

Report 5

Lee Woo-yeon (Naksungdae Institute of Economic Research Committee member)

The Migration, Mobilization, Working Environment, and Daily Lives of Korean Laborers at the Sado Mines, 1940-1945: A Critique of the “Forced Mobilization” and “Forced Labor”

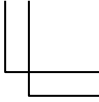
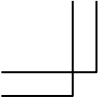
Arguments

1. How was the Korean Wartime Mobilization Carried Out?

South Korean and Japanese media reports and previous studies on Korean migration and mobilization to the Sado mines during the war have all been mere recapitulations of the sentiments expressed in Record of the Forced Mobilization of Koreans, published in 1965 by a non-professional, self-proclaimed “expert” researcher. The author was a teacher at the Chongryon’s Korea University who made no attempt to hide the fact that his purpose in publishing it was to prevent the restoration of diplomatic relations between South Korea and Japan. He argued that the process by which Koreans were brought to Japan was “slavery” – that is, “forced mobilization” – and that in Japan, they were used in “slave labor”, or “forced labor”.


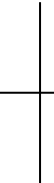
Koreans were mobilized across three stages: “recruitment”, “official mediation”, and “conscription”. Recruitment was precisely that; company representatives traveled to Korea, where it was public knowledge among farmers that they had come to hire employees. “Official mediation” differed from recruitment only in that the local police voluntarily provided administrative support to recruiters dispatched from Japan, while “conscription” was legally enforced (those who did not comply faced up to one year in prison and a fine of up to ¥1,000 JPY. To put this into perspective, the wholesale price of rice in Seoul between 1939-45 was ¥38-47 JPY per 1.8kg, according to the Historical Statistics of Korea Vol.2, p.822, 2018, edited by Kim Nak-nyeon, Park Ki-joo, Park Lee-taek, and Cha Myung-su). However, conscription also entailed a lengthy series of legal procedures that took approximately an entire month; first, a summons was issued to conscripts. Once they received this, they were then obliged to take a medical examination, after which – if they were deemed medically fit – they finally reported for duty at the designated place and time. Accounts from those who claim to have been whisked away “while sleeping at home”, “while working in the fields”, or “forcibly mobilized” do not comport with the facts. This misconception is believed to stem from the conflation of the “street recruitment” that took place during the Korean War (coercive enlistment in front of schools, in homes, and on the streets without an official summons) with the wartime mobilization under colonial occupation.

Unlike the “recruitment” that took place from September 1939, the mobilization of Koreans



under “official mediation” from February 1942 was based on a 1940 “Labor Resources Survey” by the Government-General of Korea. How the Korean authorities dealt with the mobilization during this phase varied significantly, which manifested in an equally varied degree of “coercion”. The reason for this is that there was no law stipulating the methods by which Koreans were to be mobilized or any punishment for those who failed to comply; labor division personnel from Japanese companies, the Government-general of Korea, and the local police simply disseminated public information administratively to young Korean men and solicited or coaxed them into applying.

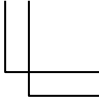
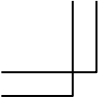
2. A Case Study of Sado: Concerning wages



Even before the initiation of the Japanese government’s wartime labor mobilization in September 1939 and the Sado mines’ subsequent recruitment of Koreans in line with this policy in February 1940, migrant Korean workers who had come to Japan to earn money were already employed at the mines. These more experienced workers would have served in the capacity of mentors and directors for the wartime laborers. In a broad sense, from the perspective of the corporate sector, mobilization was a means of addressing labor shortages (although the Japanese government’s perspective may differ), while for Koreans, it was characterized by the movement of labor outside the Korean Peninsula or emigration. Considered in this light, the nature of the wartime migration of Koreans to Japan is contiguous with that of post-liberation migration.


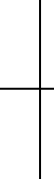
As with other establishments, Korean workers at the Sado mines, including those recruited under conscription from September 1944, were paid wages on a regular basis. For both Koreans and Japanese, compulsory savings, labor income tax, health insurance premiums, and pension insurance were deducted from their salaries. With the exception of savings, these deductions were not so large, and Koreans were free to decide whether to send the money to their families in Korea or spend it locally. The most notable discrepancy between the Japanese and Koreans in terms of deductions was the compulsory savings, but this was because, unlike Japanese workers, many Koreans were single workers with no families, and they had a much greater capacity to save than Japanese with families to support.

A comparison of the amount of money that the Sado mines did not – or could not – pay Koreans which was deposited with the Legal Affairs Bureau (an average of ¥203 JPY per person, in the case of the Sado mines) and the amount deposited by other Mitsubishi and Mitsui (another large conglomerate) affiliates with the monthly wages they paid around 1945 (an average of over ¥100 JPY at the Sado mines) shows that the total amount was equivalent to one or two months’ wages – a decidedly small sum. Firstly, for fugitives and those who returned to the



peninsula immediately following the end of the war, the reimbursement of such an insignificant amount of money was evidently not worth waiting for. Secondly, compared to the wages they had received up to that point, the money deducted was a relatively small amount for the individuals who decided not to pursue payment. Therefore, this deposited money cannot be used as the basis for forced labor without compensation or for systematic and large-scale exploitation.

3. The Case of Sado: Daily Life and Treatment

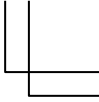
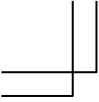


Koreans who came to Japan during the war, including those at the Sado mines, were better off than the peasants who remained in Korea in terms of housing (the rent for both dormitories and housing and use of communal facilities such as bathhouses were either free of charge or far below market price), staple foods (including rice, wheat, and beans), and calorie intake. Just before the end of the war, the menu and amount of food provided were the same for both Korean and Japanese laborers. However, this resulted in a relative shortage of food since Koreans were more voracious eaters than the Japanese. This shortage, in conjunction with the fact that condiments (pepper and garlic) were not provided, caused dissatisfaction among the Koreans. When the distribution system was impacted by a poor harvest and the U.S. bombing campaign in the final days of the war, Koreans faced the same hardships as the Japanese wrought by food shortages. Henceforth, research systematically comparing the living standards of Koreans who came to Japan with those of the farmers who remained in Korea will be required.

More Koreans lived with their families at the Sado mines than in other mines that employed mobilized Koreans. It is speculated that the reason for this was that many Koreans came to Japan as migrant workers and secured employment even before the labor mobilization commenced in 1939.

The higher number of casualties and severe injuries among Koreans compared to Japanese at the Sado mines and other wartime worksites were not due to any particular racial discrimination but merely a result of the coalescence of labor supply and demand at the workplaces. In other words, healthy, young and middle-aged Japanese men were drafted into the army (Japanese troops overseas numbered 950,000 in 1937, 3.58 million in 1943, 5.4 million in 1944, and 7.34 million in 1945. By the end of the war, 60.9% of men aged 20-40 were enlisted in the military, and 2 million had died), the result of which was that young, healthy Koreans worked in the pits in their stead.

In the case of the Sado mines, there were far fewer disputes than at other work sites; since the


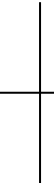


mobilization began in 1940, there were a total of three cases of group demonstrations by Koreans. These incidents were due to insufficient provisions of food in the dormitories, the rental cost of work equipment, and a “rescue” attempt of colleagues who were reported to the police for gambling.

4. Runaways are Not Evidence of Forced Labor

The percentage of Korean fugitives at the Sado mines was infinitely lower than at other sites. This is believed to be because of the excellent treatment Koreans were afforded, the low risk of accidents compared to coal mines and the fact that many Koreans lived with their families. Although many wartime mobilized workers fled, this was also the case even before the war. The same was true on the Korean peninsula, and although the scale was much smaller than that of Koreans, a significant number of Japanese laborers also abandoned their jobs.

These instances of desertion differ considerably from the allegations of the “forced labor theory” and cannot be deemed “Korean dissent.”



Runaways simply sought to avoid working underground in coal and other mines, such as the Sado mines, where approximately 60% of the Koreans were mobilized. Not only those who fled during their time at the mines but all those who used labor mobilization as a safe means of traveling to Japan without incurring travel expenses (fleeing upon arrival in Japan in areas such as Fukuoka or with the help of Korean brokers they had contacted beforehand in major cities such as Osaka, Kyoto, and Tokyo), those who fled after the expiration of their contracts using the money they received from the company for their return ticket, or fled while their family members were repatriated to Korea all remained in Japan to seek employment at companies offering better pay and working conditions.

No special policies or measures were adopted by the Japanese government to find these fugitives, and even if they were caught, they were simply fined the equivalent of 20-40% of their monthly wages, with deportation to Korea reserved as the most severe punishment. Fugitives were also welcomed with high wages at munitions factories and other sites where military installations were being constructed, due in part to the vast capital these establishments possessed but also because labor was in extremely short supply.

To claim that these fugitives constituted a form of “resistance,” or even a facet of some kind of “anti-imperialist” or “anti-war” struggle while ignoring such circumstances is an ideological distortion of history.


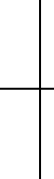
As was the case at other mines, at the Sado mines, too, many of those Koreans who had fled to work elsewhere returned following the end of the war on August 15, 1945, where they received



the money for their return to Korea in accordance with the policy of the Japanese government.

5. The Need to Bring the Historical Facts to Light

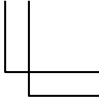
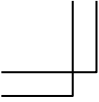
Was the mobilization of Koreans really “forced mobilization”? Although recruitment and official mediation were at times supported on an administrative level by the Government-General or local police, the relationship between Koreans and Japanese companies was fundamentally contractual. Contracts were concluded in Korea or upon arrival at the companies in Japan. The reason for this was that, although in the case of official mediation, there were cases where the Governor-General’s Office employed coercive measures in convincing them to go to Japan, if Koreans point-blank refused to go or fled to another part of Korea, there were no legal means by which Japanese companies or the Government-General could force them to assent. In contrast, conscription involves legal sanctions, and the concept itself is literally that of forced mobilization. In other words, it is clear that “forced mobilization” is a tautology in the case of conscription, but coercion in the case of recruitment and official mediation cannot be defined as “forced mobilization”.



So, can the mobilization of Koreans be considered “forced labor”? Relying on the Forced Labor Convention promulgated by the ILO in 1932 and ratified by Japan in the same year, leftist forces in Korea and Japan argue that Korean wartime mobilization was forced labor and that Japan violated this Convention. However, not only is the interpretation that wartime labor does not correspond to forced mobilization but is a matter of the survival of the community and the nation gaining significant credence, but South Korea ratified the Convention in February 2021, perfectly illustrating the reality that the interpretation and application of the Convention vary according to the circumstances of each country.

The more important issue regarding the “Forced Labor Convention” is the relationship between the concepts stipulated in the laws and the Convention and the historical facts. Whatever these concepts may be, they cannot alter the objective reality of history. Nevertheless, leftist forces are obsessed with the concept of “forced labor” in the above-mentioned Convention and try to bind the Korean and Japanese people to it in order to force upon free citizens a subjective, collective, and ideological “image” of history already formed by the concept of “forced labor” rather than objective historical facts, i.e., a dominating cultivated view of history. This is not an objective historical fact but a subjective, collective, and ideological “image” of history already formed by the concept of “forced labor,” i.e., a dominating cultivated view of history that is being forced upon free citizens.


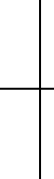
Therefore, the most fundamental task is still that of clarifying the historical facts on the issue of



whether wartime labor mobilization does or does not constitute “forced labor” and to fight against the existing distorted fictions.

The work Korean wartime laborers engaged in cannot be considered “forced labor”. First, recruitment and official mediation were contractual in nature, and thus the duration of the contract was clearly specified. When the Sado mines recruited Koreans in 1940, the contract period was three years, whereas most other workplaces had two-year contracts.

As a result of labor shortages, Japanese companies offered various incentives to Koreans whose contracts had expired, such as visits home, financial incentives, wage increases, and encouraged them to invite their families so that they might renew and extend their contracts. Although some claim that companies coerced the Koreans into extending their contracts, this was not legally enforceable, and it was, in fact, Korean laborers who frequently reneged on their periods of contract. As many as 40% of workers abandoned their workplaces at their discretion. Companies were, of course, never compensated for this. Koreans had the authority and freedom to decide whether to return to Korea or renew their contracts once the initial contract period concluded, as well as more bargaining power.

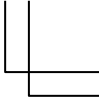
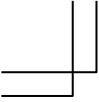


The fact that Japanese companies deported Koreans who were negligent of their duties as well as ringleaders in group demonstrations as “delinquents”, and granted workers with personal reasons or extended contracts “temporary leave” – many of whom did not return – also contradicts the claim of “forced labor”. At the time, Koreans (including those at the Sado mines) were paid higher wages than factory hands and clerical workers, were guaranteed the right to be absent from work in the case of illness and other extenuating circumstances, and enjoyed such freedom in their daily lives that alcohol and other sundry activities became an issue. Because the Japanese government and companies gave top priority to the labor productivity of Koreans, there was no mandated or systemic discrimination between Japanese and Koreans in terms of labor, working environment, food, clothing, or housing.

After working hours and on the three to four days off they received each month, they were free to go out. There were no “barbed-wire fences”, “watchtowers”, or “military police with guns” surveilling Koreans as they worked to prevent their escape. The Korean “forced labor” depicted in movies such as *Battleship Island* is pure fiction.


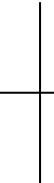
6. Koreans who came to Japan of Their Own Volition

Approximately 2.4 million Koreans traveled to Japan during the period of wartime labor mobilization (1939-45). However, only about 720,000 came to Japan under the wartime mobilization of Japanese companies and the Tokyo government. As the gates to Japan were



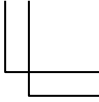
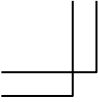
thrown wide open with the commencement of wartime mobilization, about 1.68 million people emigrated to the home islands, the majority of whom were itinerant workers who had come to stay for several years and earn money. Due to the marked weakening of restrictions on travel to Japan and the extreme shortage of labor, there were also many stowaways that were not reflected in the statistics, and their number is consequently unknown. At the time, these migrant workers who came to Japan to earn money irrespective of the wartime mobilization were known in Japan as “general laborers” or “non-mass migrant workers.”

During the same period, about 25% of the 720,000 people who came to Japan under wartime mobilization were recruited, 40% were hired through official mediation, and 35% were conscripted. Since recruitment was fundamentally voluntary, and about 40% of those recruited through official mediation and conscription deserted and became free laborers, 55% ($25\% + 75\% \times 0.6$) of the wartime laborers were free. There were undoubtedly many workers among those who came to Japan through official mediation or conscription who willingly accepted their placement at sites offering high incomes (for example, those who extended their contracts or found employment at other workplaces after the expiration of their contracts), but precisely how many is still unknown. Ultimately, even by conservative estimates, 45% of the wartime workforce, or about 320,000 people, moved to Japan regardless of whether they wanted to or not.


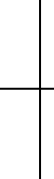


Because 320,000 out of 2.4 million cannot be used to define the nature of Korean emigration to Japan between 1939 and 1945, precedence must be given to the 2.08 million. Moreover, as seen in the case of the Sado mines, there were already Korean workers who had emigrated to Japan before September 1939. As the example of the Sumitomo Konomai Gold Mine shows, they played an essential role in directing and managing the wartime laborers, and this would have been the case at other sites, including the Sado mines. These more than 2.08 million free laborers and 320,000 wartime workers were not mutually exclusive; they coexisted in the Japanese labor market, sometimes working in the same factories or mines. Escape was a route for wartime workers to become free laborers, and sites that employed wartime workers had to be aware of the existence of free laborers in more favorable conditions, such as surface workers and relatively high wages.

Overall, this period was the first time in its history that Korea saw a veritable explosion in free migrant work in such a short period of time, which can be largely attributed to the free expatriates who pioneered an expanded sphere of economic activity. It was during this period that the international migration that unfolded during the so-called “first wave of globalization” from the 1870s to World War I and the Korean international migration that developed in the



wake of liberation began. Even though this migration was colonial in form and took place during the war, the fundamental nature of it was that of overseas migration. The term “colonial” refers to the fact that this migration took place under the rule of the Japanese colonizers and that migrants were treated as “second-class citizens” in accordance with the rapidly changing policies on Koreans traveling to Japan from 1937 onward. While “second-class citizen” may allude to the possibility of racial discrimination against Koreans due to their “second-class” status, it also implies that Koreans were foreigners and prisoners of war who had rights and obligations as Japanese “nationals”. This is suitably expressed in the fact that Koreans were subject to “conscription” and could choose to “run away”, if they so wished.



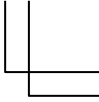
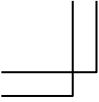
The “wartime” nature of Korean wartime immigration refers to the fact that labor immigration took place under the exceptional circumstances of war when freedom of employment was restricted; that is, Koreans were obliged to work in occupations they shunned in coal mines and other mines, where they received preferential treatment. At the same time, the war resulted in the rapid and large-scale expansion of possibilities for immigrants in a very short period of time. The labor shortage brought about by the massive conscription of Japanese men dictated that the treatment of Koreans be determined not by market equilibrium but by the extra-economic policies of the Japanese government and corporations, paradoxically resulting in a situation in which the wages and benefits the colonized people were afforded exceeded their human capital. Wartime migration thus developed in seemingly contradictory and complex ways.

I propose that the movement of Koreans to Japan during 1939-45 be understood as a form of “colonial and wartime overseas migration”, and that the wartime labor mobilization be seen as a facet of it. Koreans and Japanese alike must identify with this perspective in accepting the registration of the Sado mines as a World Heritage site.

7. Official Mediation


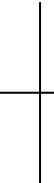
“Official mediation” was an administrative measure without any legal regulation whereby government authorities (county office officials and local police) assisted employees dispatched by Japanese companies in carrying out mobilization, the success of which varied depending on their commitment.

Essentially, 1) it could not be decisively enforced because there was no legal basis that stipulated the procedures for mobilization or punishment in the case of non-compliance. 2) The mobilization process varied depending on a combination of the efforts of the Japanese company labor department staff charged with recruiting and leading the mobilization, the county labor officials and clerks, police stations and sub-stations, the cooperation and willingness of



landowners and wardens, the cooperation of rural Koreans, and the evasion and resistance of the Korean people. How the Korean authorities dealt with the mobilization during this phase varied significantly, which manifested in an equally varied degree of “coercion”. Consequently, the results of the mobilization also varied according to the county.

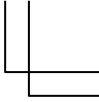
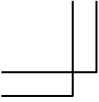
As an indicator of the level of success achieved by wartime mobilization, the frequency of escapes can be considered along with the number of mobilized personnel. However, desertion in and of itself cannot be interpreted as Korean aversion to going to Japan. They shunned jobs at mines, where they would be compelled to work underground digging for coal and gold, evidenced by the fact that they did not return to their hometowns in Korea after fleeing their worksites but worked at other business entities in Japan, such as construction sites and factories. In this respect, the flight of Koreans is much like the recent phenomenon of Southeast Asian workers fleeing their workplaces in South Korea.




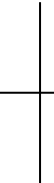
On March 12, 1940, letters were sent from the Director-General of the Bureau of Internal Affairs to the governors of each province, instructing them to “set the ideal area of arable land in consideration of the local conditions (as of the end of March 1939), prepare a “Labor Resource Survey Report”, and submit it to the Korean Governor-General by the end of April.” (Noh Yong-jeong (2016), p. 196) Five surveyors were assigned to each township, with a total of 11,355 people mobilized across 2,271 townships nationwide. (Noh Yong-jeong (2016), p. 198) For example, South Chungcheong Province surveyed labor resources in 167 areas under its jurisdiction and reported to the Bureau of Internal Affairs on May 17, 1940. This was a survey of 16,700 houses (equivalent to 7.8% of a total of 223,372 houses) carried out by 835 surveyors (Noh Yong-jeong (2016), p294).

It has been confirmed that the Governor-General of Korea surveyed and reviewed labor resources throughout Korea in July 1939. Following this, on March 12, 1940, it issued its report “Concerning the Matter of the Investigation of Labor Resources” to the governors of each province through the Director General of the Bureau of Internal Affairs. The Governor-General instructed each county and township through the provincial governments to “set the ideal area of arable land in consideration of the local conditions (as of the end of March 1939), prepare a “Labor Resource Survey Report,” and submit it to the Korean Governor-General by the end of April.” Towns and other administrative units were excluded from this survey, which covered only townships, the number of those who were able to work as migrant laborers or change occupations, as well as the number of those who wished to do so (Noh Yong-jeong (2016), p. 196).

With budgetary support from the Office of the Governor-General of Korea, each province



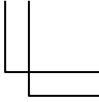
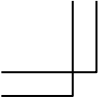
appointed a “person familiar with the circumstances in each province” as a surveyor to investigate the labor resources in each province. Five surveyors were assigned to each township, with a total of 11,355 people across 2,271 townships nationwide. (Noh Yong-jeong (2016), p. 198). For example, South Chungcheong Province spent approximately one month surveying the labor resources of 167 townships under its jurisdiction before reporting the results to the Bureau of Internal Affairs of the Office of the Korean Governor-General on May 17, 1940. This was a survey of 16,700 houses (equivalent to 7.8% of a total of 223,372 houses) carried out by 835 surveyors, with each surveyor in these five-man groups responsible for surveying 200 households for a total of 1,000 households per township. The number of those who were able to work as migrant laborers or change occupations, as well as the number of those who wished to do so, were also investigated (Noh Yong-jeong (2016), p. 196).




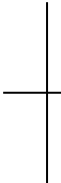
The household survey report included 12 categories: the head of household's permanent residence, address, occupation, the name and age of each family member, their relationship with the head of household, their name, age, state of health, whether or not they were migrant workers or wished to change jobs, the area of cultivated land, and living conditions (annual income and annual expenses). Occupations were divided into “landed farmer,” “landed tenant farmer,” “tenant farmer,” and “agricultural laborer,” while physical health was classified as either strong, average, or weak. Migrants and job-seekers were surveyed among men aged 20-44 and women aged 12-19 who were of average or better health (Noh Yong-jeong (2016), p. 196). When each county reported the results to the provincial governor, each province added up the results and reported them to the Governor-General's Office, which then added them all up and compiled the “Labor Resource Survey Report.”

The results of the surveys recorded in this report indicated that the ideal area of land for each household or house was 16-35 “banbo” (one banbo = 1/10 hectare); the ideal number of households nationwide was 2,035,264; the surplus number of houses was 1,023,491; the number of possible transferees among males aged 20-30, 31-40, and 41-45 (and females aged 12-19) was calculated to be 232,641, 534,068, 274,887, 118,581, and 927,536, respectively, while the corresponding numbers of those who expressed an interest in doing so were 20,767, 158,919, 61,502, and 21,893 for a total of 242,316. As of the end of 1936, the total area of cultivated land was 4,941,584 hectares, and the total number of farming households was estimated to be 3,058,755 (Ho Su-yeol (1985) 308-10).

The provinces with the largest number of excess households was South Jeolla with 161,722 households (accounting for 15.8% of all farmers in the province), followed by Gangwon with 142,296 households (13.9%), Gyeongbuk with 132,525 households (12.9%), South Gyeongsang



with 124,228 (12.1%) and North Jeolla with 85,418 (8.3%). As can be seen, the majority of the respondents (75.1%) were concentrated in Jeolla, Gangwon, and Gyeongsang Provinces. It is particularly interesting to note that the majority of potential and interested applicants were concentrated in the southern region (Gyeongsang, Jeolla, and Chungcheong) (Noh Yong-jeong (16), p. 201-202). The fact that workers mobilized to Japan also came primarily from this region proves that the official mediation was based on the “Labor Resource Survey Report.”



The Governor-General's Office, which conducted the survey from the end of March 1940, established and promulgated the “Labor Mediation Guidelines of the Korean Governor-General's Office” and its corresponding by-laws at the end of 1940. First, employers who wished to avail of worker placement services were to submit a plan for using workers to the provincial governor-general in charge of the area where the business was located. In accordance with this plan, the province would prepare a “Projected Manpower Requirements Protocol.” Based on the results of the “Labor Resource Survey,” the province established a “Provincial Labor Adjustment Plan” and reported it to the Governor-General's Office. The Governor-General's Office combined these “Provincial Labor Adjustment Plans” to formulate a “Headquarters Labor Adjustment Plan,” which was then dispatched to each province. Based on this, each province would then formulate a “Provincial Internal and External Mediation Implementation Plan” and issue it to each county while also informing business owners of its contents.

Once the Governor-General assigned and dispatched mediation personnel to each province, the provinces would then assign them to the counties and islands of the provinces, where they were in turn assigned to towns and townships. The towns and townships then set about compiling a list of “those who wish to work or change occupations” and “those who can work or change occupations,” and mobilizing laborers with the cooperation of the “National Federation of Towns and Townships” and the “League of Communities” within the same federation. At this time, towns and townships maintained close contact with the police and government officials. Meanwhile, the Governor-General of Korea enacted and promulgated the “Outline of the Mediated Migration of Koreans to the Home Islands” and its by-laws and began the “public dispatch of laborers recruited through official mediation” to Japan and other regions. (Hsu Hye-ryeol (1985), p. 306-328). However, no “list of applicants and potential applicants” has been found among these documents, and it may be assumed that no such physical list was actually created. This is because there is no trace of the extensive research personnel, time, and money that would have been spent on the field surveys.

8. Wage

Table: Wage Expenditures

Units: JPY/%.

Fiscal Year	Deductions				Remmitances	Balance	Total
	Meal Expenses	Savings	Other	Subtotal			
1940	15.24	13.37	11.78	40.39	24.84	6.72	71.95
	21.2	18.6	16.4	56.1	34.5	9.3	100.0
1941		11.5			21.52		52.96
		21.7			40.6		100
1943		23.62			24.07		79.99
		29.6	0	0	30.2		100.0
1944	18.00	45.00	25.00	88.00	40.00	22.00	150.00
	12	30	16.7	58.7	26.7	14.7	100.0
1945		67.16		67.16	36.88	20.75	124.79
		53.8		53.8	29.6	16.6	100.0

Sources: 1940: Japan Mining Association (1940), "Report on Korean Laborers," edited by Park Kyung-woo (1981) vol.2, p.1-300. 1941: Institute for Research on Labor Affairs (1942), "In Conversation with Korean Laborers Based at the Hitachi Mines, edited by Kyung-woo Park (1981), vol.1, p.90. 1943: Sumitomo Konomai Mining Co., statistics for January-March from the "1943 Report Concerning Koreans", edited by Yoshihiko Moriya (1991), *Historical Documents on the Wartime Forced Mobilization of Foreigners*, part 3, section 2. The numbers as of the end of March were the average for January to March. 1944: Kyushu Regional Coal Control Association, (1945), "Korean Personnel Management in Coal Mines," edited by Park Kyung-woo (1991) vol.2, p.209. 1945: Yoshihiko Moriya (1996: 128).

Table: Comparison with Other Occupational Wages

Fiscal Year	Occupations for Comparison	Monthly Income	Percentage
1940	Spinning and Weaving (Cotton Processing) in Seoul; Male workers	14.00	5.2
1940	Male Teachers in Seoul	15.96	4.6
1940	Male Company Employees in Seoul	21.00	3.5
1940	Male Bank Employees in Seoul	30.80	2.4
1943	Public Elementary School Teachers in Tokyo (initial wages)	55.00	1.5
1944	Police Officers in Japan (initial wages)	45.00	3.7
1944	Clerical Work in Japan (starting salary)	75.00	2.2

Sources: Lee Woo-yeon (2019), "The Fiction of Korean Wage Discrimination", edited by Lee Yong-Hoon, *Anti-Japanese Tribalism*, Bungeishunju. The wages of the workers in 1943 were reported by Tsutomu Nishioka (2022), "Ignorance of Primary Sources Among Proponents of the Forced Labor Theory," *Seiron*, April 2022 issue. Miners' wages for the same year are from the Sado mining operations' 1943 report *Concerning Korean Personnel Management*.

9. Industrial Accidents, Direct Laborers, and Pit Workers

66% percent of Koreans worked in the mines, where approximately 90% were pit workers. These unskilled and inexperienced Korean laborers were responsible for the most important and dangerous work in the mines, which led to an increase in industrial accidents, a decline in production efficiency, and an increase in the consumption of materials.

According to documents from the Labor Department of the Coal Mutual Aid Association, among pit workers, direct laborers included coal miners, bracers, and diggers, while indirect laborers included repairmen, haulers, pit operators, shop hands, miscellaneous workers, and assistants. Positions on the surface included assistants, coal dressers, haulers (surface), operators (surface), craftsmen, electricians, and miscellaneous laborers (assistants, haulers, operators, craftsmen, and miscellaneous workers worked both on the surface and in the pits).

Excluding both Japanese and Korean short-term laborers (Labor Service Corps, Volunteer Corps), 59,874 of the 212,604 general Japanese workers and 56,949 of the 83,299 mobilized Korean workers were engaged in direct labor (equivalent to 95.1% of the Japanese workers),

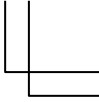
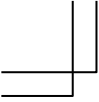
while 127,153 Japanese and 56,949 Koreans worked inside the mines (60.5% of the Japanese workers). (Shigeru Nagasawa (1987), p.157-159)

Organization and Mortality Rates of Korean and Japanese Direct Laborers, Pit Miners, and Surface Workers by Occupation in 179 Major Coal Mines in Japan

	Number of Workers					Percentage of Pit Miners (%)		
	Koreans	Japanese	Total	Korean Pit Workers	Japanese Pit Workers	Koreans	Japanese	Percentage of Pit Workers
A	1,036	5,648	6,684	984	3,890	95	68.9	1.38
B	947	5,427	6,374	—	—	—	—	—
C	2,527	6,648	9,220	—	—	—	—	—
D	365	933	1,298	—	—	—	—	—
E	314	1,036	1,350	—	—	—	—	—
F	506	1,413	1,990	494	933	97.6	66	1.48
Total	5,740	21,105	26,196	—	—	—	—	—


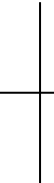
	Korean			Japanese		
	Dead	Severe injury	Total	Dead	Severe injury	Total
A	9	1	10	33	5	38
B	39	170	209	94	512	606
C	13	4	17	28	11	39
D	7	0	7	7	2	9
E	4	11	15	6	16	22
F	2	49	51	4	99	103
Total	74	235	309	172	645	817

	Koreans			Japanese			Korean/Japanese Ratio		
	Mortality Rate	Severe injury	Total	Mortality Rate	Severe injury	Total	Mortality Rate	Severe injury	Total
A	9	1	10	5.5	0.8	6.3	1.64	1.2	1.58
B	36.9	161	197.9	19.2	104.4	123.6	1.93	1.54	1.6
C	5.5	1.7	7.2	4.4	1.7	6.1	1.24	0.97	1.17
D	21.6	0	21.6	7.6	2.2	9.8	2.84	0	2.21
E	11.8	32.6	44.4	5.5	14.7	20.2	2.15	2.21	2.19
F	4.4	108.1	112.5	3	74.5	77.5	1.47	1.45	1.45
Total	13.3	42.4	55.7	8.3	31.3	39.6	1.6	1.36	1.41



The reason why Koreans met with so many accidents as described above is that most of them were underground laborers – engaged primarily in direct labor – and thus working under conditions where they were more prone to accidents; furthermore, the fact that they had been with the company for a much shorter period of time than their Japanese colleagues in conjunction with their relatively low proficiency meant that they were infinitely more vulnerable to accidents in the mines than the Japanese.

For example, according to the “Record of Disasters” in which accidents at the Joban Coal Field (which belonged to the Eastern Branch of the Coal Control Association) were recorded, the death rate of Koreans was 4.3 times higher than that of Japanese, and the casualty rate was 1.7 times higher (Yamada, et al. (2005), p.186). When discussing the high mortality and injury rates as compared to the Japanese, it is necessary to examine the ratio of direct laborers and underground laborers and their length of service, but there are very few data for this purpose, and few studies have been written from such a perspective.



In a 2019 research report authored by Chung Hye-kyung for the Foundation for Victims of Forced Mobilization by Imperial Japan, it was alleged that the death rate of Korean laborers across all regions of Japan was 0.9% (October 1939-October 1942), 0.6% in Fukuoka Prefecture, and 1.7% in the Konomai mines in January 1944, while the Inquiry Commission on Forced Mobilization related that “9 deaths account for 6% of the 148 deaths...This is remarkably high as compared to the contemporary mortality rates of coal mines and miners in Japan,” based on reports it had received concerning these “victims.”

However, these are highly exaggerated and fictional figures. As the 1943 data from the Sado mines shows, 1,005 Koreans were mobilized from February 1940 to May 1943, during which period only 10, or 0.1%, died.

Although it is, of course, possible that some of these workers may have died between May 1943 and August 15, 1945, most of the others – excluding fugitives – returned home once their contracts had expired, and since they only worked at the Sado mines after May 1942 for a very brief period, the number of additional deaths would subsequently have to have been quite low. If there were any credibility to Chung Hye-kyung’s assertion of a 6% mortality rate, there would have had to have been an additional 59 deaths, which is highly unrealistic.

On the contrary, the mortality rate at the Sado mines must be considered very low in comparison to other mines; unlike coal mines where over 40% of Koreans worked, gold mines had solid bedrock, far less risk of cave-ins, very little coal dust, and few gas explosions or fires. This is an example of how even the slightest misunderstanding or misinterpretation of statistics can lead to completely conflicting conclusions about objective historical facts and distort our view of history.

10. Silicosis

According to a book written by Teizo Hirose (Hirose (2000), p.13) and physician Ken Saito's 1944 report on silicosis at the Sado mines titled "Investigative Study and Addendum on Silicosis", the respective amounts of dust inhaled by workers were 810 cc for drillers, 360 for haulers, 350 cc for bracers, and 240 cc for miners. As noted earlier, at the time, these jobs were mostly occupied by Koreans.

As of the end of May 1943, there were 294 Koreans engaged in hauling, 123 in drilling, 56 in bracing, and 49 in outside transport. There were no Koreans in the occupations at the Sado mines classified as "miscellaneous." In contrast, the number of Japanese in miscellaneous jobs was 321, 85 worked in ore milling, 80 in hauling, 52 in general labor, 46 in leveling, and 39 in bracing (522 in total). It was also pointed out in *A Comprehensive History of Sado Aikawa* (1995) that Koreans were primarily pit workers engaged in hauling, drilling, and bracing (p. 681).

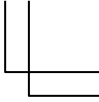
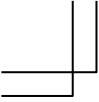
When dust mixed with silicic acid accumulates in the lungs, the mechanical and chemical effects of silicic acid cause inflammation of the lungs. This inflammation eventually leads to scarring of the lungs, which over time eventually causes problems with the lungs' ability to supply oxygen to the rest of the body. This chronic disease is called silicosis. (Doosan Encyclopedia)

Silicosis refers to chronic pulmonary mycosis. It also occurs in coal mines, and it was not limited to the Sado mines. Although the rate of onset varies depending on the concentration of silicic acid, it usually takes 15 to 20 years for silicosis to develop. The longest period of service for mobilized Korean workers was six years, typically two to three years, and just a few months for fugitives. The claims by Hirose (2000), the Foundation (2019), Chung Hye-kyung, and Lee Sang-yi (2021; 2022) that pulmonary mycosis occurred extensively among mobilized Korean laborers are most likely an exaggeration.

11. Disputes

In Teizo Hirose's book on group demonstrations and disputes (Hirose (2000), p. 13-14), two incidents of "conflict" by Koreans are noted. The first, on February 17, 1940, was "Due to the lack of facilities at the camp to accommodate all the (Koreans: the author)," requiring "about 40 (workers) to temporarily use the new dormitory run by employees of the mines. On February 17, the 40 lodgers, led by Choi Jae-man, demanded measures to address this. The mine accepted their request, and the situation was resolved on that day".


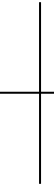
In the second incident, on April 11, 1940, 97 Korean workers in Kirinai Town in Sado County "went on strike demanding higher wages, complaining that after they had been paid their March



wages, the conditions were different from those they had received upon recruitment. The strike was “settled” on April 13 through the Aikawa Police Station, and the company “was to improve workers’ conditions.” However, the three ringleaders were deported to Korea. He also recounted that the reason for the dispute was the fact that the workers had to pay for their own food (¥0.5 JPY a day at the time), bedding (¥0.5 JPY per set), and all other necessities for work, such as jika-tabi (traditional Japanese footwear with a divided toe), which they assumed would be provided free of charge, as well as the extremely discriminatory attitude of several labor section employees.

Korean scholars of forced mobilization and forced labor argue that these demonstrations constituted a form of resistance against oppression and exploitation. Chung Hye-Kyung (2022) describes the disputes at the Sado mines as follows.

“Koreans mobilized under Japan’s national mobilization system resisted in various ways...(Introducing two cases of demonstrations over the issue of treatment: Lee Woo-yeon). Documents show that on April 29, 1942, when three Korean laborers from the Mitsubishi Sado mines were taken away by the police, 160 of their comrades stormed into the office to protest, leading to eight further arrests. In two of the three cases, the police intervened.”



Chung failed to elaborate on the substance of this apparent Korean “labor dispute” at the Sado mines. Describing this as “large-scale Korean resistance” is highly misleading. The reality, however, is that it may more accurately be regarded as a rather weak demonstration. Based on the *Special Higher Police Monthly Report*, Hirose (2000) posited that the incident was triggered by gambling, but it is unclear why it developed into a large-scale demonstration.

“In general, gambling was widely practiced in the “rooms” and dormitories of the mines. Koreans gradually began to adapt to this custom, gambling by candlelight late at night in secluded thickets or the crematorium. In April 1942, while three Koreans – including Yi Han-bong – were gambling with hanafuda (traditional Japanese playing cards) at the Soai dormitory, a Japanese labor section officer discovered them and attempted to take them to the local police station. In an attempt to recover the betting money, more than 160 fellow Koreans stormed the dormitory office, injuring a labor section employee and breaking 36 windows in the office. As a result, Aikawa police officers rushed to the scene, rounded up eight of the ringleaders, and defused the situation.” (Teizo Hirose (2000), p.16).

Let us consider the Japanese police’s response to these Korean demonstrations. According to Nagatani’s (2021) analysis of the *Special Higher Police Monthly Report*, the measures taken against Korean workers engaging in demonstrations were “strict warnings,” “strict admonitions,” “strong criticism,” “accommodation,” “persuasion,” and “pacification” with

almost no use of violence to suppress them. In other words, there were no cases, including labor-management disputes, where the police forcefully suppressed or dispersed a group of Koreans to protect the flow of operations. Even if the police were dispatched, they would only issue “strict warnings”, “strict admonitions,” “strong criticism,” “accommodation,” “persuasion,” and “pacification,” to borrow the expressions from the *Special Higher Police Monthly Report*. At the Sado mines, too, the police never used force to disperse or subdue the Koreans.

Unlike other mines, there were few disputes involving Koreans at the Sado mines. Even after the war ended, Koreans did not cause any disturbances. Pyeong Jung, who was at the Sado mines when the war ended, wrote, “Overall, as can be seen in the good results obtained through training and guidance, Korean laborers could be repatriated without the riots seen in other regions at the end of the war.” (p. 486).

2. Nutritional Supply

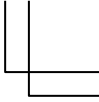
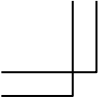
Let us consider the nutritional intake of South Korean and Japanese wartime laborers.

Table: Nutrient Absorption of South Korean Koreans and Japanese Wartime Workers

Southern Korea (Rationing of Staple Foods)			Korean Workers at Mitsui Yamano Coal Mine, Japan			Masaru Tonomura (2012), Korean Laborers
	Calories (kcal)	Protein (g)	Coal Miners Calories (kcal)	Surface Workers Calories (kcal)	Mine Workers Calories (kcal)	Calories (kcal)
1937	1,937	70.4				
1938	1,860	66.9				
1939	1,621	58.7				3,675
1940	1,762	59.7				3,675
1941	1,799	58.2	3,224	2,161	1,343	
1942	1,410	47.6				
1943	1,264	39.6	2,646	2,161	1,343	
1944	1,394	40.9	2,989	2,161	1,372	2,401
1945	1,377	37.9	2,573	1,971	1,212	1,372


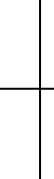
Source: Yook So-young (2017), “A Study on Changes in Living Standards in Korea in the 20th Century Through the Analysis of Food Supply Lists”, Doctoral dissertation, Department of Economics, Graduate School of Economics, Chungnam University; Tonomura (2012), p. 186

Note: 1 cup = 140 g (490 kcal); 100 g was 350 kcal.

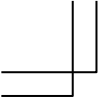


The volume of rations in southern Korea and Japan were converted to calories using Yook So-young's 2017 doctoral dissertation and the results of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey, respectively.

With the exception of surface workers under the age of 21 – who received the least rations of all Koreans mobilized to Japan – their calorie intake was far higher than that of Korean workers who remained on the peninsula. Because rationing was primarily regulated by the Japanese government and corporate bodies such as the Coal Control Association, there was no particular variance between companies. 1937-40 was 1.4 to 1.5 times the amount of stock rations in 1941, so the nutritional supply was far better than that of Koreans who remained in Korea during this period as well. In the case of protein, the minimum daily requirement per person in Japan at the time was estimated at 76g, but according to Cohen (1949), citing data from the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey (USSBS), the situation was at its worst in August 1945, when the daily requirement dropped to 37.9g.



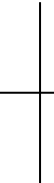
A comparison must be made between the standard of living of the young men who remained in Korea and that of the Korean wartime workers mobilized to Japan and the free migrant workers – the number of which was three times that of the wartime workers employed in coal mining and other mines. It is now evident that the nutritional intake of Koreans who chose to go to Japan far exceeded that of those who remained in southern Korea.



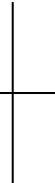
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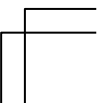
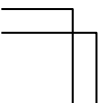
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