Archive photo of conscript laborers working on the Uryu Dam in the 1940s.

Volunteers working on an excavation near Shumarinai, Hokkaidō, in 1997.

But the project continues. Reverend Tonohira continues to appeal to Japanese citizens to take up the task of repatriating more of the 10,000 Korean laborers' souls yet buried in Japanese soil.

The student workshops continue to serve as a venue where Japanese, Koreans, and zainichi can speak openly about issues of prejudice and how to create human harmony across East Asian national borders.

Now, the project has a new initiative we call Steppingstones for Peace. For each victim of forced labor in Hokkaidō, we are creating a small bronze tablet inscribed with his name and life details. We are placing these near each man's old home in Korea. Near each labor site in Hokkaidō, we are placing a tablet that lists the names of the men who were sacrificed. The idea comes from a project in Germany named the *Stolperstein* that has placed over 60,000 such monuments near the homes of victims of the Holocaust throughout Europe.

The men deserve to be remembered not as abstract numbers but as individuals who experienced unique lives. We must admit the truth of the past that governments would rather deny—admit it not to dwell on it, but to use it as a launchpad for a more humane collective journey. ■

SUGGESTED READINGS

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—.*The Past Within Us: Media, Memory, History*. London: Verso, 2005.

Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History." *Representations* 26 (1989): 7–24.

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NOTES

1. The editors wish to thank William Underwood for his help in confirming this statistic.

BYUNG-HO CHUNG is Professor and Chair of the Department of Cultural Anthropology at Hanyang University, and President of the Korean Society for Cultural Anthropology, South Korea. For almost two decades, he has planned and practiced the excavations and repatriations of the remains of Korean forced labor victims in Hokkaidō, Japan. He has also founded Steppingstones for Peace, a Korean NGO, which organizes the commemorative activities for national reconciliation and peace. His books and articles include *North Korea: Beyond Charismatic Politics* (with Heonik Kwon, 2012) and "North Korean Refugees as Penetrant Transnational Migrants" (*Urban Anthropology*, 2014).

So Long Asleep
Waking the Ghosts of a War

Produced and Directed by David Plath

DVD, 60 minutes, Color

An MPG Production, 2016

Documentary available through Documentary Educational Resources beginning July 2017. Visit www.der.org to order a copy and for more information on the documentary.

Reviewed by Franklin Rausch

So Long Asleep: Waking the Ghosts of a War is a well-produced documentary that traces the finding, excavation, and repatriation in 2015 of the remains of 115 Korean conscript laborers whom the Japanese forced to work in Hokkaidō, Japan, and who died during World War II (referred to as the Asia–Pacific War in the documentary). The documentary focuses mostly on interviews with the volunteers who traveled to Hokkaidō to exhume the remains of the laborers, footage of the work itself, and sites of commemoration for the deceased. As such, it touches upon a multitude of subjects, including colonial history, peace and reconciliation, memories of the war and how they influence contemporary politics in Japan and Korea, and how the living relate to the dead, particularly in religious terms.

So Long Asleep begins with a quote from Richard Flanagan's *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (Vintage Books, 2015): "For if the living let go of the dead, their own life ceases to matter," establishing one of the central themes for this documentary: the importance of remembrance. Subtitles then explain that young Korean men were taken as conscript laborers to Japan during the Asia–Pacific War, that some died there and were buried in shallow graves, and that seventy years following the end of the war, they were being taken home by volunteers. It is later noted that state-to-state talks to repatriate remains had failed to make progress. As this is explained, a procession of white-gloved Koreans and Japanese carry white cloth-wrapped boxes behind a man bearing a memorial stone, as a Japanese-accented man's voice reads the Korean names of the deceased. Then, Tonohira Yoshihiko, a Japanese Buddhist priest, is interviewed (we only hear his answers, not the questions), and he describes how when visiting a dam with some friends, he met with an elderly woman who informed him that she helped take care of a Buddhist temple that no longer had a resident priest

SPECIAL SEGMENT

Koreans and Japanese: Honoring Colonial Lives

Byung-Ho and Tonohira lead the procession to the ceremony on the grounds of Nishi-Honganji Temple in Kyoto, Japan.

A Korean woman sings during the ceremony in Pusan, South Korea.

and that housed memorial tablets that did not belong to local families. She asked him to examine them. He discovered that they were the tablets of Koreans and Japanese who had died building the dam. Tonohira then goes on to describe his and other volunteers' efforts to gather and cremate the dead, and give them a place on the altar so they could have memorial services. However, his meeting with Byung-ho Chung, then a graduate student but now a professor of anthropology and social activist, led to the establishment of international workshops to continue to expand efforts to recognize the deceased laborers. This would later also include the site of an unfinished airfield in another part of Hokkaidō and a plan to repatriate the remains to Korea. Another Korean anthropologist who became involved in the project, Son Ki-cha, recalls during his interview that the workshops built a sense of togetherness between Koreans, Korean-Japanese, and Japanese. This, with the many interviews with Chung and Tonohira together that explore their friendship, underlines the theme of reconciliation that also stands at the center of this documentary.

In addition to these interviews discussing the recovery of remains, a great deal of attention is paid to their actual repatriation, covering the journey from Hokkaidō to Seoul, with stops in Hiroshima, Shimonoseki, and Pusan, clearly marked with graphics of a map that show the cities and the route traveled, an important aid to people unfamiliar with the geography of the area. Interviews and scenes of commemorative events at such locations as the excavation sites, Japanese Buddhist temples, a Korean Anglican church, and the Seoul Municipal Cemetery where a monument with alcoves for the deceased was built, with the placing of the remains there, serve as the climax of the film.

So Long Asleep takes a minimalist approach with subdued music and no omnipresent narrator other than a few English subtitles. Instead, it focuses on interviews that mostly describe the work of recovery, repatriation, and commemoration, and clips from fieldwork and commemorative sites. This simple approach does an excellent job of drawing the viewer in—it feels as if one is taking part in a conversation, actually witnessing or even participating in the events presented, creating a sense of warmth and intimacy. The views and experiences of participants, as well as the theme of reconciliation, are thus conveyed in a gentle, even matter, avoiding the anger that can mark such experiences that might alienate audiences in the West and making more palatable expressions of cultural difference, such as when a Korean primary schoolteacher describes the sense of intimacy she felt through her contact with the bones of the deceased.

The documentary proceeds in a roughly chronological order, describing the recovery of the remains, narrating the journey of repatriation, and culminating in the placing of the remains in the alcove. The documentary also touches on important political themes. For instance, Park Wonsoon, the mayor of Seoul at the time, is shown to be a friend of Chung and to have offered a place for the repatriates' remains at the Seoul Municipal Cemetery when he learned that the bureaucratic requirements of the National Cemetery would make interment there impossible for most of the dead. Chung's identity as a social activist and his memories of both receiving a medal for scouting from the dictator Park Chung Hee and later his protest of the dictator by printing a dissident newsletter (which earned him an eight-year suspended sentence) connect him with the political left. Similarly, Tonohira recalls during his interviews his desire to avoid following in his father's footsteps as a Buddhist priest and his participation in anti-government protests in the 1960s, until his encounters with clergy who combined social activism with their religious vocation led him to continue in the family profession. Both Chung and Tonohira are clear in their criticism of failure to accomplish repatriation on a state-to-state level, with the latter emphasizing that while the government of Japan and the corporations who used the Korean workers were responsible, he too as a citizen had a responsibility, thus leading to his decision to take part in the repatriation work. Chung also emphasizes in his interview the pain of remembering this history, but the need to do so in order to prevent it from occurring again. Similarly, Tonohira emphasizes that the commemorative events carried out on the journey will give Japanese people an opportunity to remember past wrongdoing "and to face realities and the truth of the past." Such statements mesh well with Chung's juxtaposing the arrival of the remains in Pusan with Prime Minister Shinzō Abe's attempt "to pass the security law" and the "attempt at denying forced labor and denying the Peace Constitution," showing how Japanese and Koreans might ally together against one of their governments on the issue. Moreover, the documentary also reports how a local Japanese monument to the laborers who died during the building of the airfield had been created, but protests from the far right prevented its being unveiled. Thus, viewers of this documentary will be introduced in an organic way to the complex political divisions both between and within Japan and Korea.

Religion is another important theme throughout the documentary. Buddhist priests make frequent appearances, and volunteers can be seen performing Buddhist protestations and deep Korean bows. Buddhist Priest Tonohira explains that as Japanese people prepare to die, they often

A procession of volunteers carries the carefully wrapped and boxed remains to the stage at the public commemoration service in Seoul City Square.

Attendants place the urns in individual alcoves at the Seoul Municipal Cemetery.

listen to priests chanting *sutras* for consolation. While Tonohira notes that it cannot be certain whether such chanting consoles the dead, it does offer the living the opportunity to express their compassion for them. Another particularly striking interview is when a Japanese Buddhist priest whose temple hosted the remains for a night describes how he was moved by young Korean student volunteers singing *Arirang* (a popular Korean folk song) in front of the altar to include the souls of the deceased in his future daily prayers, again underlining the theme of reconciliation. Other religious traditions are also included, with Ainu shamans performing rituals, Korean shamans singing and dancing, and officiants in an Anglican church in Korea holding a liturgy that included reading the names of the deceased.

Although the actions of these religious leaders are important, that of laypeople is also included, for instance, the schoolteacher's intimacy with the dead described earlier, as well as their invitation when honoring the dead to be "receptive" when meeting them so that they might learn from the deceased. Particularly striking is the overnight hosting of the dead in temples and the aforementioned Anglican church so that they might be treated as human guests rather than "cargo." Thus, just as this documentary introduces the complexities of Korean and Japanese politics, it also clearly illustrates the lived realities of religious life in both countries.

While the minimalist approach taken by this documentary described above serves it well, there are some areas where more context would have helped. For instance, though Tonohira muses at the beginning about what could have killed so many young men, little is said about the lives of those Korean conscript laborers, the Japanese youth in similar situations, or the unsafe working conditions in which they worked. Particularly unfortunate is that even though Tonohira emphasizes that the men who died were individuals and not simply a nameless mass, in the end, we learn nothing about them as such. Including an interview somewhere that would offer more of this information, and possibly one to tie together the complex political situation surrounding repatriation and relations between the countries, would have been helpful for nonspecialists and those who wish to use this in the classroom. Finally, while the subtitles are well done, they are lacking in several areas, notably when shamans are speaking or singing, during the chanting of Buddhist sutras, and for a Korean song during a commemorative event in Seoul. Though these would have been particularly challenging to translate, it would have been helpful to include them.

The above observations notwithtanding, this is an excellent documentary that touches upon a host of fascinating issues, and it is highly recommended. The documentary shown in its entirety is probably best-suited for upper-level undergraduates, since younger students might have difficulty following it. However, shown in segments with discussion interspaced throughout, it would work from the middle school level on up through high school and beginning university courses. Instructors are highly encouraged to watch the documentary thoroughly first to determine what sort of additional political, historical, and religious information should be provided, as students might have difficulty connecting and understanding the documentary's political and religious themes. It should be noted that this documentary would not only be helpful in classes on history and politics, but also on religion. Instructors might find the following questions useful:

1. What are the causes behind the difficult relations between Japan and Korea? What role did Korean conscript workers play in their relationship? How did the people in this video try to heal the relationship between Japan and Korea?
2. Byung-ho Chung said that he hoped that by repatriating the conscript laborers' bodies back to Korea that future wars might be avoided. How do you think repatriation helped with this goal?
3. What role did religion play in how the dead were commemorated in this documentary?
4. Why do you think the repatriation of the bodies of these conscript laborers was so politically sensitive?
5. What were some areas of cultural difference between your own culture and what you saw in this documentary? Try to explain why people might behave differently in these circumstances.
6. Would you be willing to take part in one of the workshops and recover remains? Why or why not?
7. This video did not describe how Korea became a colony or why Japanese forcibly conscripted Korean laborers. Try to answer these questions.
8. What role might people in the West play in helping bring reconciliation between Japan and Korea? ■

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