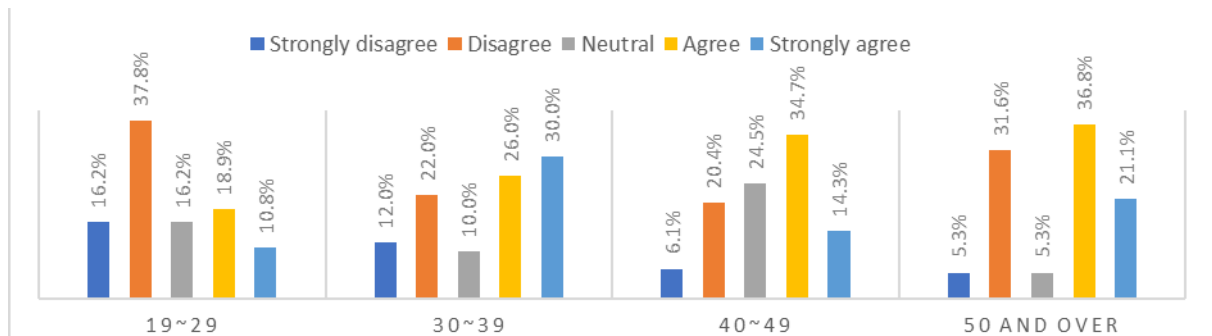
to dark tourism. D1 to D3 states “there are times when I visit sites related to Korean death and tragedy to: 1) learn about history, 2) pay my respect to the victims, 3) join family/friends.” Total ratios of both degrees of agreement for these statements were 1) 90.1%, 2) 84.8%, and 3) 61.4%. Cross-tabulation clarified that out of the population who sometimes visits such dark tourism sites because of family/friends, 97.8% would also sometimes go to learn about history, and 94.2% would also sometimes go to pay respect and commemorate victims. In other words, almost all Koreans approached outside Seodaemun Prison at times engage in (domestic) dark tourism for a variety of reasons. A total of 88.8% agreed with statement D4, “if travelling abroad, I would consider visiting sites of other peoples' death and tragedy.” Most Koreans engaging in dark tourism domestically are open to dark tourism abroad as well, especially women (D4 Mann-Whitney test women mean rank = 124.46, men mean rank = 98.74, $U = 4777.5$, $p = .001$).

In a survey conducted at the Historic Park of Geoje POW Camp in 2018, only 15.5% of respondents knew the term dark tourism.⁵ In the case of this 2022 survey in front of Seodaemun Prison, 48.8% agreed and 34.5% disagreed with statement D5, “I have often heard the term ‘dark tourism.’” Respondents who had not yet visited Seodaemun Prison were less familiar with dark tourism (in this group, 30.3% agreed, 54.5% disagreed with statement D5). A higher age did not correlate with less familiarity with the term (Spearman $r = .114$ $p = .090$), with 57.9% of all respondents over 50 years of age agreeing with the statement. In fact, as evident from table E below, the youngest age group was the least familiar with the term, possibly due to their extent and form of travel experiences. It is possible that dark tourism is less known outside the capital of Seoul. However, comparing responses of the two surveys strongly indicate that while the term dark tourism is still less known in Korea compared to Koreans engaging in tourism that matches its definition, the term is rapidly becoming better known.

Table E – Bar graph of D5 ‘I have often heard the term “dark tourism” responses divided

⁵ Yang Jinyeon, “Geoje P.O.W yongso bangmungaegui dakeu tu-eorijeum inshige gwanhan tamseokjeong yeon-gu [An Exploratory Study on Visitors’ Perceptions of Dark Tourism in Geoje P.O.W(Prisoner-of-war) Camp]”. *Hangukgwangwanghakhoe haksulbalpyodaehoe*, 50 (2018), 146

by age groups”



VI.III.V Willingness to visit Hashima (E statements)

The last six statements, E1 to E6, revolves around willingness to visit Hashima island. As previously mentioned 78.9% agreed with statement E1, “If the Japanese government recognises the Korean victims and corrects official history at the site, I may want to visit Hashima.” However, Japanese official recognition of Mitsubishi’s wartime victims at Hashima was not essential for the majority of respondents to consider travelling there. A high ratio of 63.2% agreed that if the chance arise, they may visit Hashima regardless, as they can find any necessary historical interpretations themselves (E2). Even so, Spearman’s rank correlation assessed a positive relationship between E2 and B4, “if the Korean wartime victims are recognised in the World Heritage sites' official history, I'd be more inclined to visit Japan.” Rather than a trip in protest of Japan’s denialism, the majority of Korean’s who would consider a trip to Hashima despite history distortions would prefer to travel in the event official history is corrected.

Surprisingly, the exact same ratio as above, 63.2%, agreed with E3, “Even if the Japanese government does not recognise the victims, I would consider travelling to Hashima if guided by a knowledgeable Korean guide.” Similarly, 57.4% agreed they would consider travelling to Hashima on a non-government Japanese tour for paying respect and commemorate Korean victims (E4). However, only 37.2% agreed with E5 “even if the Japanese government does not recognise the victims, I would consider travelling to Hashima if my friends or family planned the trip and invited me.” The majority of respondents may consider a visit to Hashima to learn about and/or commemorate wartime Korean victims of the site (independently or with a guide), but not in the case of simply following family/friends. The data indicates that while there exist a certain market for

non-official dark tourism tours of places in Japan like Hashima, the potential existence of such travel options would not at the time of data collection greatly affect Korean's willingness and/or intent to visit.

The above data does not indicate whether the existence of non-official Hashima dark tourism tours would help popularise the idea and encourage more Koreans to visit. Computing Spearman's rank correlation on statements D1 to E6 assessed that with the exception of E5, higher acquaintance of the term dark tourism (D5) correlated with more experience and intent to visit dark tourism sites for all instances described in the statements (D1 $r = .374$, $p < .001$; D2 $r = .313$, $p < .001$; D3 $r = .211$, $p = .002$; D4 $r = .305$, $p < .001$; E1 $r = .185$, $p = .006$; E2 $r = .237$, $p < .001$; E3 $r = .174$, $p = .009$; E4 $r = .182$, $p = .006$; E6 $r = .201$, $p = .003$). From this it can be inferred that development and promotion of dark tourism from Korea to Hashima and other similar Japanese sites would have a positive effect on potential Korean visitors' willingness to engage.

Response ratios for the last statement in the questionnaire confirm a major obstacle for unofficial Korean dark tourism on Hashima. In response to E6, "in order to join a Hashima tour by a private actor that tells the full story of forced labour on the island, I am open to pay a small travel tax to the Japanese government," totally 35% disagreed, 24.2% were neutral, and 40% agreed. One cannot disembark on Hashima Island without paying a small tax of 310 JPY (as of October 2022) per person collected on behalf of the government by the responsible tour company. Larger numbers of Koreans visiting Hashima could increase local and international attention towards Korean memory suppressed by the Japanese government, but at the same time the Japanese government would collect more resources from visiting Koreans that may be used to further suppress Korean memory.

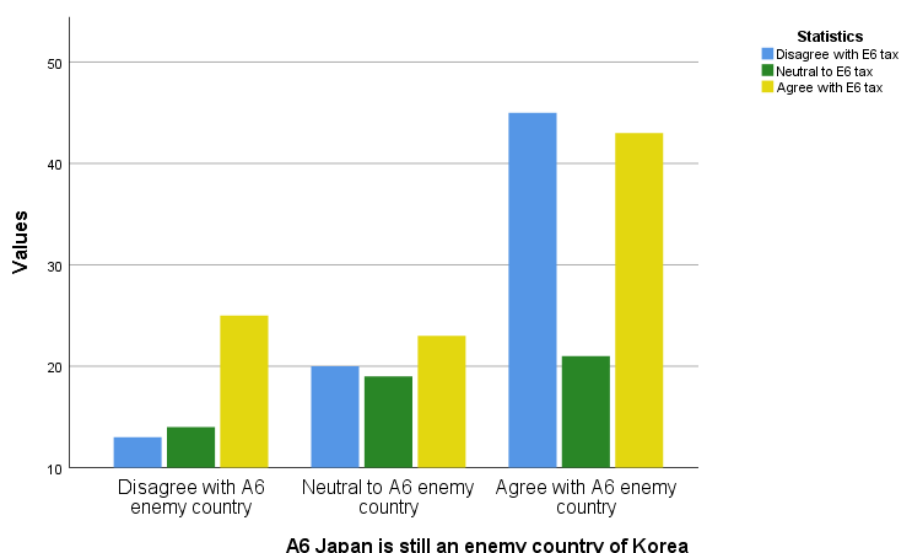
By means of Spearman's rank correlation, it was found a positive relationship between A6 and D5, "I have often heard the term 'dark tourism'" ($r = .201$, $p = .003$). The reason those more familiar with the term dark tourism are more willing to pay the Hashima tax may be that they have a clearer idea of the purpose and value of visiting such a site and that this value outweighs the downside of having to pay the tax to the Japanese government. Unofficial dark tourism programmes and guidebooks catering to Korean travellers who

may not be very familiar with dark tourism would benefit from presenting moral dilemmas like the Hashima tax issue. With arguments for both travelling and not travelling, each potential visitor can make an informed decision based on their values. By extension, any potential Korean tour itinerary of Japan focussed on memories of Korean suffering denied by the Japanese government could benefit from providing an explanation for the choice of encouraging travel to Japan despite it inducing a need to pay Japanese taxes amidst its “history war” against Korea.

Continuing Spearman’s rank correlation, a negative relationship was assessed between E6 regarding Hashima tax and A6, “Japan is still an enemy country of Korea” (see table E), suggesting Koreans who see Japan as an enemy are less likely to engage in dark tourism in Japan due to taxes going to the “enemy country” ($r = -.150, p = 0.26$). In addition, Spearman’s rank correlation found a positive relationship between A6 and C3, “if foreigners visiting Korea are interested in history, I would recommend not only beautiful sites, but also educational sites related to colonial history,” ($r = .191, p = .004$) and a negative relationship between A6 and C4, “If foreigners visiting Korea are not interested in history, it does not matter if they do not hear about the colonial period” ($r = -.178, p = .008$). Koreans who see Japan as an enemy are highly likely to recommend foreigners in Korea to engage in dark tourism, but they are less likely to consider dark tourism in Japan for themselves.

Table F – Japan as an enemy country and tourist taxes

Responses to E6 "In order to join a Hashima tour by a private actor, that tells the full story of forced labour on the island, I am open to pay a small travel tax to the Japanese government" divided by responses to A6



VI.III.VI Comments from respondents

Respondents were informed in writing at the end of the questionnaire that in the case they wished to share a comment or opinion, they may voice it directly or write it on the questionnaire paper. This information in Korean was formulated similarly to the above, clearly stating that any comments are optional. The formulation was intended to remove pressure on respondents to come up with a comment and facilitate the collection of only sincere messages respondents felt worthy of communicating. Out of the 223 valid questionnaire responders, 43 chose to leave a written message. The majority of comments were expressions of gratitude and messages of encouragement.

A detailed description of the purpose of the questionnaire was printed at its beginning, but in order to catch the attention of potential respondents, I initially explained verbally that the questionnaire results would be used in this thesis to introduce Korean perspectives on Japanese history distortions to a non-Korean audience. Messages of gratefulness and encouragement may have been influenced by perceptions of myself as “pro-Korean” (and possibly “anti-Japanese”). As comments revealed, some respondents believed in the existence of a “correct history,” and it was implied it can be found in Korea. Some respondents may have compelled to leave messages of encouragement or gratefulness due to their possible perception of a foreign researcher raising awareness of disputed “Korean truths” abroad. 12 of the 43 comments included or consisted of phrases of encouragement,

most of were translatable as “keep up the hard work” (“*sugo haseyo*”, “*sugo ga maneusimnida*”, “*hwaiting*” etc.).

21 of the 43 comments were or included messages of appreciation. Seven of these were unspecified, six expressed gratefulness for my interest in Korean history, and four specified gratefulness for this research being conducted. In addition, there were two messages of gratefulness for my perceived efforts to spread “correct history,” and one expressed gratefulness for how the questionnaire had made the respondent think about Hashima. Expressions of gratefulness for “interest” in Korean history acknowledge and welcome my foreignness as a researcher. It may also imply surprise that a (non-Asian) foreigner perceives Korean colonial history as a significant topic of exploration. If “correct history” is perceived as being known and accessible in Korea, messages of gratefulness for such history being spread are also acknowledging the foreignness of this research’s audience and implies a wish for Korean “correct” history to become better known outside the country.

One message of appreciation by a man in his forties read “Thank you! I’m ashamed!” (“*Gamsa hamnida! Bukkeureopseumnida!*”). While the cause of shame is not specified, it appears the respondent perceived Korea-Japan disputes to be a problem for Korea to solve unilaterally or with Japan bilaterally, resulting in a feeling of shame over the perception of a foreign researcher wanting to aid what may be perceived as the incomplete work of Koreans. If so, the shame may be linked to an inferiority complex. Another man in his fifties commented “keep up the hard work. You are a praiseworthy foreigner” (“*Sugo haseyo. Oegukbuni daegyeon haseyo*”). The phrase “*daegyeon haseyo*”, translated as “praiseworthy”, cannot be used towards seniors and is often used to express feelings of content, satisfaction and pride in the work of someone younger. Using this expression together with “foreigner” reveals the speaker’s sense of superiority. Both these middle-aged Korean men expressed gratefulness and inferred surprise that a foreigner collected Korean opinions on a Korea-Japan history dispute, but these feelings were accompanied by contrasting senses of shame and pride. The foreignness of myself the researcher was experienced as the gaze of an ethnic and national outgroup, which prompted some Korean respondents to evaluate their ingroup in contrasting ways.

Eight written comments described hope that this research would contribute to bring international awareness of the “correct history” or the “historical truths” of Japan’s colonial occupation of Korea. Most formulations signalled unequivocal dichotomous views of Korea knowing “correct history” while being the victim of Japanese history distortions. Comments like “please make Japanese atrocities known” (*Ilbonui manhaengeul allyeojuseyo*) pointed out Japan as a perpetrator. In addition to these, others noted their hopes that Japan would repent for its history distortions. However, there were also a few similar comments with more diplomatic expressions, such as “I hope Korean perspectives will be properly conveyed” (*Hangugui ipjangi jal jeondaldoegil baramnida*), and “please help to develop Korea-Japan [relations] with good research results” (*Joeun yeongugyeolgwaro haniryanggugui balcheone doumjuseyo*). The last example being the only exception, these comments reveal interpretations of Korean perspectives on colonial history being undermined by Japan for global bystanders.

The idea that “correct history” has been compiled and is freely available in Korea can exacerbate the feeling of being victimised by both the Japanese government and the Japanese people because the core of the dispute appears to be that Japanese people accept Japanese history textbooks with obvious pro imperialist anti-Korean propaganda. Such ideas and feelings are exemplified in comments like “I don’t understand why it is so difficult for the Japanese to admit their faults. All they have to do is to acknowledge the truth” (*Ilboni jagideureui jalmoeseul injeonghaneun geoshi wae geuri eoryeoun irinji moreugesseumnida. Ddak sashilman injeonghamyeon doeneun geoseuryo*) and “in this age in which any distorted history can be easily recognised, I cannot understand how learning from distorted history textbooks causes young Japanese people to continue holding distorted history perceptions” (*eolmadeun waegokdoen yeoksareul baro al su inneun shidaee ajikdo waegokdoen gyogwaseoreul baeundaneun iyuro ajikdo waegokdoen yeoksainshigeul gatgoinneun ilbon'gungmin jeolmeunideureul ihaehal su eopta*). In contrast, comments from two respondents who did not blame the general Japanese public conveyed a lower level of frustration: “the problem is in the attitude of the Japanese government, so it is not the case that I have unconditional negative feelings towards Japan and its people” (*Ilbonjeongbueui taedoga munjeji ilbonina, ilbonine daehae mujogeonjeogin akgamjeongi inneun'geon anieyo*), “there is a large gap between

the history perceptions of politicians and regular people” (“*Jeongchiin'gwa ilbanineui yeoksainshigeun chaiga keuda*”).

Only two respondents shared ideas for how others than the Japanese can contribute to solve the history dispute. Both these respondents suggested that the Japanese government is unlikely to acknowledge history distortions without outside pressure. One specified the need for international pressure, while the other noted “comfort women” lawsuits as an example of essential civilian solidarity and continuous efforts. These comments condemn Japanese history distortions and call for outside pressure to facilitate change from the outside. Others implied hopes for Japan to change within, like a woman in her forties who commented that “I wish Japan would repent and educate itself!” (*Ilboni banseonghago seuseuroreul gyoyukkamyeon jokketta!*). Nobody suggested a need for joint historical interpretations, and nobody expressed doubts over accusations of Japanese history distortions. Received comments revealed an undisputed collective idea of Japan deliberately denying their history of colonial aggression against an innocent Korea.

Vocal comments received from respondents while conducting the survey reflected those of the written comments. The majority of vocal comments were expressions of gratitude and encouragement, many complimenting my dedication to my fieldwork despite the hot August weather. Several respondents said that this research is significant and important, and one even offered to hand out a large amount of questionnaires to employees in their company (offer declined). One couple recognised me from previous appearances on Korean television and expressed support for the choice of conducting this research. No comments towards me or this research were negative, except from a few respondents who complained that the questionnaire was too long.

Many respondents voiced surprise that a foreigner was conducting this research. Several respondents sought confirmation that I was indeed a Korean studies scholar in the UK who had travelled all the way to Korea for research. Respondents also expressed surprise and complimented my Korean language capabilities. One respondent said they know SOAS, University of London and was extremely pleased that one of its students was conducting this research. One of the respondents who commented on the perceived significance of this research was a journalist and asked permission to mention the

questionnaire in a news story about Seodaemun Prison and the National Liberation Day of Korea. About one third of the resulting brief news article was allocated to report on the fact that a researcher from SOAS, University of London had come to survey Korean opinions on Hashima, Japan and its government, and travel to Japan.⁶ The widely expressed surprise over a foreigner conducting this research signals beliefs that foreigners are not interested in Korean history and that the interpretation of Korean colonial history is a Korea-Japanese issue.

Although more than half (15 out of 26) of the Likert-scale statements in the questionnaire revolved around dark tourism and travelling, only one single respondent left a comment relevant to this theme: “I think there is much to learn from visiting [sites of colonial period Korean suffering in Japan]” (“*bangmuneuroseo baeul geotdo mantago saenggakkamnida*”). The lack of comments addressing narratives and visitation to relevant sites imply that in the eyes of most who commented, revealing and correcting Japanese colonial history distortions is important, but (dark) tourism narratives are relatively insignificant both as subjects and tools for change and improvement.

VI.III.VII Discussion and Conclusion

Analysing the survey results gave invaluable insights into the opinions of the sample population, which can be projected onto the whole population in order to partially answer the research questions. “population” refers to Koreans in close vicinity of a dark tourism site (Seodaemun Prison). Thus, the survey data cannot directly be projected onto the whole population of Korea to indicate exact ratios of level of interest in dark tourism or evaluations of Japan and UNESCO. As intended, the survey was successful for evaluating potentials of various forms of dark tourism developments related to colonial history from the perspective of Koreans who participate in or are aware of (dark) tourism at sites of painful collective memory. This perspective examined by quantitative means produced data that fills the gaps in the qualitative research conducted for this thesis.

⁶ Choe Jongdae, *Gwangbokjeol maja seodaemunhyeongmusoyeoksagwan chajeun simindeul* [Citizens visiting Seodaemun Prison History Hall on National Liberation Day], *M economy news*, 15 August 2022.) http://m-economynews.com/news/article_print.html?no=34624 (accessed 16 November 2022)

About nine out of ten respondents were emotionally burdened by the perception that the memory of Korean suffering is concealed for foreigners visiting relevant sites in Japan (C1 94.2%), and felt that UNESCO should cancel World Heritage inscriptions of Japanese sites if wartime victims are not officially acknowledged (B3 88.8%). This speaks to this research's sub-question revolving around the ingroups' extent of interest in historical narratives at tourism sites dissonant to their own in their outgroup's country. Analysis of survey data confirms that the Korean target population have a high level of interest in Japanese official history at relevant sites due to how Japan's interpretations easily give Koreans a sense of the colonial perpetrator denying the memories of victims of the Korean ingroup, and because of the significance of Japan feeding bystanders (foreign visitors) with celebratory narratives ignoring Japan's responsibilities towards its colonial victims. The high level of interest is especially clear in data from statements A4, B1, B3, B4, and C1 analysed above.

Another research sub-question asks how and to what extent marginalised narratives can be introduced to tourism sites relevant to Asia's "history problem" in Japan and Korea, and what factors complicate dark tourism development at such sites. The survey data provides Korean perspectives of sites in Japan. The paragraphs above described how the majority of potential Korean visitors to dark tourism sites in Japan are acceptive of both official and unofficial tours operated by Korean and also Japanese operators, as well as being capable of self-driven dark tourism (gathering necessary information independently). Thus, for a Korean audience, marginalised narratives at such tourism sites can be introduced off-site through various media (guidebooks, websites, newspapers, television programmes, private museums etc), and on-site by private companies or organisations, as well as by the government. As mentioned, a multitude of times within this thesis, the most significance obstacle to introducing Korean marginalised memories at dark tourism sites in Japan is that the Japanese government is actively waging a "history war" against Korea, making Japanese official dark tourism tours of relevant sites appear completely unrealistic for the foreseeable future.

As discussed in the analysis, respondents who knew about Hashima had less trust in the Japanese government, Japanese companies with wartime forced labour history, and

Japanese people in general. Especially the mistrust in Japanese people should be seen as an obstacle for Korean dark tourism in Japan. While traveling may be the best cure for xenophobia, general travel experience in Japan did not significantly affect Koreans' levels of mistrust, even in the Japanese people. As the data analysis confirmed, the majority of respondents' mistrust in Japan appear to be not based on xenophobia, considering only a minority of 39% agreed with the xenophobic statement "Japanese people should not be trusted" while about nine out of ten did not trust the Japanese government (A1 92.8%) or companies with forced labour history (A2 89.2%).

Although most younger respondents' mistrust in Japanese people was lower, the total respondent ratio of 39% is still very high for mistrust in the people of a neighbouring nation. It can logically be assumed that if private Japanese companies and organisations develop options for Korean dark tourism in Japan opposing official narratives, Korean participants would evaluate Japanese people differently than on a standard visit to the country. In such a case, mistrust in the Japanese people may be reduced, but mistrust in the Japanese government could increase even more as this dark tourism would attract further attention to the government's denialism.

Another significant obstacle discussed in the analysis using Hashima as an example is that paying taxes in Japan is necessary for visiting many dark tourism sites in the country, while especially Koreans who see Japan as an enemy country are reluctant to pay such taxes. Approximately half the respondents saw Japan as an enemy country (A6 48.9%) despite the fact that also approximately half had travel experience in Japan (56.1%), and there was no correlation between these variables. Seeing one's neighbour country as an enemy is naturally a problem, but as it has no apparent effect on Korean's likelihood of travelling there, it is not a significant obstacle for dark tourism developments. Convincing potential Korean travellers that the value of their trip to sites discussed is high enough to accept "enemy" taxes, however, is a purposeful task for relevant dark tourism stakeholders.

The survey analysis gave answers for the research sub-question regarding to what extent the existence of ingroup narratives at colonial sites of dark tourism can influence the willingness of Koreans to visit Japan and its sites of disputed colonial history. Analysis

of the D statements' responses found that the large majority of Koreans open to dark tourism travel to sites where Koreans have suffered both to learn history and to commemorate and pay respect to victims. The presentation of ingroup narratives, or Korean memory, at dark tourism sites in Japan would allow for a learning experience making the trip more valuable and desirable for Korean visitors. 63.2% of respondents would consider a trip to Hashima with no ingroup narratives other than what they would seek out elsewhere in advance (E2), while 16.9% more (totally 78.9%) would consider the same trip in the event Korean victims are recognised in the site's Japanese official history (E1).

Analysis of the E statement responses revealed that the majority of the target population would consider visiting a dark tourism site of Korean suffering in Japan with a Korean guide (E3 63.2%) or participate in a non-government Japanese tour if Korean victims are recognised (E4 57.4%). Profitability from the perspective of tourism management is unknown, but a high number of Koreans are interested in colonial-era related dark tourism incorporating Korean memory in Japan. Dark tourism tours by Korean and/or Japanese NPO's would attract Korean visitors if made sufficiently known in Korea. If, as suggested above, Japanese non-government dark tourism tours could help reduce Korean bias towards the general Japanese population, such dark tourism developments could over time nudge also the more sceptical, often more senior, Korean travellers to reconsider a trip to Japan.

Inferential analysis of D and E statement responses implied that dark tourism is becoming more well-known in Korea, and that with this process, the number of Koreans who value and engage in dark tourism will also increase. However, the most ideal form of relevant dark tourism from Korea to Japan, that would attract the highest number visitors, would be official Japanese tours in the event the Japanese government ends its "history war" in favour of history revision incorporating Korean memories. In such an event, although still difficult to imagine, it can be inferred from the data that sites of the Meiji Industrial Revolution would become popular destinations for young and old Korean women and men visiting Kyushu.

The written and voiced comments received from respondents said more about Korean

views on foreigners learning Korean colonial history than what it said about Korean dark tourism in Japan. Respondents valued efforts to introduce Korean memories to a foreign audience, while expressing surprise that Korean colonial history may interest foreigners. Based on the above analysis of their comments, many respondents would likely be positively surprised if dark tourism with *satisfactory* narratives at sites of colonial history becomes popular for foreign visitors in Korea (and Japan, if Korean memories are acknowledged). Such foreign interest is likely to be welcomed by some Koreans, while others, especially those of older generations, may be uncomfortable with foreigners learning about history associated with Korean shame.

The comments collected through the survey also strongly implied a widespread view of Korean official colonial history as “correct”, and Japanese official history and public memory as deliberate lies. However, while dark tourism can visualise complexities of conflicts for contemplation, it is rarely useful as a tool for propagating a single solidified narrative in support of one group. Dark tourism narratives of Korean colonial history would not attract and convince a significant international audience if Korean bias was obvious.

설문지

일본의 산업세계유산 관광과

조선인 강제동원의 역사 (하시마/군함도 등)

안녕하십니까?

먼저 바쁘신 가운데 본 연구를 위해 시간을 내어 주신데 대해 진심으로 감사드립니다.

본 설문지는 일제 강점기 때 조선인의 노동력이 강제로 동원되었던 일본 세계유산 (하시마/군함도, 사도 광산 등) 관광에 대한 한국인의 생각을 알아보기 위한 조사 자료입니다. 연구자의 입장에서 볼 때 현재 조선인 강제노동이 실행된 일본 세계유산의 전시 및 역사 해설에서 조선인 강제노동에 대한 설명이 충분하지 못한 상태로, 피해자와 후손에 대한 일본 정부의 배려를 느낄 수가 없습니다. 이러한 문제점을 지적하고 실행 가능한 개선 또는 대책을 제안하기 위해서 조사를 실시하고자 합니다.

조사배경

2015년 “일본의 메이지 산업혁명 유산: 철강, 조선 및 탄광”이라는 주제 아래 일본 내 23 곳의 유적지가 유네스코 세계문화유산으로 지정되었습니다. 이 중 하시마(군함도)를 비롯한 8 곳의 유적지에서는 일제강점기에 수많은 조선인과 타국의 국민들이 본인의 의사에 반해 가혹한 조건하에서 강제로 노역에 동원되었으며, 수많은 피해자가 목숨을 잃었습니다. 세계문화유산 지정의 조건으로 조선인 강제 동원의 역사가 포함되는 역사해설을 마련하겠다는 약속을 했음에도 불구하고, 일본 정부는 현재까지도 조선인 강제동원을 인정하지 않고 있습니다.

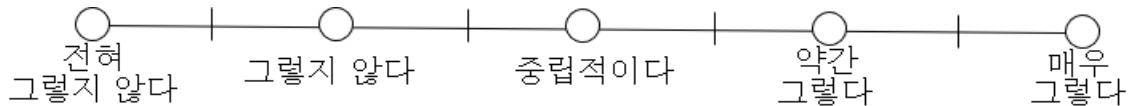
조사의 익명성 및 출판

본 연구를 위해 응답해주신 귀하의 소중한 의견은 학술적인 연구자료 이외에는 사용하지 않을 것을 약속 드리며, 또한 **설문결과는 익명으로 통계 처리되어 개인적 정보누설이나 불이익이 전혀 발생하지 않는다는 것을 보장해 드립니다.** 본 조사결과는 박사 졸업 논문의 기본 자료로 사용될 뿐만 아니라, 국제적인 영어 학술지에 출판될 수 있도록 준비할 예정입니다. 협력해주셔서 진심으로 감사드립니다.

본 조사는 19 세 이상의 한국인을 대상으로 합니다. 귀하는 19 세 이상인 한국인이십니까? (한국계 동포, 혼혈 등 포함)

예, 맞습니다 아닙니다

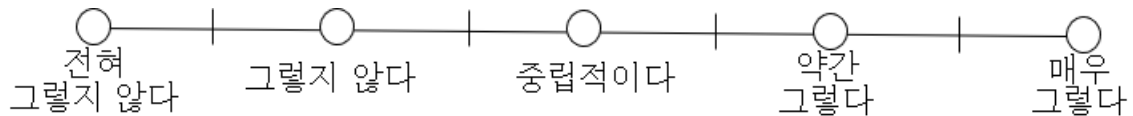
아래 예와 같은 방법으로 귀하의 생각과 느낌에 가장 가까운 답변에 체크(✓)해 주시기 바랍니다. 예: 한국에서는 축구보다 야구가 인기가 더 많다.



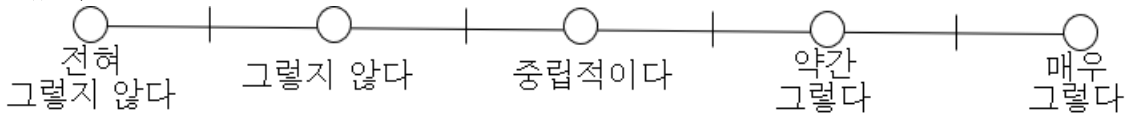
위에서 “그렇지 않다”는 답은 “내가 보기에는 야구보다 축구가 조금 더 인기가 있다”는 의미입니다. 설명이 부족한 경우 연구자에게 직접 물어보시기 바랍니다. 일본 산업혁명 세계유산의 역사 왜곡에 대한 영향

1. 나는 조선인 강제동원의 역사를 부정하는 일본의 세계 유산에 대해서 생각하면 다음과 같이 느낀다:

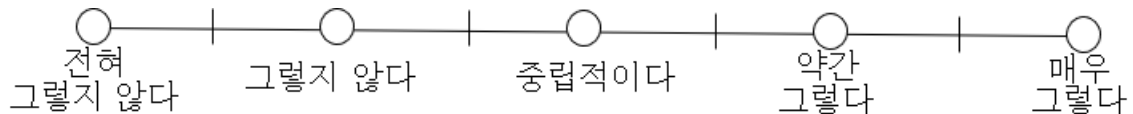
A. 일본 정부를 전체적으로 못 믿겠다.



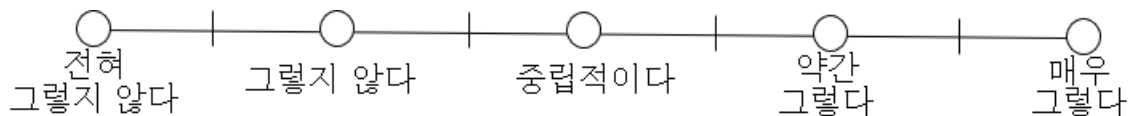
B. 일제 강점기 때 강제 노역에 연관되었던 일본회사(전범사)들은 지금도 신뢰할 수 없다.



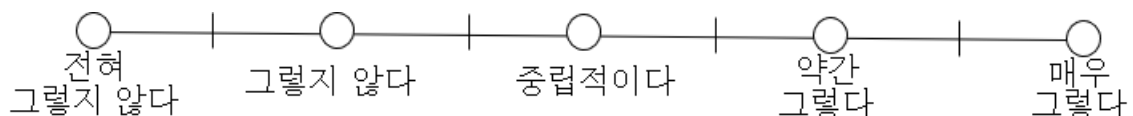
C. 일본인을 믿으면 안 된다.



D. 유네스코는 영향력이 약하거나 책임감이 부족하다.



E. 일본정부는 일제강점기 때나 지금이나 한국과 한국인을 낮게 본다.



F. 일본은 지금도 한국의 적국이다.

일본 전혀 그렇지 않다 그렇지 않다 중립적이다 약간 그렇다 매우 그렇다

아래 확인하신 후 자신의 생각을 가장 잘 나타내는 답변에 체크해 주시기 바랍니다.

유네스코 세계유산위원회는 전쟁 중 징용된 한반도 출신자에 관한 설명이 부족하다며 일본의 세계유산 관리 방식에 강력한 유감을 표명했다. 일본 측이 2022년 12월 1일까지 이행 보고서를 제출하면 세계유산위원회는 2023년으로 예정된 회의에서 이를 검토할 계획이다.

1. 일본의 역사 왜곡에 대해 유네스코가 충분히 대응하는 것 같다.

전혀 그렇지 않다 그렇지 않다 중립적이다 약간 그렇다 매우 그렇다

2. 유네스코에서 경고를 받은 일본이 왜곡된 역사를 올바르게 정확하게 알릴 것으로 기대 한다.

전혀 그렇지 않다 그렇지 않다 중립적이다 약간 그렇다 매우 그렇다

3. 2022년 12월까지도 큰 개선이 없으면 유네스코는 일본의 산업혁명 세계유산 등재를 취소해야 한다.

전혀 그렇지 않다 그렇지 않다 중립적이다 약간 그렇다 매우 그렇다

4. 일본의 산업혁명 세계유산의 공식적인 역사해설에서 조선인 강제동원 등 피해자가 제대로 인정된다면 나는 일본으로 여행을 갈 마음이 지금보다 더 생길 것이다.

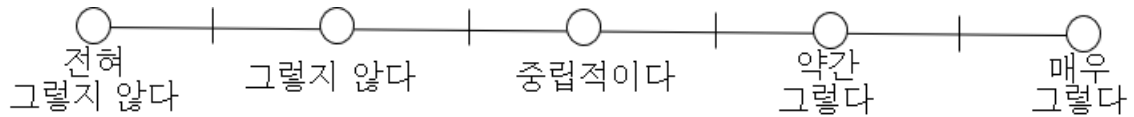
전혀 그렇지 않다 그렇지 않다 중립적이다 약간 그렇다 매우 그렇다

5. 일본의 산업혁명 세계유산의 공식적인 역사해설에서 조선인 강제동원 피해 사례가 제대로 인정된다면 일본 사람들의 대부분은 반대할 것 같다.

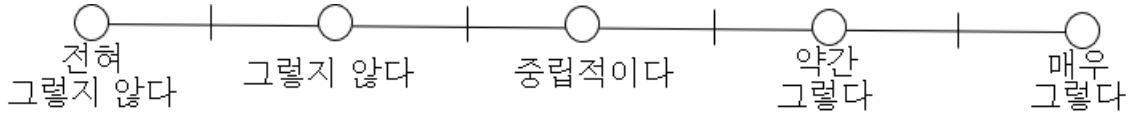
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외국인 관광객에 대해서

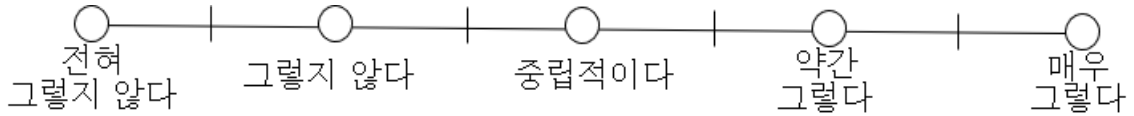
1. 강제로 동원된 조선인이 일하고 사망한 일본유적지를 방문하는 외국인이 일제 강점기의 역사적 사실을 배울 수 없는 것은 한국인으로서 가슴 아픈 일이다.



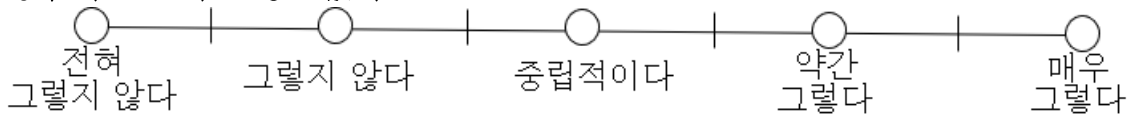
2. 조선인 피해자의 역사가 제대로 표시된다고 하더라도 하시마(군함도)는 절대 관광지로 이용되어서는 안된다. 피해자를 위해 관광은 금지되어야 한다.



3. 한국을 방문하는 외국인이 역사에 대해 관심이 있다면 한국의 아름다운 장소 뿐만 아니라 일제 강점기에 대해서 배울 수 있는 한국내 유적지나 박물관을 방문하는 것도 추천하겠다.

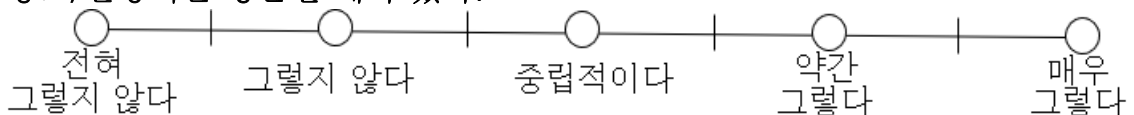


4. 한국을 방문하는 외국인이 한국역사에 대해서 관심이 없다면 일제 강점기를 몰라도 상관없다.

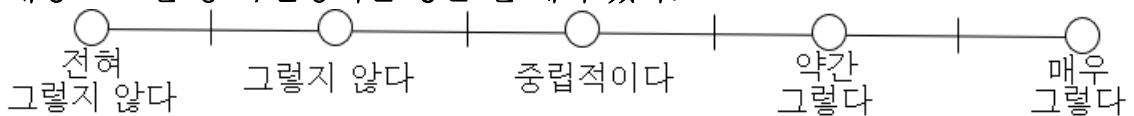


한국인의 역사 교훈 여행

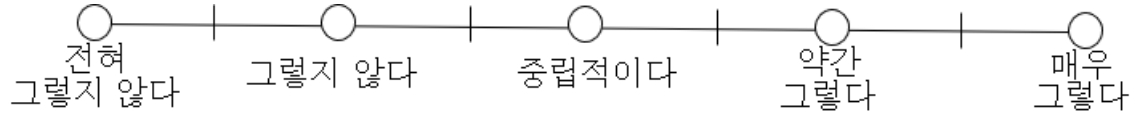
1. 나는 역사를 배우기 위해 한국인의 죽음이나 슬픔을 대상으로 한 장소/관광지를 방문할 때가 있다.



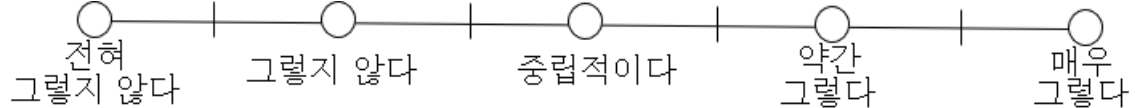
2. 나는 피해자를 존중하고 기념하기 위해 한국인의 죽음이나 슬픔을 대상으로 한 장소/관광지를 방문 할 때가 있다.



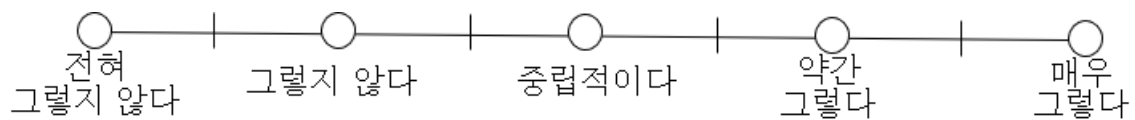
3. 특별한 목적 없이 그냥 동행자로 친구나 가족을 따라 한국인의 죽음이나 슬픔을 대상으로 한 장소/관광지를 방문할 때가 있다.



4. 해외여행을 할 경우, 나와 다른 민족의 죽음이나 슬픔을 대상으로 한 장소/관광지를 여행 일정에 포함시킬 용의가 있다 (예: 독일 나치 수용소, 캄보디아의 킬링필드, 미국 뉴욕 의 세계 무역 센터가 있던 그라운드 제로 등).



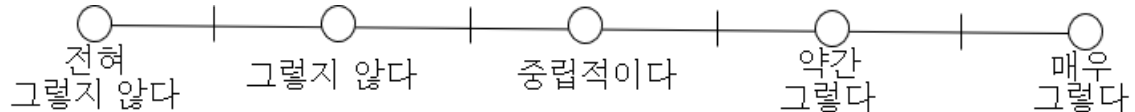
5. 나는 “다크 투어리즘”이라는 표현을 많이 들어봤다. (다크 투어리즘=역사 교훈 여행)



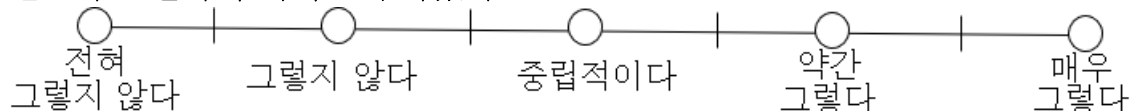
일본으로 역사 교훈 여행을 가는 조건

실제의 상황과 관계 없이 일본으로 여행하게 되는 상황을 상상하시기 바랍니다. 일본 여행 일정에 하시마(군함도) 등 일제 강점기에 조선인이 강제로 동원되어 노역했던 관광지를 방문하는 조건에 대한 항목입니다.

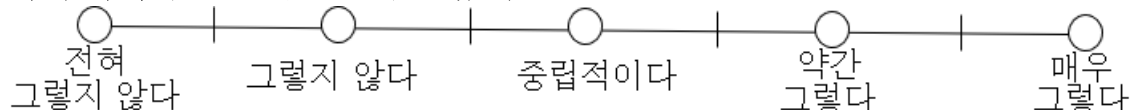
1. 일본 정부가 조선인 피해자를 인정하고 올바른 역사해설을 준비하면 하시마를 방문할 마음이 생길 수도 있다.



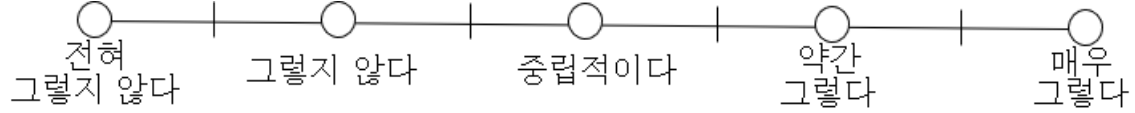
2. 좋은 기회가 있다면 지금이라도 하시마 등을 방문하고 싶다. 역사 해설이 필요하면 알아서 미리 공부하겠다.



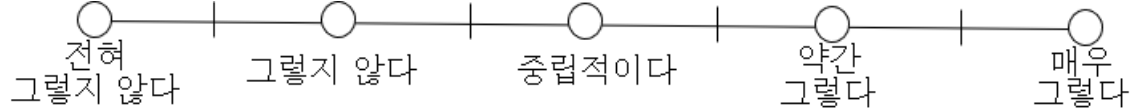
3. 일본 정부가 하시마의 조선인 피해자를 인정하지 않아도 현지에서 한국인 역사 전문가가 직접 안내하며 역사 해설을 해준다면 좋은 기회가 있다는 가정 하에 하시마 등을 방문할 수도 있다.



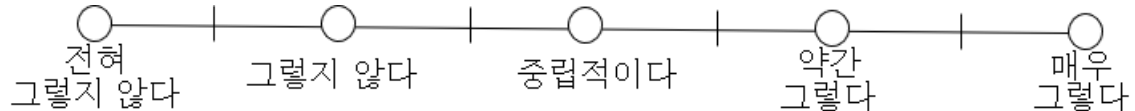
4. 일본 정부가 하시마의 조선인 피해자를 인정하지 않더라도 일본 기업 또는 비정부 기구가 조선인 강제동원의 역사를 인정하며 피해자를 존중하고 기념하는 투어를 진행한다면 참가할 용의가 있다.



5. 일본 정부가 하시마의 조선인 피해자를 인정하지 않더라도 가족이나 친구가 계획해서 가자고 하면 같이 갈 용의가 있다.



6. 하시마 강제 노동 피해사례가 올바르게 구술되는 사기업의 비공식 투어에 참여하기 위해 일본 정부에 약간의 여행세를 낼 용의가 있다.



응답자 정보

1. 귀하의 성별은 어떻게 되십니까?

남성 여성 기타

2. 귀하의 연령은 어떻게 되십니까? 19 세~29 세 30 세~39 세

40 세~49 세 50 세~59 세 60 세이상

3. 귀하는 서대문 형무소 역사관에 방문한 경험이 있습니까?

있습니다 없습니다

4. 귀하는 일본에 방문한 경험이 있습니까?

있습니다 없습니다

5. 귀하는 “일본의 메이지 산업혁명 유산”에 포함되는 하시마 섬(“군함도”)에 대해서 들어본 적이 있습니까 (뉴스 매체나 영화 등)?

잘 모르겠습니다 예, 압니다 예, 하시마에 가본적도 있습니다

6. 귀하의 직업은 무엇입니까?

- 경영/관리직 사무/기술직 판매/서비스직 기능/작업/단순노무직
 자영업 전업주부 농/림/어/축산업 학생
 자유/전문직 (의사, 변호사, 약사, 프리랜서 등) 기타

7. 귀하의 부모님의 고향은 어디입니까? (2 개까지 선택 가능)

- 서울 경기도 충청도 전라도
 제주도 경상도 강원도 북한
 일본 기타 응답 없음

연구자에게 전하고 싶은 의견·감상 등 있는 경우에는 직접 말씀하시거나 아래에 자유롭게 기입해 주십시오.

설문에 응해주셔서 대단히 감사합니다!

런던 대학 연구 조사 요구사항의 일환으로 ‘한국생명의 전화’ 연락처를 제공합니다: 1588-919

Appendix VIII Consent forms for interview participants

VIII.I Korean

정보자료: Dark Tourism and Dissonant Memories in Korea and Japan: An Exploratory Study of potential impacts of dark tourism development on transnational tourism demographics and the visibility of marginalised narratives of war and colonialism
(한국과 일본의 역사교훈여행과 상반되는 기억: 다크 투어리즘의 발전이 국제 관광 인구 통계에 미치는 잠재적인 영향과 전쟁과 식민지주의 경계의 내러티브의 가시성에 대한 탐구적 연구)

2022.05.11

소개

이 문서의 목적은 귀하의 연구 참여 여부를 결정하기 위한 정보를 제공하는 것입니다. 질문이 있는 경우 연구자가 이에 응답할 것입니다. 이 자료의 정보를 확인하신 후 귀하의 참여 여부를 결정하시고, 참여에 동의하시면 이 연구에 대한 동의서를 작성하거나 동의 내용을 구두로 기록하시기 바랍니다.

연구자 이름 및

연락처 니콜라이 존센 (Nikolai Johnsen). Email: N_Johnsen@soas.ac.uk

연구 유형 박사 과정 연구

연구 목적 한국과 일본에서의 관광을 통한 일제강점기에 관한 역사교훈여행의 가능한 유형과 제한을 알아보기

꼭 참여해야 하나요? 아닙니다. 또한 참여 후에도 언제나 중단이 가능합니다

인터뷰 녹음 녹음에 대한 동의를 받은 경우에만 진행됩니다. 녹음된 내용은 인터뷰 대상자 본인과 연구원, 녹취록 타이핑 전문가만 청취할 수 있으며 타인에게 공개되지 않습니다. 녹취록 전체는 공개되지 않으나 부분적인 내용은 인용의 형식으로 향후 공개될 논문에 포함될 수 있습니다 (박사과정논문 또는 관련 학술지 기고 논문).

참여의 위험과 이점 참여와 관련된 직접적인 위험과 이점은 없습니다

데이터 보호 및 보안 인터뷰 데이터는 연구원의 컴퓨터와 런던 대학의 보호 서버(영국)에 안전하게 저장됩니다.

익명성 익명성을 원하시는 경우 말씀하시기 바랍니다.

연구 결과는 어떻게 됩니까? 연구자의 박사과정 논문으로 공개될 예정이며 (온라인-오픈 액세스). 연구 결과와 인터뷰 데이터의 일부는 연구자에 의해 작성되는 다른 학술 출판물에 포함될 수 있습니다.

귀하의 권리에 대하여

귀하는 일반 데이터 보호 규정(General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR)에 따라 SOAS 가 귀하에 대해 보유하고 있는 정보에 대한 접근을 요청할 권리가 있습니다. 상세한 설명은 SOAS 웹사이트에서 확인 가능하며 (<http://www.soas.ac.uk/infocomp/dpa/index.html>), 정보준수 관리자에게 직접 연락하실 수 있습니다: Information Compliance Manager, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG, United Kingdom (e-mail: dataprotection@soas.ac.uk). 영국 정보국장실(ICO)의 연락처 및 데이터 주체 권리에 대한 세부 정보는 ICO 웹사이트에서 확인하실 수 있습니다 (<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/>)

Data Protection Privacy Notice (개인 데이터 보호에 관한 고지)

The data controller for this project will be SOAS University of London. The SOAS Data Protection Officer provides oversight of SOAS activities involving the processing of personal data and can be contacted at dataprotection@soas.ac.uk

(이 프로젝트의 데이터 컨트롤러는 런던 SOAS 대학교입니다. SOAS 데이터 보호 담당자는 개인 데이터 처리와 관련된 SOAS 활동에 대한 감독을 제공하며 dataprotection@soas.ac.uk 로 연락할 수 있습니다.)

Your personal data will be processed for the purposes outlined in this Information Sheet. The legal basis that would be used to process your personal data under data protection legislation is the performance of a task in the public interest or in our official authority as a controller. However, for ethical reasons we need your consent to take part in this research project. You can provide your consent for the use of your personal data in this project by completing the consent form that has been provided for you or via audio recording of the information sheet and consent form content. (귀하의 개인 데이터는 이 정보 자료에 설명된 내용과 같이 처리됩니다. 영국의 데이터 보호법에 따라 귀하의 개인 데이터를 처리하는 데 사용되는 법적 근거는 공익을 위한 작업의 수행 또는 컨트롤러로서 주어진 당사의 공식 권한입니다. 윤리적인 이유로 이 연구에 참여하기 위해서는 귀하의 동의가 필요합니다. 제공된 동의서의 작성 또는 정보 자료 및 동의서 형식의 오디오 녹음을 통해 이 연구를 위한 개인 데이터 사용에 동의하실 수 있습니다.)

Copyright Notice (저작권에 대한 고지)

The consent form asks you to waive copyright so that SOAS and the researcher can edit, quote, disseminate, publish (by whatever means) your contribution to this research project in the manner described to you by the researcher during the consent process. (동의서는 SOAS 와 연구자가 동의 과정에서 귀하에게 설명된 방식으로 이 연구에 대한 귀하의 기여를 편집, 인용, 유포, 출판(어떤 수단이든)할 수 있도록 귀하에게 저작권을 포기할 것을 요청합니다.)

추가 정보 문의:

니콜라이 존센 (Nikolai Johnsen) Email: N_Johnsen@soas.ac.uk

동의서

연구원: 니콜라이 욘센 (Nikolai Johnsen) – “한국과 일본의 역사교훈여행과 상반되는 기억”
 정보 자료를 확인하거나 연구에 대한 설명을 들으신 후 이 양식을 작성하시기 바랍니다.

| 해당되는 답변에 표시하시기 바랍니다. | 예 | 아니요 |
|--|---|-----|
| 2022.05.11 일자의 연구 정보 자료를 읽거나 이에 대한 설명을 듣고 이해했습니다. | | |
| 연구에 대해 질문할 수 있었습니다. | | |
| 해당 연구를 위한 인터뷰에 동의합니다. | | |
| 인터뷰 녹음에 동의합니다. | | |
| 질문에 대한 답변을 거부할 수 있음을 이해합니다. | | |
| 언제든지 연구를 철회할 수 있으며 더 이상 참여하고 싶지 않은 이유를 설명할 필요가 없음을 이해합니다. | | |
| 인터뷰 데이터를 다음의 목적으로 사용함에 동의합니다: 연구원 박사과정 논문, 또는 연구원이 작성하는 다른 학술 출판물의 연구자료. | | |
| 익명이 필요하지 않습니다. | | |
| 연구에 기여한 인터뷰 데이터에 대한 저작권 및 기타 지적 재산권을 포기하는 데 동의합니다. | | |

니콜라이 욘센: 010-5938-3451/+44 07916-884855, N_Johnsen@soas.ac.uk,

지도 교수: Owen Miller, om4@soas.ac.uk, 10 Thornhaugh St, London WC1H 0XG, UK

연구 참가자 선언

연구 참가자

서명

날짜

연구자는 정보 자료의 내용을 공유하고 참가의 자율성에 대해 설명했습니다.

연구자

서명

날짜

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Please ensure a copy of this document is retained safely for future reference.

VIII.II Japanese

情報資料: Dark Tourism and Dissonant Memories in Korea and Japan: An Exploratory Study of potential impacts of dark tourism development on transnational tourism demographics and the visibility of marginalised narratives of war and colonialism
 (日本と韓国のダークツーリズムと相反する記憶：ダークツーリズムの発展が国際観光人口統計に及ぼせる影響と戦争と植民地主義の非公式歴史記憶の可視性に関する探求的研究)

2022.05.11

概要

この資料の目的は、研究にご参加するかどうかを判断できるように情報を提供することです。質問ございましたら研究者はお答えいたします。この資料をご覧になり、ご参加するかどうか判断してください。同意の場合は、この研究の同意フォームの記入、または同意を録音するようお願いいたします。

研究者の名前と連絡方法

ニコライ・ヨンセン (Nikolai Johnsen). N_Johnsen@soas.ac.uk

研究類型

博士課程研究

研究目的

日韓での観光による植民地時代に関するダークツーリズムの考えられる種類と制限について調べる

ご参加の自由

ご参加は自由で、いつでも中断することは可能です

インタビューの録音

録音の同意を得る場合にのみインタビュー録音を進めます。録音はインタビュー対象者、研究員と録音書き起こしの専門家だけが聴取可能で公開されません。書き起こしの全体も公開されませんが、部分的な引用は論文で公開される可能性があります
 (博士課程論文または関連する学術誌記事)。

ご参加に伴う危険と利点

ご参加に伴う直接的な危険と利点はありません

データ保護とセキュリティ

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追加情報お問い合わせ：

ニコライ・ヨンセン (Nikolai Johnsen) Email: N.Johnsen@soas.ac.uk

同意フォーム

研究者: ニコライ・ヨンセン (Nikolai Johnsen)

「日本と韓国のダークツーリズムと相反する記憶」

情報資料のご確認後、または研究の説明を聞ききになってから記入してください。

| 該当する欄にチェックしてください | はい | いいえ |
|---|----|-----|
| 2022.05.11 日付の研究情報資料の内容を理解しました | | |
| 研究について質問する機会がありました | | |
| この研究プロジェクトのためのインタビューに同意します | | |
| インタビューが録音されることに同意します。 | | |
| 質問回答をいつでも拒否できるということを理解しています | | |
| いつでも参加の撤回は可能であり、参加したくない理由を説明する必要はないと いうことを理解しています | | |
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| 匿名の必要はありません | | |
| 研究に貢献したインタビューデータの著作権およびその他の知的財産権を放棄す ることに同意します | | |

ニコライ・ヨンセン: +44 07916-884855, N_Johnsen@soas.ac.uk,

指導教員: Owen Miller, om4@soas.ac.uk, 10 Thornhaugh St, London WC1H 0XG, UK

研究ご参加者様宣言

研究ご参加者様

署名

日付

研究者は情報資料の内容を共有し、参加の選択性を説明しました。

Nikolai Johnsen

研究者

署名

日付

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VIII.III English

Information Sheet For “Dark Tourism and Dissonant Memories in Korea and Japan: An Exploratory Study of potential impacts of dark tourism development on transnational

tourism demographics and the visibility of marginalised narratives of war and colonialism.”

2022.05.11

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you with information, so you can decide whether to participate in this study. Any questions you may have will be answered by the researcher or by the other contact persons provided below. Once you are familiar with the information on this sheet and have asked any questions you may have, you can decide whether or not to participate. If you agree, you will be asked to fill in the consent form for this study or record your consent verbally.

| | |
|--|--|
| Research title: | “Dark Tourism and Dissonant Memories in Korea and Japan: An Exploratory Study of potential impacts of dark tourism development on transnational tourism demographics and the visibility of marginalised narratives of war and colonialism.” |
| Name and contact details of researcher | Nikolai Johnsen (N_Johnsen@Soas.ac.uk) |
| What type of research project is this? | PhD Research and data collection for academic articles |
| Do I have to take part? | No, taking part in the research project is entirely voluntary and the participant can discontinue participation at any time. |
| Will I be recorded and how will the recordings be used? | Audio will be recorded only with the participant’s consent. The recording will be used to create an interview transcript, which will not be published. However, selected citations from the transcript may be published in the researchers PhD thesis and potentially in his future academic articles. |
| Risks and Benefits of participation | There are no known direct risks or benefits of participation in the research interview. |
| What if Something Goes Wrong? | [Inform participants how complaints will be handled should they arise or if something serious occurs during or following participation in the project] |
| Will I be kept anonymous in this research project? | If you wish to be kept anonymous, please state your preference to the researcher. |
| How will information I provide be kept secure? | Interview data will be stored securely on the researcher’s laptop and on the cloud storage of SOAS, University of London. |
| What will happen to the results of this research project? | It will be published in the researcher’s PhD thesis (online, open access) and potentially in his future academic articles. |

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If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, please contact SOAS in the first instance at dataprotection@soas.ac.uk. If you remain unsatisfied, you may wish to contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Contact details, and details of data subject rights, are available on the ICO website at: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/>

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Contact for Further Information

Nikolai Johnsen (N.Johnsen@Soas.ac.uk)

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research study.

Consent Form for “Dark Tourism and Dissonant Memories in Korea and Japan: An Exploratory Study of potential impacts of dark tourism development on transnational tourism demographics and the visibility of marginalised narratives of war and colonialism.”

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an equivalent explanation about the research.

Researcher Name: Nikolai Johnsen

| Please tick the appropriate boxes | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| I have read and understood the project information sheet dated 11/05/2022, or it has been read to me | | |
| I have been able to ask questions about the project | | |
| I agree to take part in the project and understand that taking part involves being interviewed | | |
| I agree that my interview is recorded using audio | | |
| I understand that I can refuse to answer questions | | |
| I understand that my taking part is voluntary; I can withdraw from the study at any time by notifying the researcher/s involved and I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part | | |
| I understand that the information I provided will be used for the researcher’s PhD thesis and potentially in his future academic articles. | | |
| I agree to be named in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs | | |
| I agree to waive copyright and other intellectual property rights in the material I contribute to the project | | |

Contact Information

Nikolai Johnsen, 010-5938-3451/+44 07916-884855, N_Johnsen@soas.ac.uk,
 Supervisor: Owen Miller, om4@soas.ac.uk, 10 Thornhaugh St, London WC1H 0XG, UK

Research Participant Declaration

 Name of Participant [printed] Signature Date

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant and to the best of my ability, or otherwise ensured that that participant understands what they are freely consenting.

Nikolai Johnsen

 Name of Researcher [printed] Signature Date

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