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Relics of Empire Underground: The Making of Dark Heritage in Contemporary Japan

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines civil activities to protect and conserve the underground war-related sites in contemporary Japan. Conservation movements rooted in local communities and centred on the Japanese Network to Protect War-Related Sites are making efforts to transform the dark heritage of war-related sites into cultural property in an attempt to integrate diverse wartime experiences. In delving into the heritage-making practices, I introduce local movements in Okinawa and Okayama. Okinawa hosts the first underground war-related site to become a cultural property, the Haebaru Army Hospital Bunkers, while Okayama struggles to create another one by making the Kamejima Mountain Underground Plant a dark heritage site. I argue that these conservation movements are challenging the homogenising national war memory by attaching ethnically diversified vernacular memories to the underground sites. In doing so, these underground war-related sites have become public spaces where new forms of social engagement are negotiated and contested.

KEYWORDS

Japan; dark heritage; war-related sites; ethnicity; memory; civil activities; Okinawa; Okayama; Matsushiro

Introduction

As more than 60 years have passed since Japan's defeat in World War II (WWII), the Japanese Network to Protect War-Related Sites (hereafter, the Network) pointed out that "the memories of war are being transplanted from person to object, resulting in the growing importance of war-related sites" (Sensō iseki hozon zenkoku nettowāku, 2004, p. 11). Since its formation in 1997, the Network has played a central role in connecting vernacular war memories that are attached to local places and sites.[1] At its 17th annual symposium, various local organisations gathered at Kurashiki in Okayama Prefecture in the summer of 2013 to share information on local conditions of specific war-related sites and to discuss practices, methods and problems in conserving those sites (Sensō iseki hozon zenkoku nettowāku, 2013, p. 1). The two-day convention was followed by a field trip to a nearby war-related site, the Kamejima Mountain Underground Plant (KMUP). This facility was one of Mitsubishi Heavy Industry Company's (MHI) plants built near the end of WWII to escape Allied air

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strikes. MHI was one of the largest aircraft producers in wartime Japan and the KMUP was designed to produce parts for Mitsubishi fighters (Figure 1).

The KMUP was just one of many underground facilities built in wartime Japan. It has been reported that there were around 100 underground aircraft plants alone built throughout the Japanese archipelago (United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 1947, p. 37). Moreover, the wartime empire built countless caves, barracks, trenches, bunkers, shelters and tunnels to house and protect military headquarters, national institutions and facilities, soldiers and workers, ammunition, equipment and machines, as well as to protect the imperial family as Imperial Japan desperately prepared for the "Final Battle" on Japanese soil.

This paper looks at the grassroots movement to protect and conserve these war-related underground sites to investigate how contemporary Japanese civil society has produced a new space for social and political activities and how local communities are making efforts to attach different meanings to postwar Japan by incorporating vernacular war memories associated with this "dark heritage". The term "dark heritage" is used to convey both metaphorical and literal meaning. Metaphorically, the term refers to the "heritage of shame" (*fu no bunkazai*) (Itō, 1994), containing the remnants and memories of modern Japan's imperial wars of aggression and accompanying wartime atrocities, from which few Japanese draw pride and which in fact most prefer to leave in oblivion.[2] At the same time, given the natural condition of caves and tunnels, these underground sites are hardly attractive, instead being literally dark.

By transmogrifying the ugly remains of aggressive wars into cultural properties to be protected, the civil activities of conserving war-related sites attempt to re-draw contemporary Japan's landscape of war remembrance. It has often been pointed out that postwar Japan has been deeply susceptible to a "universal willingness to commemorate suffering experienced rather than suffering caused" (Lisle, 2006, p. 853), and that entrenched sense of (nuclear) victim consciousness has largely excluded memories of suffering inflicted by Imperial Japan in Asia (Buruma, 1994; Orr, 2001; Yoshida, 2005; Weiner, 2005). Yet, one can identify subtle changes in the way the war is remembered, beginning some time in the 1980s, as more diversified actors evolve and varying modes of medium are utilised in the making and remaking of war memories so as to introduce the memories of suffering caused. Few have followed and analysed this change. Those who have examined it, however, tend to highlight contributing factors to the changing landscape of war remembrance largely at the macro level, including the restructuring of world politics in the aftermath of the Cold War at the global level, the rise of Asia in both economic and politico-cultural terms at the regional level, and demographic changes and resultant socioeconomic shifts at the national level (Conrad, 2003; Seraphim, 2006; Jager & Mitter, 2007). This paper is intended to complicate the debates on war memory and responsibility in Japan by bringing in grassroots civic activities and movements at the micro level. I argue that the growing consciousness toward the materiality of dark heritage at the local level is a crucial and concrete force that is facilitating the changing process of war remembrance to include memories of suffering caused as well as experienced by the Japanese.

Heritage, which consists of place-bound products, is notoriously "dissonant" in the sense that practices of heritage-making are repeatedly employed to materialise an exclusive political, social or cultural ownership over the product while solidifying pre-existing differences and identities between and within national communities (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). Dark heritage, loaded with both pain and shame, often foreshadows the emotional and

Figure 1. Kamejima Underground Factory. Photo by author.

potent generation of collective memories overtly linked with local or national identities and ethnic or cultural distinctiveness along the lines of victim versus perpetrator (Logan & Reeves, 2009). Yet if one accepts the heritage as "first and foremost, a process" that has developed "according to the contemporary societal context of transforming power relationships" (Harvey, 2001, p. 335), then one can also tease out "enacted moments wherein heritage practices constitute an 'event', a turning point in or break with existing patterns of social existence" (Simon & Ashley, 2010, p. 249). In this paper, I present the Japanese practices of dark heritage-making as a case conceived of such possibilities of carving out a space for new forms of social relations and solidarities. For this purpose, I first delineate the formation and workings of the Network, culminating with its 17th annual symposium. Second, I examine two examples of conservation movements, one in Okinawa and the other in Okayama, to identify forces that motivate and sustain such civil activities. Okinawa shelters the first underground war-related site to become a cultural property and Okayama struggles to create another one.

The Making of Dark Heritage by Connecting War-Related Sites in Japan

Most of the annual symposiums of the Japanese Network to Protect War-Related Sites are held in August, usually around 15 August, the so-called "memorial day for the ending of war" (Table 1).[3] It was refreshing to hear the term "memorial day of defeat", and not "memorial day for the ending of war", during the opening ceremony of the Network's 17th annual symposium on 17 August 2013. Such a critical approach to the conventional war remembrance is also reflected in the Network's choice of the term "war-related sites" (*sensōiseki*). Articulated in numerous publications of the Network and by the involved activists and scholars, war-related sites refer to "the heritage of shame" (*fu no isan*) and include "the built structures and materials that were produced to execute Japan's aggressive wars". The Network limits war-related sites to the buildings, structures and materials that were produced "from

Table 1. Annual Symposium of the Japanese Network to Protect War-Related Sites

Meeting	Date	Venue	Partici-pants	Report by Local Divisions	Participat-ing Group Members	Partici-pating Individual Members	Designated Cultural Properties
Preliminary Meeting	1996–30–06	Hiyoshi	5				
1	1997–20–07	Matsushiro	100		22		5
2	1998–21–06	Haebaru	300	12	19	64	7
3	1999–04–08	Kyoto	300	22	23	93	8
4	2000–18–08	Kochi	210	22	24	110	10
5	2001–04–08	Kawasaki	400	29	28	150	69
6	2002–24–08	Yamanashi	240	29	30	141	69
7	2003–23–08	Usa	300	11	40	160	82
8	2004–21–08	Tateyama	400	23	36	153	96
9	2005–20–08	Nagasaki	250	17	39	172	104
10	2006–19–08	Gunma	250	26	40	178	110
11	2007–17–08	Tokyo	350	23	42	174	131
12	2008–09–08	Nagoya	120	24	45	185	144
13	2009–08–08	Matsumoto	260	30	45	182	157
14	2010–19–06	Haebaru	400	34	50	196	170
15	2011–06–08	Yokohama	380	23	43	173	188
16	2012–18–08	Suzuka	460	19	46	167	205

Source: Information provided by a representative of the Network, Murakami Akiyoshi, May 2013.

the Meiji period when the modern military system was created to the early Shōwa period when the Asia-Pacific War was concluded". These built structures and sites are directly related to "the aggressive wars of Japan in terms of perpetration, suffering, collaboration, or resistance". Given the fact that most of the wars Japan carried out in modern times were fought abroad, these war-related sites exist both within and outside Japan. As an example of work outside Japan, in order to investigate the existence and condition of war-related sites in China, the Network has also carried out collaborative investigation with Chinese scholars and activists since 1993.[4]

The Network strives to differentiate its position from other efforts to make war-related sites memorials to the war dead while glorifying their sacrifice for the state. The glorification of war dead and war, the Network claims, is often carried out at the expense of remembering civilian suffering and losses caused by the Japanese state. For example, Kikuchi Minoru, a working committee member of the Network, pointed out in his report at the most recent symposium that "most cases of excavating skeleton remains from underground sites in Okinawa have been carried out for the sake of memorialisation and hardly for the purpose of returning those remains to the family members of the deceased". It is necessary to redefine the purpose of retrieving human remains while paralleling such activities with "investigating the historical reasons for the existence of underground sites, and the conditions of remains at the time of excavation". For this purpose, he calls for continuous interdisciplinary collaboration among historians, archaeologists, anthropologists and other specialists in conservation (Kikuchi, 2013, pp. 7–8).

The Network is an association of various civil and scholarly organisations including the National Association of Cultural Property Preservation, the Association of History Educators, the Research Association of Archaeology of War-Related Sites, the Okinawa Peace Network and the Matsushiro Underground Imperial General Headquarters Complex Preservation Association, among others. In addition to these active participating members,

a related guidebook for nationwide war-related sites lists 45 local organisations involved in similar conservation movements.

Since the practices of excavation and conservation of war-related sites are methodologically tied to the field of archaeology, some professionals in the field were active in the Network from its inception. In fact, the need for the "archaeology of war-related sites" was pointed out by a scholar named Tōma Shiichi in 1984. Based in Okinawa, the site of the only battleground on Japanese soil during WWII, Tōma was deeply troubled by the social practice of collecting human remains without any reflection on the Battle of Okinawa itself in which more civilians than soldiers had perished. In an article entitled "An Invitation to the Archaeology of War-Related Sites", Tōma called for archaeological research and investigation of both the natural and artificial caves scattered on the island to "re-experience" the Battle of Okinawa (Tōma, 1988, pp. 79–80). This archaeology of war-related sites became an official sub-discipline of the Japanese Archaeological Association at the Association's Okinawa symposium in 1997 (Shimabukurō, 1999).

In the same year, the Network was organised and held its first national symposium in Matsushiro, Nagano Prefecture. Matsushiro is both symbolically and practically an important place in the making of dark heritage in general and for the Network in particular. The place hosts a gigantic complex of underground shelters and tunnels constructed under the three mountains of Maizuru, Zōzan and Minakami during the last ten months of WWII. They were designed to relocate the Imperial General Headquarters based in Tokyo as well as the imperial family and state organs, including ministries and the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK), in preparation for the impending "Final Battle" expected to take place on Japan's main islands. The total length of the three main tunnels for the underground shelters reached around 10 kilometres. The Nishimatsu Construction Company and the Kajima Construction Company carried out the construction, using primarily Korean forced labourers. The estimated number of Koreans mobilised for the construction was between 6,000 and 8,000, and the estimated number of Korean forced labourers who died from malnutrition, accident and execution ranged from 100 to 1,000 (Jūbishi & Kikuchi, 2002; Aoki, 2008; Harayama, 2009; Han, 2012).

If Okinawa recalls suffering caused by the wartime state toward its own people, albeit an ethnic minority, Matsushiro stands for suffering inflicted by Imperial Japan upon the other, albeit the colonised. Prompted by an interest in the local history, the Matsushiro Underground Imperial General Headquarters Complex Preservation Association (hereafter Matsushiro Preservation Association) was organised in 1986. The civil organisation was partly inspired by a group of local high-school students who petitioned the local government to conserve the underground shelter by making it a cultural property. In the larger context, the investigation of ethnic discrimination toward Koreans had already been undertaken by local students, scholars and writers. For example, students at Shinshū University, inspired by Pak Kyong-sik's *The Record of Forced Taking of Koreans* (1965), organised a Korean Cultural Study Group to investigate the forced Korean labour used to build the underground complex. In the meantime, Wada Noboru, a children's book writer from Nagano, published a nonfiction book entitled *The Fortress of Sadness* based on research on Korean forced labourers (Aoki, 2008, pp. 254–255; Han, 2012, p. 504). The physical inheritance of Matsushiro underground complex has provided a material ground on which local people encounter the shameful past of discriminating against the different other; and through which they can transfer a shared knowledge of the past that included the memories of suffering caused.[5]

Since the Network's first meeting in Matsushiro, the Matsushiro Preservation Association has played a central role in providing personnel and resources for these efforts. The Network, however, does not have a centralised administrative organisation and endeavours to let local groups take the lead in local movements as well as hosting annual symposiums. Such an emphasis on local initiatives has its own strengths and weaknesses. Locally-based heritage-making activities and practices provide (1) opportunities for local residents to learn about the history of their hometown; (2) spaces for gaining knowledge and experience of public engagement with the local administration; and (3) chances to forge new local networks. At the same time, the Network's lack of a centre results in a lack of strong financial and personnel bases which in turn causes an over-dependence on a few active members at the individual level and the Matsushiro Preservation Association at the group level (Murakami, 2013).

Due in part to the resilience of local heritage-making activities, the number of war-related sites designated as cultural property increased from 5 in 1997 to 205 in 2012. These very achievements are inviting new challenges, however. As the number of recognised war-related sites is increasing, the question of how to prioritise and manage these cultural properties has become an urgent issue to negotiate both within the Network and between the state and society. In probing how the local groups are dealing with these issues, we now turn to the case of the first war-related site recognised as a cultural property on Okinawa.

The Case of Haebaru, Okinawa: Haebaru Army Hospital Bunkers

Okinawa has become an "island of war-related sites" since the end of WWII (Yoshihama, 2010, p. 161). It is where the only major ground battle on Japanese soil was fought, engulfing noncombatant residential areas and causing the deaths of approximately one-third of the island's population. As of 2009, 979 war-related sites were confirmed within Okinawa Prefecture based on an investigation conducted by the Prefecture (Murakami, 2013). Given the tragic history of the island, it is not too surprising to find that the first war-related site to be designated as a cultural property is on Okinawa. The remains of the Haebaru Army Hospital underground bunkers and shelters were designated as such by the local government of Haebaru in 1990 (Jūbishi & Kikuchi, 2002, pp. 276–277).

During WWII, the army hospital was attached to the 32nd Army and moved to Naha, Okinawa in June 1944. The hospital was relocated from Naha to Haebaru after a US air raid in October. Around 30 tunnels were built under the nearby Kugani Woods by the 32nd Army's engineer unit (Figure 2). To construct the underground shelter, the army also mobilised students and nearby residents. The underground hospital began operation in March 1945, with around 350 surgeons, nurses, corpsmen and other personnel. Towards the end of the war, 222 students of the Okinawa Teachers' School's Prefectural Girls' Department and First Prefectural Girls' High School (also known as Himeyuri Student Nurse Corps[6]) were mobilised as nursing assistants to aid in the care of the wounded (Yamamoto, 2010; Koga, 2010).

In making the remains of the Haebaru Army Hospital Bunkers a cultural property, the Haebaru Town Museum assessed the event as follows: "[I]n 1990, the town of Haebaru designated the tunnels used by the 1st Surgical Group and 2nd Surgical Group as cultural assets of the town to convey the tragedy of war, and to protect this history for future generations to learn from". The making of the underground hospital as part of the dark heritage, however,

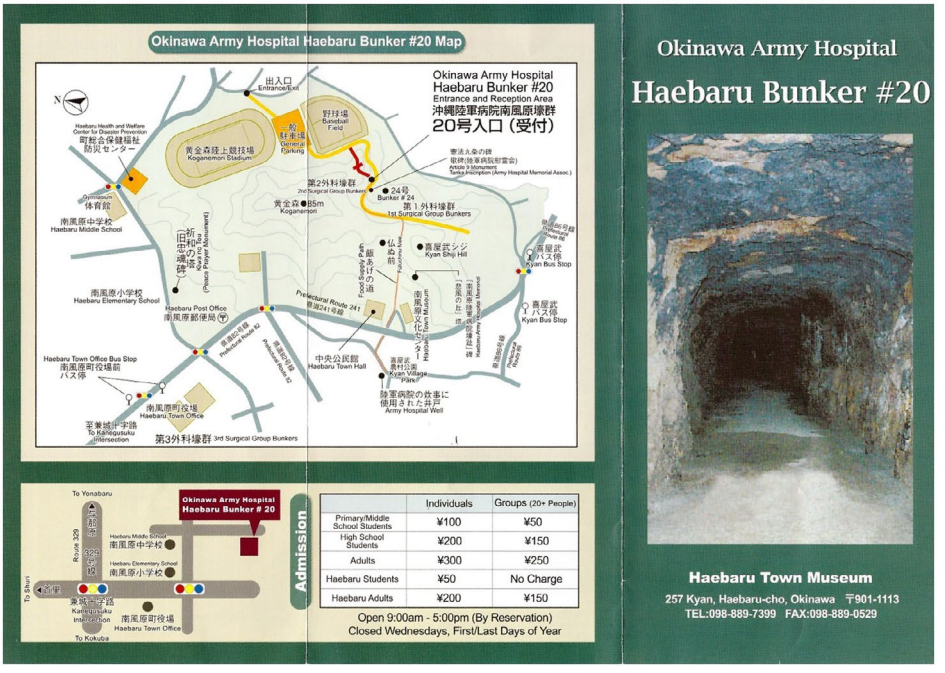

Figure 2. A map of Haebaru Army Hospital Underground Bunkers from the Haebaru Town Museum pamphlet. Used with permission.

was hardly without its problems, and competition, conflict and negotiation between the local government and community marked the process. It was also an achievement resulting from decades of civil movements to promote peace on the island by redefining its relationship with Japan and the United States. To better understand the conflicting perceptions and emergence of the peace movement, a brief history of Okinawa's place in Japan is in order.

Until the early seventeenth century, Okinawa was part of the Kingdom of Ryukyu, thriving through maritime trade within Imperial China's tributary system. Although it maintained its status as a tributary state, in 1609 Okinawa fell under the rule of Satsuma, one of the largest domains of Tokugawa Japan. After feudal Japan transformed itself into a modern state with a centralised government, Okinawa was absorbed into the Japanese imperium as Okinawa Prefecture in 1879. During WWII the island became one of the deadliest war zones in the Pacific theatre. The massive loss of civilians on the island was caused not only by enemy forces but also by Japan's own military, exemplified by cases of coerced "group suicide". In the aftermath of its defeat in WWII, Japan was under Allied Occupation until 1952. But even after sovereignty was returned to Japan's central government, Okinawa remained under US trusteeship until 1972. During this period, a sizeable US military force operated from the island in support of the Vietnam War and during the prosecution of the Cold War. Despite the end of the Cold War, Okinawa, which comprises just 1 per cent of the Japanese landmass, still provides the base for 75 per cent of the US forces in Japan. The troubled history of Okinawa encompasses Okinawans' experiences and memories of being severely discriminated against by both the Japanese state and society (Hein & Selden,

2003). It is these past memories of marginalisation and present realities of hosting foreign military bases that are inspiring civil activities to conserve the dark heritage in Okinawa.

In fact, the Okinawa prefectural government initiated activities to conserve war-related sites long before the US returned the island to Japan. In 1962, the prefectural government began investigating the tunnel complex of the 32nd Army headquarters under Shuri Castle to determine its worth as a "tourist attraction" (*kankō shigen*). The initiative went nowhere when the investigation concluded that the tunnels were not safe for tourism. In 1969, the prefectural government developed the former navy underground headquarters in Tomigusuku as a tourist attraction. Developed and managed by the Okinawa Tourism Convention Bureau, 250 metres of the 450-metre tunnel were preserved and opened to the public in 1970 (Yoshihama, 2010).[7] By the time of Okinawa's reversion to Japan in 1972, the mainstream tourism course of war-related sites in southern Okinawa had been developed, connecting Himeyuri Monument, the Mabuni Hill Memorial Complex and the former navy underground headquarters, all in the context of an underlying narrative of loyal sacrifice by the Okinawan people during the war (Yoshihama, 2010, p. 153).

Critical of the official sightseeing programs of war-related sites that promote the narratives of remembering the battle as the heroic sacrifice of the Okinawan people for the Japanese empire, concerned Okinawans organised their own peace tours of the war-related sites that recalled the harsh realities of the war and the violence committed by the Japanese state against its own people (Murakami, 1998; Figal, 2003). In the early 1970s, this movement was mainly organised by members of the Naha, Okinawa, branch of the Teachers' Union and focused on taking students on field trips to locate and tour war-related sites such as underground trenches. The critical consciousness and activities toward the official approach to war-related sites were also intertwined with the development of new historical narratives from the late 1960s onwards that integrated testimonies of low-ranking soldiers' experiences on the battlefields with those of ordinary women on the home front, with rudimentary awareness of the suffering caused by the Japanese. In the case of Okinawa, *History of Okinawa Prefecture, Volumes 9* and *10* were published in 1971 and 1974 respectively to record the "wartime experiences of the Okinawan people", including the oral testimonies of local citizens who vividly recalled their neighbours being killed as suspected spies or in group suicides coerced by the Imperial Japanese Army (Toriyama, 2006, pp. 381–406; Narita, 2010, pp. 179–181).

In 1977, while commemorating the 32nd anniversary of the end of the Battle of Okinawa, the Association Reflecting the Battle of Okinawa was formed and forwarded a petition to the prefectural government. According to the appeal written on 15 May 1977, the Association stated that the Battle of Okinawa was "an abnormal war in which more Okinawan people died than fighting soldiers" and "the multifaceted wartime experiences of the people of Okinawa are important historical experiences and the starting point of Okinawan people's longing for peace". "The war-related sites and buildings are," the appeal continued, "not only important historical evidence of Okinawa but also the starting point for the postwar thoughts and activities of the Okinawans"; it therefore called for conservation of those war-related sites that "are being destroyed and transfigured in the name of postwar development or tourism" (Okinawasen wo kangaerukai setsuritsu sōkai, 1977). No reply was received from the local government.

It was during the 1980s that the practice of promoting "peace education" in Okinawan terms by networking the war-related sites in such a way as to remember the ethnic

discrimination and the civilian losses became active (Murakami, 1998; Yoshihama, 2010, pp. 154–155). For example, the organisers of peace tours of war-related sites published guidebooks entitled *Okinawa, Not on the Tourist Course* in 1983 and *Okinawa: Walk, See and Think* in 1986. The latter guidebook was published by people related to the Association for Peace Tour which developed into the Okinawa Peace Network in 1994. One of the representatives of the Okinawa Peace Network, Murakami Akiyoshi, also works as a representative in the Network. The Okinawa Peace Network has been an active member of the Network from its formation. It was in this initiation of peace tour movements with a specific goal of conserving war-related sites in Okinawa that the idea emerged in 1990 for the partial preservation of the remains of the Haebaru underground sites by making them a cultural property.

The conservation activities continued in order to manage the cultural property. One of the earliest steps to conserve the site was to form the Investigation Committee on How to Conserve and Use the Haebaru Army Hospital Underground Bunkers in 1993. The committee explored, surveyed and discovered a variety of war-related sites in Okinawa. It also carried out archaeological and geological investigations of the army hospital underground trenches. In 1995, a "Symposium on Trenches" with the central theme of "how to conserve and utilise war-related sites" was held while commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Okinawa. As part of the commemoration project, the movement to conserve and open the underground complex of the 32nd Army Headquarters to the public so as to "transmit the reality of the Battle of Okinawa to the next generation" was formed.[8] In the meantime, local initiatives merged with similar efforts to conserve the underground remains in Nagano Prefecture and Kanagawa Prefecture, for example, with the holding of the Second National Symposium of the Japanese Network to Protect War-Related Sites in Okinawa during 1998.

Despite activities to conserve and publicly utilise war-related sites on Okinawa, the partial opening of the Haebaru Army Hospital underground tunnels to the general public materialised only in 2007. One reason for the delay can be attributed to prefectural politics such as changes in the governorship and other official positions, with concomitant changes in policies. This ebb and flow in local politics is illustrated by the project to conserve and open the underground tunnels of the 32nd Army Headquarters. Initially started during the governorship of Ota Masahide, who was broadly supported by progressive groups, the project was later frozen when Ota lost to a Liberal Democratic Party candidate, Inamine Keiichi, in 1998 (Yoshihama, 2010, p. 160).

Nevertheless, the civil movement managed the opening of Tunnel #20 to the public in 2007 so that people could "re-experience the war and to send a national message that the tunnel is a place for peace education to respect human life" (Yoshihama, 2010, p. 11). The specific wartime and early postwar history of being violated and "abandoned" by the Japanese state as an ethnic minority was one factor that contributed to the persistence of the civil movement to conserve the war-related sites in Okinawa.[9] While the Okinawa case reveals that the Japanese state's violence toward its own people proved to be crucial in the making of dark heritage in Okinawa, the Okayama case points out that violence toward the colonised subjects of Japan also plays a role in this dark heritage.

The Case of Kurashiki, Okayama: Kamejima Mountain Underground Plant (KMUP)

The city of Kurashiki belongs to Okayama Prefecture, located on the western part of Honshū and bounded at the south by the Inland Sea. During the war, the city was turned into a large armament plant when it hosted the Okayama Plant involved in the production of naval airframes for Mitsubishi Heavy Industry Company (MHI) beginning in 1941. During this period, the wartime Japanese economy experienced rapid growth of the machinery industry spurred by the expansion of the aircraft industry. By 1944, the Japanese aircraft industry had produced some 28,000 planes, of which three-quarters were combat aircraft. This was an impressive expansion of production, compared to the production of 100-200 planes per year during the early 1930s. A major turning point in the growth of Japan's aircraft industry occurred in 1941 when the Japanese government made the decision to wage an all-out war against the United States and gave the aircraft industry top priority in the allocation of resources, machine tools and labour (United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 1947; Okazaki, 2011, pp. 973–994).

It was in this wartime context that MHI built the Okayama Plant. The plant produced around 500 planes in total and hired between 250,000 and 300,000 labourers by the end of the war. The aircraft production of the workshop, however, ended when the US Air Force carried out incendiary bombings in June 1945. Already, in April of the same year, the workshop had been hit by bombs, causing MHI to begin dispersing its materials, tools and workers to the workshop under Kamejima Mountain (Kamejimayama chikakōjō wo kataritsugu kai, 2013, pp. 22–24; Murata, 2013, p. 16).

The KMUP was one of the underground tunnels and shelters built during the "underground factory boom", facilitated by the passing of the "Urgent Dispersal of Plants Act" in February 1945 by the wartime Diet (Jūbishi & Kikuchi, 2002, pp. 63–64). Although the Japanese government perceived the need for the dispersal of factories as early as 1944, the wartime pressure for production led the government to withhold permission to disperse plants to underground shelters since such action would have reduced both production efficiency and productivity (Ueba, 2013, pp. 55–56). Once moved, however, the level of production was considerably reduced:

> The general level of efficiency of underground shops inevitably would have been very low. The in-line arrangement of benches and tools, coupled with restricted passageways, made material handling difficult and good work planning impossible. Bad lighting, dampness, and poor ventilation would not have improved the efficiency of individual workers. Precision tools and finished machine parts deteriorated rapidly from rust and corrosion. Worst of all, little thought seems to have been given to the transportation of materials and personnel to and from the tunnels. Many of them are remote from rail connections, and the roads leading in to them are frequently single tracks, negotiable with difficulty in a jeep in good weather, and probably impassable at some seasons of the year. (United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 1947, p. 24)

By war's end 32 per cent of the 100 planned underground aircraft plants were in production and 6 per cent were ready to produce (United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 1947, p. 24). The KMUP was one of those plants in production. The total length of tunnels at KMUP was around 2 kilometres. There were 5 tunnels (each 30 metres in length) penetrating the mountain from east to west. These tunnels were connected by 28 smaller tunnels (each around 15 metres in length) that went through south to north. Although the exact number of workmen mobilised at the site is unknown, it is suspected that many Koreans

Figure 3. Kamejima Mountain Underground Plant Monument. Photo by author.

were mobilised to work in the highly dangerous and harsh conditions KMUP presented (Kamejimayama chikakōjō wo kataritsugu kai, 2013, p. 23).

The underground workshop was left derelict in the aftermath of defeat and disappeared from the local and national memories. It was not until the late 1980s that local high-school students and teachers brought the workshop back into the local memory by initiating an investigation of how the underground workshop came into being. The dark heritage-making process in Kurashiki evolved at two interrelated levels. At one level, reminiscent of the Okinawa case, the civil activities to rewrite wartime history from the people's perspective provided fertile ground for "discovering" the underground site. Local movements to record the suffering experienced in air raids had become active since the 1980s and contributed to the growing attention to the underground shelters by the general public (Narita, 2010, pp. 183–187). At another level, similar to the Matsushiro case, local students took the initiative in discovering and recording the memories of the suffering caused. In 1987, students and teachers of the Social Problem Research Group at Kurashiki Central High School encountered the remains of the underground tunnels during their research on Okayama's wartime experience of air strikes. On discovering the remains, they began an investigation into who built the tunnels, and discovered that many Koreans were forcibly mobilised to carry out the most dangerous part of construction. They interviewed a Korean in Japan by the name of Won-chul Kim, who testified to his experience:

> The digging of tunnels was usually done at night. Although one could return [home after work] freely, eating and sleeping during the excavation were under the heavy surveillance of police. These police, usually in pairs, carried clubs and went around the barracks at night. Once in a while, a military policeman came along. And he shouted "work" and hit us. "Don't sleep", and hit us. If we didn't say a word, he would shout "say something". If we said anything, he would shout "don't say a word" and hit us. There was no way to talk to each other… (Kamejimayama chikakōjō wo kataritsugu kai, 2013, p. 34)

It was this effort to retrieve testimony of the suffering experienced by the colonised and "discover[ing] ethnic people" (*minzoku no hakken*) by those students and teachers that pushed some concerned local people to form the Association for Transmitting Kamejima Mountain Underground Plant (hereafter Transmitting Kamejima Association) in 1988. The Transmitting Kamejima Association researched how the plant was built, assessed the condition of the underground facilities, and analysed existing and potential strategies for conserving and publicising the remains. These civil activities contributed to the Kurashiki town government's decision to erect a small monument near the site in 1996 that included a mention of the mobilisation of Korean labour (Figure 3).[10] This effort to expose the dark heritage contributed to the forging of new relations with Koreans living in the Kurashiki area. Educational activities such as incorporating various cultural events to introduce Korean customs and culture into high-school extracurricular activities, forming expeditions to return the remains of Korean labourers to their families, and inviting Korean youths on field trips to the underground plant were all introduced. In this respect, "the underground plant transformed into a symbol for the 'coexistence' of different ethnic people" (Kamejimayama chikakōjō wo kataritsugu kai, 2013, p. 33).

Soon after the erection of the monument in Kurashiki, the activities of the Transmitting Kamejima Association came to a standstill, until the Association was reorganised in 2008. One direct event that triggered the reorganisation of the Transmitting Kamejima Association was an incident that occurred in one of the underground tunnels in Kagoshima in 2005, when four middle-school students accidentally died during a trip to the site. Alarmed by the accident, in 2009 national and local governments alike carried out a nationwide investigation

of "special underground tunnels", which resulted in the forced closure of the KMUP to public visits in 2010 on the grounds that the place was not safe (Mainichi Newspaper, 17 August 2013). In the face of this regulation, the Transmitting Kamejima Association reactivated its investigations, research and interviews, and hosted a national symposium in an effort to have the underground site legitimised as a cultural property.

Conclusion

The ongoing civic movements to conserve the relics of empire underground are committed to making the dark history of wartime Japan come alive. Embedded in the particular local experiences of discrimination against and inflicting suffering on peoples on the margins of the wartime empire, underground war-related sites in Okinawa, Matsushiro and Kurashiki are becoming tangible anchors for reimagining and reconfiguring social relations in contemporary Japan.

To be sure, Japanese heritage-making in general shows, as it does elsewhere, a predisposition to the mainstream historical narrative and predilection of state apparatus to develop consensual sites of memory by dislodging the voices and experiences of the marginalised. In this respect, the dark heritage-making practices and activities continue to develop and sustain themselves throughout the periphery of the Japanese archipelago. Local efforts rooted in Matsushiro and Kurashiki, for instance, are still struggling in their quest to legitimise underground sites as cultural properties.

Still, it is increasingly difficult to refute the growing potential and possibilities of war-related sites functioning as effective "communal mnemonic devices" for creating shared memory (Margali, 2002, pp. 52–54). The civil activities of dark heritage-making are questioning the abstracted official remembrance of culturally homogenised wartime experiences by calibrating diversified perspectives derived from locally and ethnically cultivated memories. As seen in all three cases, the underground war-related sites are serving as signposts for the "discovery of ethnic people" in the Japanese memory-scape of the Asia-Pacific War and are supplying the civil movement with material and physical ground to shape its direction.

At the same time, the effectiveness of civil activism in legitimising war-related sites as cultural property is being achieved in collaboration with professionals and experts in archaeology, history and engineering. Joint efforts between activists and professionals to excavate, investigate, manage and publicise war-related sites provide leverage for local civil activism in negotiating with local authorities and administrations.

It remains to be seen how the local movements to conserve underground war-related sites will unfold. The strategies will necessarily vary according to local conditions. Given the common local circumstance in which residential populations and economic resources are declining, an increasing tendency to link dark heritage with the marketplace via tourism is detectable. Whatever methods the Network or other community engagements adopt, it is vital to make efforts for the continued discovery of ethnically diversified experiences and realities in order to transform the underground sites into a valuable heritage for Japan, Asia and the world.

Notes

1. See the organisation's official website, http://homepage3.nifty.com/kibonoie/isikinituto.htm.
2. In this respect, the dark heritage of Japan is comparable to the "undesirable heritage" of Germany bound up with the Nazi past. For "undesirable heritage", see Macdonald (2006).
3. On 15 August 1945, the emperor of Japan announced the acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration to end the war, and the official signing of the surrender document occurred on 2 September.
4. See Obinata (1998); Jūbishi (2001); Kikuchi (2001); Sensō iseki hozon zenkoku nettowaku (2004). The Network's position did not go unnoticed, and Japanese scholars of military history suggested the term "military heritage" *(gunji isan)* to refer to "the heritage bequeathed by the people engaged in military forces, military preparations and wars" (Gunji shigaku, 2013, p. 22).
5. As of August 2013, the Matsushiro Preservation Association is still struggling to make the underground complex a cultural property recognised by the local government.
6. The Himeyuri Student Nurse Corps is a representative and persistent symbol that embodies the idea of sacrificing Okinawa. The Corps consisted of female students from the top two girls' high schools who were mobilised. Most were killed, trapped between Japanese and US troops. See Angst (1997).
7. See also the official website of the tunnel complex at http://kaigungou.ocvb.or.jp/park.html.
8. In 1992, an appeal for "Conservation of the 32nd Army Headquarters Underground Complex" was made by an Okinawa civilian organisation called the "Association for Film and Field Recording of the Battle of Okinawa" to the mayor of Naha.
9. One of the appeals to the local government to recognise war-related sites as cultural property and articulate the sites by local organisations argued that the preservation of war-related sites was to preserve them as historical evidence of Okinawa being used to "buy time" to prepare for the "Final Battle" on the main islands. "Association for Film and Field Recording of the Battle of Okinawa" to the mayor of Naha (1992).
10. See Murata (2013). The monument, however, remains ambiguous on the point of how and why these Koreans were mobilised. It just states that "many people, including Koreans, were mobilised and worked under the watch of the military". During our field trip, one of the participants criticised the apparent ambiguity of the statement inscribed on the monument. A local activist acknowledged the ambiguity but mentioned that it was the best result they could get from their negotiations with the local authorities.

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