

# Investigating Tragedy at Sea: The *Ukishima-maru* Incident and its Legacy

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## Abstract

On August 22, 1945 the *Ukishima-maru* set sail from the northern Japanese port city of Ōminato with the apparent intention of delivering an undisclosed number of Koreans to Pusan, Korea. The laborers had been both recruited and conscripted for construction work necessary to fortify the naval base that had been strategically located in this remote location decades from the time of the 1905 Russo-Japanese War to monitor ship traffic between the islands of Honshu and Hokkaido. Two days later, while skirting the Japan Sea/East Sea side of Honshu island, the ship suddenly detoured into Maizuru Harbor in Kyoto prefecture, where it exploded sending hundreds, perhaps thousands of Koreans, and 25 Japanese to their watery grave. While other ships met similar fates after the guns of the AsiaPacific wars fell silent, the *Ukishima-maru* incident is unique in the cause of the explosion that sank the ship remains a mystery. While the Japanese government insists that a sea mine sank the ship, Korean groups continue to maintain that it was the Japanese navy that intentionally caused the explosion to sink it. This paper aims to first identify the points of contention by following the ship from its Ōminato departure to its Maizuru sinking. It then considers the ramifications for the incident remaining unresolved. In what ways might Japan adopt more positive means toward assisting investigations that seek resolution and closure? Is non-resolution truly in its interests, or might its failure to resolve this incident (and other outstanding colonial-era issues) return to haunt the Japanese government? Does non-resolution strengthen the colonial narrative

that Koreans have scripted that frames Japanese colonial-era ambitions as seeking a long-term goal of cultural genocide?

Keywords: Korean History, Colonial Korea, Korean–Japanese Relations, Unresolved Memory, Historical Disputes

## Introduction

At around 17:10 on August 24, 1945, just over a week after the Japanese emperor announced his country's intention to accept the Allied forces' surrender terms, the *Ukishima-maru* suddenly exploded as it entered the western Japan port of Maizuru. The explosion lifted the hull of the 114-meter, 4,730 ton transport ship straight up from the water in an inverted V-shape before it plunged into the sea. The ship had departed two days previous from the port town of Ōminato, Aomori Prefecture to repatriate thousands of Korean laborers. This tragic story did not end with the ship's sinking. Though other ships carrying repatriating peoples would suffer similar fates<sup>2</sup> the *Ukishima-maru* incident is unique in that even its most fundamental details—the cause of the explosion and the number of victims it claimed—continues to be debated. Did the ship sink accidentally after contacting a sea mine or did the Japanese navy intentionally destroy the vessel? Several investigations, both private and public, have produced a number of publications, documentaries, and films that suggest Japanese guilt and Korean victimhood,<sup>3</sup> one of the more recent being the popular 2000 North Korean film *Souls Protest* (K. *Sar'a innŭn ryŏnghondŭl*, 2000, Director Kim Ch'in-song) discussed toward the end of this paper. While the available evidence falls short of substantiating this conclusion, less than enthusiastic cooperation by Japanese authorities to investigate the cause of the ship's sinking, along with actions that suggest attempts to impede these efforts, have strengthened suspicions of Japanese culpability for the ship's sinking and the deaths of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Korean passengers.<sup>4</sup>

The incident has left in its wake several unresolved issues from the time the *Ukishima-maru* set sail from the lonely northern Japanese port of Ōminato: explanation of why the ship departed so soon after the war's end, before formal repatriation operations had begun; the location of records that detail the number of people who boarded the ship at the time of departure; the logic behind the crew choosing the inefficient, and potentially more dangerous, coastal route over the more direct route across the open seas; and the reasoning and timing behind its decision to detour into Maizuru Harbor rather than advance directly

to Pusan. Questions also remain about the explosion itself: whether the ship was carrying explosives; the number of detonations; and the number of people who perished from the incident. Suspicions of Japanese culpability strengthened during efforts to investigate the incident: the premature reduction of the primary piece of evidence, the *Ukishima-maru*, to scrap metal before it had been properly examined, and claims of witness tampering.

Time has eroded most known material and memory evidence to all but eliminate any chance of definitive conclusion being reached regarding the fate of the *Ukishima-maru*. The incident, along with other unresolved colonial-era atrocities, contributes to what Ann Stoler terms “imperial debris” of occupation rule.<sup>5</sup> Secondary “debris” of this incident is how the news of the ship’s sinking, perhaps spread verbally by survivors who gravitated to Korean communities in Japan, affected repatriating decisions by Japan-based Koreans. As the majority of those directly affected by this incident have long passed, memories of this debris are preserved through second generation recollections passed down by the survivors and witnesses to the explosion, as well as through education institutions such as museum displays, cinema scripts, and more recently Internet sites. In the case of the *Ukishima-maru* these mediums tend to be utilized by victims’ groups, the collective memory that they create draws on a general feeling of victimization that renders the possible as probable, or even verified, fact that leaves little margin for debate over the possibility of alternative scenarios.<sup>6</sup> These conclusions benefit from a Japanese silence that has stubbornly resisted Korean demands for cooperation. The *Ukishima-maru* incident on occasion finds its way into Japanese courtrooms. The purpose of this paper is to explore the tragedy of the *Ukishima-maru* as one example of this “imperial debris,” and to consider the long- and short-term consequences of this and other such unresolved issues.

## Ōminato and its Korean Residents

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Koreans were recruited, and later conscripted, for war-related work projects throughout Japan. One location for such projects was in the city of Ōminato in northern Aomori Prefecture first to extend a railway line and then to build facilities needed to protect a military installation. The Ōminato Guard District (*keibifu*) was founded as a major Japanese naval base around the time of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) to monitor ship movement through the Tsugaru straits that separated the main Japanese islands of Honshu and Hokkaido. During the Asia Pacific wars Japan used the base as a springboard to attack Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Islands off of Alaska. The United States responded by targeting the base for aerial bombing attacks.<sup>7</sup> The

need to protect Ōminato increased exponentially toward the end of the war as defeat neared and the fear of Allied land invasion intensified. These threats led to the Japanese military requisitioning the construction of the Kabayama airbase to fortify the naval base.

The construction project required labor which the navy imported, primarily that conscripted from the Korean peninsula but also from among “free” workers recruited from different parts of Japan. Recruited labor may have differed from “conscripted” labor in name but not necessarily in practice, as suggested in Aoyama Torazō’s account of how he “recruited” Korean labor. Offered 15 yen for every laborer he gathered, Aoyama turned first to local village offices in Korea for assistance in rounding up the laborers. He recalls, once Korean males had assembled at a local hotel they were immediately issued work garb, the donning of which certified them as “recruited laborers” to be dispatched via Pusan to mines and factories in Japan.<sup>8</sup> Kim Tongsöp’s case informs of this process from the Korean laborer’s perspective. Married with four children he was brought to the local town office in Korea’s South Ch’ungch’ong province where other Koreans had been gathered to be “pulled [*kkullyokatta*] to Japan.” Upon arrival in Ōminato he was put to work at the Kabayama air base construction site where he was paid 70 won per month to lay a runway and build a large hanger for the airplanes.<sup>9</sup>

Laborers and their handlers remember the difficult situation that the Koreans faced at the northern Japan site, conditions echoed by others who labored at other work sites across the Japanese empire. The jobs to which they were assigned in Ōminato included their carving through Mt. Kamabuse to extend the railway and through the area’s hilly terrain to construct runways and facilities required for the new airbase, work assignments that were reportedly more dangerous than the work assigned to their Japanese counterparts.<sup>10</sup> Working conditions were Spartan. Kim Söngdae, who also hailed from Korea’s South Ch’ungch’öng province, recalled the “terrible food and tiring working conditions that pushed him to the limits of exertion.”<sup>11</sup> Yun Hwisu, who was assigned to level a hill to build the airfield and later to construct a runway and a large hanger reports that the basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter were despicable, more appropriate for cattle or pigs. Many injured laborers went without treatment. Yun saw little of his 70-won monthly salary, which was deposited and recorded in a deposit book that he (“stupidly”) lost.<sup>12</sup>

The housing provided for the laborers mirrored their harsh working conditions. One son of a Japanese overseer verified that the structure that served as the laborers living space resembled a dark “scallop shack” (*hotate goya*), the space of which measured the equivalent of 2.5 tatami mats (approximately 15 x 7 feet). The Koreans collected grass and straw to make their bedding that they

laid out on a barren floor. These conditions alone caused an untold number of deaths among the laborers.

Japanese residing in the area corroborated the Korean laborers' recollections of harsh treatment. Yamamoto Saburō remembers Koreans being addressed by impersonal numbers rather than by their names ("Hey 7" or "Don't slack off 6"). Aoyama Torazō verified that while both Japanese and Koreans labored at the site, the division of labor separated the two people, and ensured that Koreans were assigned the more dangerous work. He noted that the workload and urgency to complete the project intensified as the U.S. bombing raids became more frequent and the fear of Allied land invasion increased accordingly.<sup>13</sup> Corporal, and even capital, punishment served as a control mechanism. Those caught trying to escape faced severe beatings and even "public lynching."<sup>14</sup>

It is probable that at one point records existed that contained the basic information on the Koreans brought to Ōminato, yet to date a complete record has not surfaced. Most probably such documents were included in the postwar burnings. The rising smoke reported by witnesses following defeat indicates that the Japanese here, like in other parts of the empire, destroyed potentially damaging files prior to the arrival of occupation troops.<sup>15</sup> In the haste to relocate the Koreans from Ōminato it is quite possible that the Japanese never bothered to register the basic information of those who boarded the *Ukishima-maru*, including whether any Koreans refused to board the ship. Without this information there remains little hope of ascertaining the number of laborers that the ill-fated ship carried, much less how many of these Koreans succumbed after the ship sank in Maizuru Harbor.

The haste in which the Japanese sought to clear Koreans from the Ōminato area reflected the panic that spread here and throughout the empire following the emperor's sudden announcement that Japan would accept the Allied surrender demands. Japan's uncertain future caused ill-founded rumors to rapidly spread from this time. One elementary school teacher, Akimoto Ryōji, recalled one such rumor that had "all commissioned officers being arrested and exiled to Australia." This uncertainty no doubt led to predictions over how Koreans would react upon learning of their country's liberation. Would they seek vengeance? Would they assist the approaching occupation armies? One Japanese witness recalls paranoia setting in among the colonizers as Korean "*manse!*" [J. *banzai*, literally "live for 10,000 years] chants grew in volume as the now liberated laborers paraded through the streets of Ōminato.<sup>16</sup>

Japanese, in an attempt to encourage the Koreans to board the *Ukishima-maru*, warned the laborers that they too faced punishment after the Allied forces arrived. Yi Yōngchul offered a different twist to the anticipated power shift. He believed, to the contrary, that the Japanese feared that the Koreans would cooperate with

the occupying forces: “If the Americans began killing the Japanese it would be the Koreans who helped them,” just like the Americans helped Koreans liberate their country from Japanese rule.<sup>17</sup> Was it the uncertainty over the now postwar situation coupled with Japanese having to coexist among a sizeable, liberated Korean population in this isolated part of Japan that encouraged the decision to quickly relocate them? Or, was this decision a cost-saving measure: the Japanese hoping to escape from having to compensate the Koreans for their labor and from reimbursing the “savings” that the company automatically deducted from their wages?<sup>18</sup>

## Departure from Ōminato and Detour into Maizuru

The *Ukishima-maru* was built in 1937 by the Osaka Merchant Ship Company to transport people between Osaka and Okinawa. In September 1941 the Japanese navy requisitioned the ship for wartime purposes. In this capacity it served as the primary vessel along the Aomori (Honshu)—Hakodate (Hokkaido) run. Along this route, in April 1945, the ship encountered torpedo attacks from Allied submarines.<sup>19</sup> On August 15 the ship embarked for Hakodate on what its crewmembers believed would be their last wartime mission. To their dismay they returned to Aomori to learn that the ship had been scheduled to make one more “final mission”: to transport Korean laborers from Ōminato to (presumably) Pusan on the southernmost coast of the newly liberated (but still Japan-administered) Korean peninsula.

The crewmembers’ protests to this added assignment offers clues toward understanding the *Ukishima-maru*’s sad fate in their providing one possible reason for the ship’s detour into Maizuru Harbor. Kim Ch’angjōng’s interviews with surviving crewmembers suggest that they had limited knowledge as to why the Koreans were in Ōminato, much less why they must repatriate them.<sup>20</sup> They were also concerned over the reception they would receive should they enter Korean territory: Would the Koreans seek retribution after the ship entered their homeland waters? One crewmember, First Class officer Kokufuji Gen, recalls his mistaken fear that the quickly advancing Soviet military would occupy the entire peninsula. Would the occupiers seize the ship, arrest the Japanese, and send them to Siberia for forced labor?

How stupid! ... The war was over so why did we have to go to Korea? The Soviets had entered the war and their military was going to occupy the peninsula. If we went there for sure they would have captured us. There were many reasons given but truth be told we felt that we had endured the war and survived. Why go out to sea again? We simply wanted to be deactivated and allowed to return home.<sup>21</sup>

The crewmembers laced their objections with threats of mutiny if forced to board the ship. While three did manage to escape prior to departure, they did so with the threat, if caught, of capital punishment hanging over their heads.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps the anger expressed by crewmembers succeeded in their forging a compromise in the ship's destination—to a Japanese port in Honshu rather than to Pusan.

A second fear may have stemmed from a genuine concern over the safety of the ship and for their personal safety during the voyage that would hug Japan's coasts. This course apparently was necessary because all sea charts had been destroyed, thus making it difficult for the officers to navigate the ship across the high seas.<sup>23</sup> However, by hugging the coast the *Ukishima-maru* risked contacting one of the 55,347 sea mines that U.S. B-29 bombers had littered along the Japanese coasts to prevent Japanese military ships from going out to sea.<sup>24</sup> It is difficult to imagine that minesweeping operations, entrusted to the Japanese, had advanced enough to ensure safe passage just one week after Japan had made the decision to surrender. Even the emperor's sudden announcement had not halted all military activity along these coasts where *kamikaze* pilots reportedly continued their attacks on Allied ships.<sup>25</sup>

Reports on the *Ukishima-maru* incident suggest the possibility that crewmembers had prior knowledge of the ship's unfortunate destiny. Other points support arguments that the ship never intended to sail to Korea. The limited fuel and supplies that the *Ukishima-maru* carried—enough for a one-way trip to Pusan or a round trip to a Japanese port such as Maizuru—suggests that the ship would make a call at a Japanese port either to replenish supplies (perhaps before advancing to Pusan), or as a terminal stop. If the latter, it would be fair to question what the Japanese intended to do with the Koreans had the ship arrived in Maizuru without incident.

The most frequently used assumption to justify this detour into Maizuru centers on the Navigation Prohibition directive that General Douglas MacArthur issued to the Japanese government from the Philippines on August 20, 1945, two days prior to the *Ukishima-maru's* departure. In this Prohibition, the future Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) included five provisions that the Japanese needed to complete by 18:00 on August 24, one of which was that all Japanese ships were to have immediately removed any explosives they might be carrying to be stored safely on shore. The directive further ordered ships over 100 tons to

report their positions in plain language immediately to the nearest United States, British, or Soviet radio station. They will proceed to the nearest Allied port or such port as the Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Fleet, may direct and will await further orders.<sup>26</sup>

The directive did not elaborate on what directions the Allied navies might have issued had the *Ukishima-maru* complied with this directive by reporting its position and reason for the voyage. There is also no indication that the *Ukishima-maru* ever contacted an Allied radio station as the Prohibition ordered. Indeed, a fair question is whether this directive was ever passed on to the *Ukishima-maru* or to any other Japanese ship. Instead the Japanese government issued the “Directive of the Open Seas [*taikairei*] No. 52” which simply declared it “illegal” for such ships to be out of port after 18:00 on August 24 while omitting the direction for ships to contact an Allied radio station.<sup>27</sup>

Whether the Navigation Prohibition (or more probably the Japanese directive) caused the *Ukishima-maru* to detour into Maizuru Harbor is contingent on the timing in which it reached the ship’s officers. Had the orders arrived prior to departure, the ship’s captain could have easily concluded it to be impossible to complete the journey to Pusan before the imposed curfew. If so, a logical follow-up question is why the ship departed even though it could not reach its stated destination. Only if the order had arrived en route does the decision to detour into Maizuru Harbor make sense. Here, however, interview data is inconclusive. Onadera Kazuichi, who served as the ship’s communications officer, contends that the directive did not arrive until the morning of August 24, just as the ship passed the Noto peninsula.<sup>28</sup> Yet others, including crewmembers interviewed for the documentary *Han no Umi* (Sea of distress), claim this to be untrue: officers were aware of a directive in time to reschedule plans. One account of the ship’s sinking claims that a telegram with this information reached the ship’s captain on August 22 at 19:20, just short of three hours before departure.<sup>29</sup> This appears more logical as certainly the Japanese government would have ensured that the *Ukishima-maru* officers received this directive prior to leaving port. Here, too, one might expect the existence of documentation detailing this rather fundamental piece of information. However, to this day none has surfaced.

To convince Koreans to board the ship the Japanese would have had to assure them that the ship’s ultimate destination was a Korean port, such as Pusan. How successful they were remains an open question as no exact number of Korean passengers appears available. Estimates vary wildly from a conservative Japanese government estimate of 3,735 (plus an additional 225 Japanese crewmembers) to inflated estimates ranging from 6,700 to even 10,000 Koreans crowding onto a ship originally designed to transport 841 people (plus cargo). As for the number of deceased Japanese official records count 524 Koreans and 25 Japanese perishing from the ship’s sinking. Korean estimates rise as high as 5,000.<sup>30</sup> Part of the reason for the large discrepancy between official (Japanese government) and unofficial (mostly Korean) casualty estimates is that the lower figure calculated only those



bodies discovered just after the explosion. Officials did not adjust this figure after more bodies surfaced at the time the ship was raised in 1950. As we shall see below, unreliable means for determining the number of people who boarded the ship and perished after its sinking would later frustrate the efforts of plaintiffs attempting to demonstrate their presence on the ship at the time of its departure, thus providing Japanese courts reason to reject their claims for compensation.<sup>31</sup>

## Intentional Implosion or Accidental Explosion: What Sank the *Ukishima-maru*?

The development of the city of Maizuru in Kyoto Prefecture began as a naval base in 1901. Like Ōminato its importance grew after the Japanese went to war with Russia in 1904. Inaugurated as a city in 1943, it soon became engulfed in the battles of the Pacific War. Just prior to the war's end the United States dropped a rather large bomb on the city that some contend served as a trial mission for the *Enola Gay* crew who days later detonated the atomic bomb over Hiroshima.<sup>32</sup> Between June 30 and August 8, 1945 the U.S. military planted hundreds of sea mines into Maizuru Harbor to prevent Japanese war ships from exiting. Soon after the war the U.S. entrusted the Japanese navy with the responsibility of clearing the sea of these mines.<sup>33</sup>

Regardless of whether the ship's intended destination was Pusan or a Japanese port such as Maizuru, the cause of the explosion that sank the *Ukishima-maru* remains at the center of this controversy. The ship's detour into a Japanese port would not be an issue if not for the tragic loss of life. Resolving the mysteries surrounding the sinking of the *Ukishima-maru* thus lies in ascertaining the cause of the explosion. Here, too, unresolved questions have frustrated investigations. Had Maizuru Harbor been cleared of sea mines beforehand? Did actions by the Japanese crew, some reportedly seen escaping by lifeboats just before the explosion, signal that it had been the Japanese navy that planned the implosion? Do reports by passengers and witnesses of multiple detonations and of the lack of a water column rising from the sea support the conclusion that an internal, and thus intentional, implosion sank the ship? What clues might the sunken vessel have revealed had it been properly examined prior to its reduction to scrap iron in 1954?

The importance of the naval base would suggest its high priority in completing minesweeping operations to allow Japanese ships to safely comply with the August 24 curfew imposed by the Navigation Prohibition. Had the Japanese navy ordered the detour of ships such as the *Ukishima-maru* into Maizuru one could assume that minesweeping operations had been completed. Kim Ch'anjōng's

comprehensive study acknowledges that ships did contact sea mines in Maizuru prior to the *Ukishima-maru's* arrival. However, Kim documents at least ten ships safely entering the port on August 24 with the Navigation Prohibition deadline causing a sudden increase in sea traffic. He thus calculates the chances of the *Ukishima-maru* contacting a sea mine upon entering the harbor to have been “slim at best.” It would have been an extraordinary stroke of bad luck had it done so despite following the same sea route as other ships that entered without incident.<sup>34</sup> Others disagree. Crewmember Umegaki Seiji explains that the ships that passed through safely were smaller than the *Ukishima-maru* thus affording them easier access into the harbor.<sup>35</sup> The possibility of a mine drifting into the ship's path also cannot be overruled. One report concluded that the harbor had not been declared completely safe until 1952, seven years after the accident.<sup>36</sup>

Whether the *Ukishima-maru* was sunk by a single or multiple detonations is another disputed point that also holds possible clues towards understanding the ship's fate. A single detonation gives plausibility to both theories—external explosion or internal implosion; multiple detonations favor slightly the latter over the former. Yet another possibility is a combination of both an external and internal detonation—both a sea mine and explosives within the ship's hull causing the ship to sink. This assumes that the ship originally carried explosives and that they had not been removed as ordered. A recently discovered Japanese Ministry of Defense document supports this: there is no indication that the ship's crew had complied with this order as witnesses did not recall seeing crewmembers dispose of any.<sup>37</sup> Similar to other evidence cited to support the internal implosion theory this conclusion must be considered with caution unless it can be better substantiated. Like the multiple explosion theory,<sup>38</sup> this information teases, but falls short of, the formation of a sustainable conclusion. Because no one recalls seeing crewmembers removing the explosives does not prove that they were there in the first place.

Other questionable events surround the incident. Several reports highlight suspicious actions by crewmembers that suggest their having prior knowledge of Japanese intentions to implode the ship. One survivor, Chung Jon sik, reported overhearing suspicious comments and witnessing Japanese fleeing from the ship prior to the ship's explosion. From this he concluded that the Japanese had triggered an explosion for the purpose of killing Korean laborers. His testimony, which appeared in a September 24, 1945 *G-2 U.S. Periodic Report* exactly one month after the incident, read as follows:

On 22 August 1945, some 6700 Korean laborers and factory workers and their families of the OMINATO Naval Yards were told that they would be returned to KOREA. They departed aboard the UKIJIMA with a crew of Japanese sailors

and officers. The warship arrived and anchored outside the harbor of MAIZURU (KYUSHU) JAPAN. After dumping the cargo overboard, the workers and their families were ordered to go to their compartments where they were beaten with swords and bamboo spears. The Japanese crew then debarked in small boats. Immediately after they left, a terrific explosion on the UKIJIMA caused it to sink, causing heavy casualties. The informant believes that this was planned because of the sailors' remarks, "We feel sorry for the children."<sup>39</sup>

That Chung's recollections erroneously placed Maizuru in Kyushu, strongly suggests passenger belief that the ship was heading for Pusan. His concluding that the Japanese intentionally imploded the ship on the basis of a simple statement, one devoid of context, is weak but strengthened by other rumors that the ship would be "sunk if it reached Niigata."<sup>40</sup>

Another Korean remembers hearing Japanese sailors yell "kill the bastards" (*yatsu wo korose*) as bodies flew into the water. This witness was a Mr. Paek who served as a Korean member of the Japanese military police (*kenpeitai*) under the adopted Japanese name of Minami. Koreans in his position were often given the task of watching over Korean labor due to their proficiency in the Korean language and their knowledge of Korean customs and mannerisms. His "implosion eyewitness explanation" that appeared in the May 24, 1965 edition of the *Chosŏn sinbo* reported that Paek warned fellow passengers that the "ship is going to sink. The Japanese intentionally imploded it to kill us all," as he dove from the ship's deck.<sup>41</sup> Yet, his story, rather than told first hand in Paek's words, was relayed by others, one being Kim Tonggyŏng whose elder brother had become close to the military policeman after surviving the sinking. Paek also claimed that the sinking was intentional because the explosion's failure to cause a water column rising about 10 meters from the sea in a way that he had seen other sea mines explode.<sup>42</sup> It is not clear what happened to Paek, but he was not around to testify at court hearings later in the century. Nor could his widow be found to offer what she might have learned from him regarding the incident.<sup>43</sup> While intriguing, decontextualized statements based on hearsay fall short of providing the convincing "smoking gun" that a Japanese court would require to render a verdict in the Koreans' favor. Also missing from this and other accounts is explanation for the loss of 25 Japanese lives. On the other hand, the Japanese failure to provide convincing answers to the charges and its reluctance to cooperate more positively in the investigations renders this circumstantial evidence as "fact" in the minds of intentional implosion conspiracy proponents.

## Investigating Disaster: Efforts to Resolve the Case of the *Ukishima-maru*

Since the time of the incident several formal investigations have been organized to ascertain the cause of the *Ukishima-maru*'s sinking. None, however, have rendered conclusive evidence to quell primarily Korean suspicions of intentional implosion. The Japanese have been able to deflect these accusations by insisting that the accusers assume the burden of proof, while they maintain control over any available evidence needed to resolve the mysteries surrounding the incident. As mentioned above, evidence, both material and human, required by the victims to argue their case has not surfaced. As for documentary evidence, is it possible that important information regarding the Korean laborers had existed at one time, only to be destroyed along with other sensitive documents by Japanese officials at the naval base soon after surrender?

The initial report on the sinking appeared in the Korean language *Pusan ilbo* on September 18, 1945, just under one month after the incident. This was followed by other newspaper reportage that appeared in the Japanese language *Keijō* (Seoul) *nippo* on September 26, and the *Kyoto shinbun* on October 8, of that year. The first official account was the short September 24, 1945 *G-2 Periodic Report* quoted above. Kim Ch'anjōng ponders why, given the magnitude of this event, the media did not give it attention immediately after the ship sank. This apparent secrecy is also curiously found in Miyaaki Sango's diary quoted earlier. Here the naval base employee penned detailed entries on Allied bombings of the city. However, he made no mention of the *Ukishima-maru* explosion in his entry on this or subsequent days, at least in his diary's published version.<sup>44</sup> Kim Ch'anjōng suggests censorship as responsible for news of the sinking being contained to the immediate Maizuru area in the days following the incident.<sup>45</sup> However, we can imagine that Korean survivors spread news of the ship's sinking to Korean communities within Japan. To what extent did Japan-based Koreans privy to this news (either first or second hand) delay or even cancel their plans to repatriate to Korea?<sup>46</sup>

The U.S. Occupation government conducted the first formal investigation into the incident that produced a preliminary two-page summary dated December 12, 1945, and a final report in July of the following year. The initial report confirmed that protests had arisen among crewmembers who objected to being made to "sacrifice their lives for the sake of Korean (*sic*) especially at this time, to-day after the termination of the war." Their superiors answered these protests with threat: "you must comply with this duty with an idea of death." The report, obviously compiled by a non-native speaker of English (perhaps a Korean), continued as follows:

After departed Aomori Bay, in the strait between Sadoga-shima [Sado island], they have dumped out all life-buoys and other articles which were usually equipped in the ship. The voyage continued, henceforth, and deviated her course to Maizuru Bay at the point off east Maizuru, Kyoto prefecture, and entered the port. Just before entering the port, the ship stopped a little while and signaled by hand flag-signal and entered the harbour slowly.

An explosion of “great sound” took place “about 150 meters from the shore” at around 1610 (*sic*) on August 24. The Koreans rescued from the sea were “confined in a boarding house [and] not allowed to go out, even one step, to meet with personnels (*sic*) who came to know whether their Kin were rescued or not ...”<sup>47</sup> The file for this investigation also includes reports of interviews with witnesses that were conducted in Japanese and translated into English. These reports yielded little in the way of new information save for recollections by “Rikisan” who reported that the explosion occurred just as a small motorboat emerged and the ship sailed past a red flag.<sup>48</sup>

In the end the U.S. team deemed the evidence insufficient to carry the investigation further. A handwritten memo penned one month later termed the evidence “weak and appear[ing] to be based on conjecture” and recommended that no further action be taken.<sup>49</sup> The U.S. Occupation Forces, having arrived just days following the explosion, faced a more daunting challenge to solidify its presence on the archipelago. No doubt they were thus not in a position to devote sufficient time to thoroughly investigate the fate of the *Ukishima-maru* despite the large number of deaths that the incident claimed. Of greater urgency were the more pressing demands of pacifying and disarming militant Japanese, locating and arresting suspected war criminals, and feeding and housing starving and homeless Japanese under their supervision.

Japanese-based Korean organizations also pressured the Japanese government to provide the information needed to bring closure to the incident. One of the earliest such appeals demanded explanation of cause during negotiations with the Japanese government for victim compensation. The Japanese apparently conducted interviews in advance with members of the ship’s crew, including the captain Torikai Kingo, in preparation for the meetings with the Koreans. Unfortunately none of the records for these investigations appear to have been made public. These discussions, which most likely took place in Tokyo, broke off in mid-October 1945 when the Koreans aggressively challenged the Japanese government’s insistence that the explosion was accidental, and insisted that the Japanese admit its cause as an intentional implosion intended to kill Koreans.<sup>50</sup> As noted above Koreans would finally gain a favorable court verdict in August 2001, only to see the initial positive decision disappear by the Osaka Court of Appeals based

on the previous decision being driven by impression rather than by hard scientific fact.<sup>51</sup> In 2004, the *Ukishima-maru* incident became one of topics addressed by Truth and Reconciliation committees established by President Roh Moo Hyun (2003–2008). These investigations, which ended soon after Roh's term in office, managed to complete one report on this incident and the recent court cases.<sup>52</sup>

Soon after the ship's sinking the Japanese government did offer the families of victims established compensation packages totaling up to a paltry 1,550 yen (remains recovery costs [270 yen], funeral costs [80 yen], and general family support [1,200 yen]) to the families of deceased. Practical restraints limited the provision of this compensation to only those families residing in Japan. At the time there existed no means for transferring monetary funds between Korea and Japan. Japan ceased accepting claims from 1965 when the Treaty of Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) after the two sides agreed to a victimization fund of \$364 million allegedly to compensate Koreans victimized over the three-plus decades of Japanese colonial occupation.<sup>53</sup> According to one Korean scholar, in 1974–1975 the Korean government offered to pay compensation to up to 8,000 people, perhaps with this fund in mind. However, like other similar overtures in the spirit of closure victims rejected this gesture as it came from a Korean, rather than a Japanese, government. Also, the 30,000 Korean ₩ figure—the “value of the head of a dog”—, must have been insulting to the potential recipients.<sup>54</sup>

Part of the problem in advancing efforts to conduct a fair and comprehensive investigation has been the difficulty to access information and evidence that potentially could untangle the mysteries surrounding the sinking. The earliest investigations, for example, were conducted with the primary piece of evidence—the ship itself—still submerged in Maizuru Harbor. As emphasized throughout this paper, not having available reliable documentary evidence such as a passenger list and the ship's travel log prevents investigators from understanding even the most fundamental facts of the case. The 65 plaintiffs denied compensation by the Kyoto District Court were surely victimized by the non-existence of a passenger list.<sup>55</sup> Finally, peculiar behavior by those in possession of potentially valuable testimony further suggests witness tampering to cover up facts. One example was the inability to gain the testimony of *ex-kenpeitai* Paek's widow, as noted above.<sup>56</sup>

## Social Education as a Conduit for “Victimhood Nationalism”

Following Japan's surrender, and throughout the period of occupation, the United States occupied Ōminato and moved into the naval base. In 1959 the city merged with other municipalities to form the new city of Mutsu where the Japan Maritime

Self Defense Forces continue to be housed. Maizuru has also been used as one of Japan's primary naval bases since the country regained its sovereignty in 1952. The city keeps alive in museums and monuments its postwar role as a gateway for repatriates from the empire, many of whom endured harsh labor conditions in Siberia from the time of Japan's surrender to the early 1950s.<sup>57</sup> Also present in Maizuru, but rather inconspicuously located, is a memorial (*tsuitō*) dedicated to the tragedy's Korean victims. The location of the memorial is less enthusiastically publicized, and not as conveniently accessible, as the city's other historic sites.<sup>58</sup> This is partly due to its location being situated in close proximity to the ship's sinking. This inconvenient location and relatively limited exposure is unfortunate considering the valiant efforts made by many Maizuru residents to assist Koreans at the time of the sinking, as well as to support the construction of the monument. The monument comes alive in August when concerned peoples gather to commemorate the lives lost on that fateful late summer evening in 1945.

The chances of resolving the outstanding issues surrounding the fate of the *Ukishima-maru* have grown dimmer with each passing year as memories of the immediate first-generation passengers and witnesses fade and their lives pass. It is thus left to their descendants and other vehicles to protect the memory of the tragedy. Does this work in Japan's favor? Perhaps. The Japanese people are not exceptional in their attempts to purge less attractive elements from historical memory. Building national identities on a foundation of pride finds accusations of state-promoted acts of indiscriminate genocide, mass rape, and slave labor mobilization disturbing.<sup>59</sup> Such accusations by Japan's prewar and wartime colonized peoples tarnish the postwar image that Japanese have promoted of their country as a nation of peace. Might the less-than cooperative attitude displayed by the Japanese government in inquiries and investigations regarding the *Ukishima-maru* stem from the fear that the accusations might be true? What if the incident had been triggered by either an intentional act by the Japanese, or even by careless oversight?

At least over the short term it appears that Japan has gained the upper hand by simply deflecting accusations by those seeking deeper investigation to ascertain the truth. While the ship's sinking may garner occasional mention, most often in August as concerned people gather in Maizuru or at Tokyo's Yūtenji where the ashes of some of the victims are kept, for most Japanese and Koreans the incident remains forgotten.<sup>60</sup> It has not gained anywhere near the attention that other colonial assimilation or wartime mobilization policies have. However, as Ann Stoler notes, "imperial ruins [assume] durable forms in which they bear on the material environment and on people's minds."<sup>61</sup> The physical remains of the ship and documents on the voyage may no longer exist, but its place in the collective

memory of Japanese rule, though perhaps dim, lingers alongside other allegations of Japanese atrocities of this period. As with other aspects of victimization where critical particulars remain in question, Koreans rely on the known to assume the unknown, which over time becomes accepted as “truth.”

The “truth” becomes engraved as historical “fact” that make its way into classroom textbooks, but also into other formal social education institutions, such as museums and monuments, as well as in popular culture—cinema and documentary film, print culture, and the Internet. The North Korean film *Souls Protest* offers one telling example in its depiction of the *Ukishima-maru* sinking, hoping to leave with viewers a simple impression: The Japanese intentionally imploded the ship for the purpose of massacring Korean laborers. It explained the ship’s “sudden” detour into Maizuru as a ruse planned by the Japanese navy with MacArthur’s Navigation Prohibition serving as a convenient excuse for not returning the Koreans directly to Pusan. The film attained screen exposure at several international film festivals, and in 2001 it was shown in Seoul. Grace M. Cho credits this international attention with bringing “the 1945 sinking of the *Ukishima-maru* back to memory.”<sup>62</sup> Its production crew apparently did extensive research as much of the film reflects the verifiable facts of the incident. One viewer, a Lee Chul-woo [Yi Ch’öl’u], identified as a survivor of the ship’s sinking, attested to its accuracy, save for the film’s frequent accolades to Kim Il Sung.<sup>63</sup>

It is, however, necessary to separate the credibility that Lee offered into that which he was capable of delivering, and that in which he was not. As a Korean laborer he was no doubt in a position to verify the horrific labor conditions that the Koreans endured, the jubilation that Koreans felt at the time of their liberation, and the former laborers’ descent to the ship prior to departure, along with the trip to Maizuru. It is also most probable that he would be able to comment on the film’s depiction of the explosion and its aftermath. Other parts of the film he would be hard-pressed to verify such as the discussions limited to Japanese that the film inserts to “prove” Japanese culpability, their having imploded the *Ukishima-maru* and, the reasoning behind their intention of committing this hideous crime. These parts of the film are thus products of the film crew’s imagination. To complete the narrative of Korean victimization the film draws on past Japanese victimization of Koreans—here portrayed in the form of laborer flashbacks—to encourage the audience to connect the dots—to conclude the unverifiable as probable, if not outright fact. This requires the film inventing text, or in Oliver Stone’s words, “put[ing] dialogue into a real person’s mouth.”<sup>64</sup>

The film develops an argument that accuses the Japanese of intentionally sinking the ship by inserting “character evidence” to portray the Japanese as a people harboring a low value of human life, both that of Koreans and Japanese.



One of the film's opening scenes has Komura, a Japanese officer, preparing to commit ritual suicide. Flashbacks show this same Japanese severing the tongue of a Korean laborer as punishment, crippling a Korean girl for refusing his sexual advances, and sending another Korean girl to the Philippines as a "comfort woman." Toward the film's end Komura shoots a Japanese girl in the back as she runs to inform the Korean passengers of the Japanese plans to blow up the ship. The film demonstrates through flashback the inhumane treatment that the Korean laborers endured that brought about injuries and even death from overwork or aggressive beatings.

With the war's end the Japanese decide that only death will silence the Koreans who possess potentially harmful knowledge, as well as prevent any vengeance they might seek against their former subjugators. The conclusion, that the laborers needed to be eliminated, is supported by Korean interpretation of similar episodes of the colonial period, including the Japanese introducing a policy of assimilation attempted to complete the colonized people's "cultural genocide." A more recent ROK film *Battleship Island* (K. Gunhamdo, 2017. Director, Ryoo Seung-wan) has contributed to Koreans imagining the Japanese as genocidal by including a Japanese military plot to murder Korean laborers to hide its crimes against those brought to labor on Hashima, an island off the coast of Nagasaki that was recently designated a UNESCO Heritage site.<sup>65</sup>

Like many theories that surfaced after the *Ukishima-maru* sinking, the DPRK film *Souls Protest* had to create a "smoking gun" to justify its contention of Japanese culpability. The Japanese might continue to answer accusations of criminal activity with silence or with inactivity, while possibly sitting on documents that potentially could resolve some of the mysteries of the incident, as indicated throughout this paper.<sup>66</sup> While perhaps the most important mystery of cause may be beyond solution at this point, there are relatively simple actions that the Japanese could take as gestures of cooperation. These might simply entail their offering a sincere apology for failing to safely return the laborers to their homeland and their supporting the repatriation of the remains of Koreans still entombed in Japanese temples. Its reluctance to extend such assistance to the resolution of this and other colonial-era issues, while demanding greater cooperation in similar issues of Japanese victimization, such as the DPRK kidnappings (*rachi mondai*) that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, appears hypocritical.

Japan's failure to cooperate to resolve colonial-era differences such as the *Ukishima-maru* sinking may have greater consequences in Koreans forming a collective memory of Japanese colonial-era history that contribute to what Jie-Hyun Lin terms a "victimhood nationalism," the competing national memories for the position of collective victims in memory wars.<sup>67</sup> As "competing [colonial]

memories” draw conflict between Japanese and Koreans, “competing [political] memories” divide Koreans by generation, by location either along the Korean peninsula or between peninsula and archipelago. The unifying factor for these people is the historic victimization that the peoples faced. Victimization caused by the *Ukishima-maru* incident divided Koreans by residence to the extent it failed to repatriate one population of the ship’s Korean passengers, and quite possibly caused countless others to reconsider their decision to repatriate.<sup>68</sup> This victimhood crosses generations as the memory of “colonial debris” tragedy is passed on to secondary victims, the descendants of the primary victims and other Koreans of this generation. Thus, while incidents like the sinking of the *Ukishima-maru* helped form geographic divisions among Koreans, their memory contributes to a developing national narrative that bonds reunifying peoples seeking common grounds to pave a renewed national identity.

## Notes

1. The author would like to thank Mizuno Naoki for sharing his views on this issue during a trip we took to Maizuru in March 2016 and Satō Toshiya for keeping me informed of commemorative events regarding the *Ukishima-maru* incident. I thank Lee Young Mi for introducing to me valuable Korean-language sources. I am also indebted to Youngtae Shin and Andre Haag, as well as two anonymous readers for their comments on different versions of this article. Among the vast holdings of the library of the Zainikkanjin rekishi shiryō kan (在日韓人資料館 History Museum of J-Koreans) are valuable documents and videos related to the ship’s sinking. It goes without saying that the views and conclusions remain my own.
2. The October 2, 1945 *G-2 Periodic Reports* noted two such tragedies, one the result of a mine explosion. On November 21 it reported the sinking of the *Nikai Masru*, a Korean tugboat. These reports also informed of attacks by pirates, many of them ex-*kenpeitai* officers, who robbed passengers of their valuables and on occasion their lives. A number of other ships also fell victim to inclement weather. These reports can be found at Institute of Culture Studies, ed. *Mikugun tonggun saryōngbu G-2 iril chōngbu yoyak* (미국국동군사령부G-2일일정보요약 Far East Command, U.S. Army G-2 Daily Intelligence Summary) (Seoul: Institute of Asian Culture Studies, Hallym University, 1999). See also Jeong Ae-Young, “Kwiguk haenansago rül t’onghae bun kangchedongwōn-kwa kwihwan (귀국해난사고를통해본강제동원과귀환 Sea Accidents during the Repatriation of Mobilized Koreans) *Hanil minjok munje yōn’gu* 19 (2010): 123–59.
3. Books on the *Ukishima-maru* incident, include Kim Ch’anjōng’s *Uk’ishima-maru Pusankō e mukazu* (浮島丸は釜山港へ向かず The *Ukishima-ho* did not turn toward Pusan) (Kyoto: Kamogawa shuppan, 1996); Saitō Saguchi, ed. *Uk’ishimaho P’ukch’im sagōn chinsang* (우키시마호폭침사건진상 The Truth behind the *Ukishima-maru* Sinking by Explosion), trans. Mukai Midori (Seoul: Tonghyōn munhwasa, 1996; Chōn Saechin, *Maguma* (마그마 Magma) (Seoul: Paeksan, 2007); and Shinada Shigeru, *Bakuchin: Rekishi no fuuka to tatakau* (爆沈—歴史の風化とたたかう Explosion: Battling Historical Efflorescence) (Tokyo: Kōbunken, 2008). A committee formed by the Republic of Korea-based Truth and Reconciliation Commission investigating the incident released Ilch’e kangjōmha kangchedongwon p’ihae chinsang kyumyōng wiwōnhoe, *Uk’ishima-ho sakōn sosong charyojip* (우키시마호사건소송자료집

- Documents regarding the Ukishima-maru Incident) (Seoul: Ilche kangjömha kangche-dongwon p'ihae chinsang kyumyöng wiwönho, 2007). Documentaries include NNN Document 94. “*Han*” no Umi: *Sabukaru Ukishima-maru jiken, sono jitsu ha* (「ハン」の海—裁かれる浮島丸事件・その実は Sea of “Regret”: Trying the Reality of the Ukishima-maru), 1994. Films include *Eijian buruu: Ukishima-Maru sakon* (エイジアン・ブルー浮島丸サゴン Asian Blue: The Ukishima-maru Incident), 1995, Director Horikawa Hiromichi; *Souls Protest* (K. Sar'a innün ryöng'hondül 살아있는 靈魂들), 2000, Director Kim Chun-song.
4. Twenty-five Japanese succumbed at this time as well. They, however, were considered “war dead,” thus entitling their families to appropriate benefits.
  5. Ann Stoler, ed. *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013). Stoler here seeks to “track the uneven temporal sedimentations in which imperial formations leave their marks ...” that is, “how empire’s ruins contour and carve their the psychic and material space in which people live and what compound layers of imperial debris do to them” (Stoler, *Imperial Debris*, 2).
  6. The North Korean film *Souls Protest*, for example, displays no sympathy toward the possibility of accidental explosion in arguing intentional implosion.
  7. U.S. forces bombed the city on July 14–15, and from August 8–10, 1945. “Aircraft Action Report No. AG47#119” for the August 10 aerial raid where the operation was listed as its “mission”: “Attack Targets of Opportunity, Aomori-Ominato Area: Ominato Naval Base (Aomori) (Honshu) 7500 Ton F.T.A. Ominato Airfield Oil Storage at Ominato.” Japanese National Diet Library (<http://iss.ndl.go.jp/books/R100000002-I000006866029-00>). The information here is included in the Diet library’s listing on this bombing incident.
  8. Aoyama admitted that some Koreans did escape *en route*, Kim, *Uk'ishima-ho*, 65–66.
  9. Chön, *Magüma*, 231.
  10. Kim, *Ukishima-maru*, 70.
  11. Chön, *Magüma*, 231–32.
  12. Chön, *Magüma*, 229–30.
  13. Kim, *Ukishima-maru*, 69.
  14. Shinada, *Bakuchin*, 39–40; Kim, *Ukishima-maru*, 71.
  15. John Dower writes that following the August 15 broadcast by the emperor “military officers and civilian bureaucrats threw themselves frenetically into the tasks of destroying their files and disbursing vast hoards of military supplies in illicit ways.” John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 39.
  16. Aoyanagi, *Ukishima-maru ha Pusan ni mukete shukkō shita* (浮島丸は釜山に向けて出航した The *Ukishima-maru* Left Port for Pusan) (Hyūga: Sōtokainokai, 2012), 5.
  17. Kim, *Ukishima-maru* 81.
  18. There are a number of cases of Koreans pressuring Japanese companies in Korea for money. The October 2, 1945 edition of the *G-2 Daily Reports* listed two such incidents, involving Hidachi Iron Works and Tōyō Wire Manufacturing Co. It is not clear by these reports, though, whether the former employees were seeking funds owed to them personally or simply taking advantage of the situation. See HQ, USAFIK [United States Armed Forces In Korea], *G-2 Periodic Report* (1945.9.9 to 1946. 2.12) (Institute of Culture Studies, ed. *Mikugun tonggun* (September 24, 1945), 300.
  19. Kim, *Ukishima-maru*, 59.
  20. Kim summarizes the reasons for crewmember objection in his *Ukishima-maru*, 49–51.
  21. Kim, *Ukishima-maru*, 44. The idea that the Soviet military would arrest the crewmembers and send them to Siberia is probably a combination of a recorded concern (whether the Soviet armies would occupy the entire Korean peninsula), and invented memory (how these Soviet armies would treat captured Japanese military personnel).
  22. Kim, *Ukishima-maru*, 110.
  23. Kim, *Ukishima-maru*, 125.

24. Ukishima-maru zannansha tsuitō jikkō iinkai, *Ukishima-maru jiken no kiroku* (浮島丸事件の記録 A Record of the *Ukishima-maru* Incident) (Tokyo: Kamogawa shuppan, 1989), 46.
25. “Jap’s again Battle U.S. Photo Planes over Tokyo Area: 1 U.S. Killed,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (August 19, 1945) <<https://bklyn.newspapers.com/image/52697500/?terms=%22Japs%2BAgain%2BBattle%2BU.S.%22>> (accessed August 26, 2018). Ugaki Matome’s diary ends with the admiral recruiting pilots to participate on a suicide mission to fly eleven *Suisei* dive bombers into the ships of “arrogant” Americans stationed in Okinawa. The diary’s epilogue notes that “there is no record of Ugaki’s suicide squad crashing into any U.S. ship at Okinawa. Apparently they went down at sea.” Ugaki Matome, *Fading Victory: The Diary of Admiral Matome Ugaki, 1941–1945*, trans. by Masataka Chihaya (Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburg Press, 1991), 663–64.
26. “MacArthur’s Landing Instructions,” as carried in the *New York Times* (August 23, 1945). Proquest Historical newspapers: The New York Times with Index (<https://www.nytimes.com/1945/08/23/archives/macarthurs-landing-instructions.html>) (accessed September 5, 2018).
27. Quoted in Kim, *Ukishima-maru*, 117. Kim includes a picture of the directive as dated simply August 1945.
28. Aoyanagi, *Ukishima-maru ha Pusan ni mukete shukkō shita*, 5.
29. Shinada, *Bakuchin*, 26. This would have made it impossible for the ship to complete the estimated seventy-hour journey to Pusan in time to meet the curfew.
30. United States *G-2 Daily Reports* on September 24, 1945 provided the earliest estimate of 6,700 passengers. 70. Other estimates are taken from Grace Cho, *Haunting the Korean Diaspora: Shame, Secrecy and the Forgotten War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 172.
31. In August 2001 the Kyoto District Court awarded 15 out of 80 plaintiffs three million yen each for “stress-related hardships” (*seishintekikurō*). Though stopping short of determining cause, the court found fault in the Japanese stopping in Maizuru rather than delivering the Koreans to Pusan. In May 2003 the Osaka High Court overturned this decision, a ruling that upon appeal was upheld in November 2004 by the Japanese Supreme court. Naitō Hisako, “Korean Forced Labor in Japan’s Wartime Empire,” in Paul Kratoska, ed. *Asian Labor in Wartime Japanese Empire: Unknown Histories* (London: Routledge, 2015), 96–97.
32. Maizuru faced aerial bombings between July 29–30, 1945 as reported by Miyaaki Sango, *Maizuru daison kaigun kayakushō: Chōyōkōin nikki* 舞鶴第三海軍火薬廠徴用工員日記 [The Third Naval Gunpowder Ship in Maizuru: The Diary of a Drafted Factory Hand], Self-published, (1989), 285–286.
33. Kim Ch’anjōng offers a comprehensive summary of the numbers and types of sea mines dropped by the U.S. military, as well as the number of Japanese ships that contacted sea mines after the war’s end in his *Ukishima-maru*, 175–180.
34. Kim, *Ukishima-maru*, 181–182.
35. Kim, *Ukishima-maru*, 187–188. See also Inaba Kōichi, “Ukishima-maru jiken to Nitcho Kokkō seijōka (浮島丸事件と日朝国交正常化 The *Ukishima-maru* Incident and Japan–North Korean normalization), *Kagaku shakaishugi* 77 (September 2004): 86.
36. Ukishima-maru zannansha tsuitō jikkō iinkai, *Ukishima-maru jiken no kiroku*, 51.
37. “Ukishima Maru likely contained Explosives,” *Korea JoongAng Daily* (on-line, August 10, 2016). <http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3022406> (accessed June 21, 2018).
38. Kim, *Ukishima-maru*, 168–169; Ukishima-maru zannansha tsuitō jikkō iinkai, *Ukishima-maru jiken no kiroku*, 27.
39. Institute of Asian Culture Studies, ed. *Mikugun tonggun saryōngbu* (September 24, 1945), 70.
40. Kim, *Ukishima-maru*, 123.
41. Quoted in Kim, *Ukishima-maru*, 164.

42. Kim *Ukishima-maru*, 165–168.
43. Ilch'e kangjŏmha kangchedongwon p'ihae chinsang kyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Uk'ishima-ho sakŏn sosong charyojip* 46.
44. Miyaaki, *Maizuru daisan kaigan kayakushō*, 300–303.
45. Kim, *Ukishima-maru*, 16.
46. That the *Ukishima-maru* sinking contributed to Japan-based (*zainichi*) Koreans' decisions to remain in Japan is a point made in the exhibits of the Zainichi Kanjin shiryōkan (Japan-based Korean museum) in Tokyo, in Naitō, "Koreans Forced Labor in Japan's Wartime Empire," 97. For a discussion of other areas of danger that might have prevented Korean post-liberation repatriation see Mark Caprio, "Kiken na kikan: Nihon rettō to Chōsen Hantō no hazamano nanmin" (危険な帰還—日本レットと朝鮮半島の間の難民 Dangerous Repatriation: Refugees Sandwiched between the Japanese Archipelago and the Korean Peninsula). Translated by Kim Junko, in Ishii Masako et al., eds. *Kyōseiteki na idō/ryūdō* (Forced Migration and Mobility) Kyoto: Kōyō shobo, 2019. 3–33.
47. Kotai Sei (?) to Commander of Occupation Troops (untitled), December 12, 1945. GHQ/SCAP Records (RG331) Investigation Division Reports (No. 130). File available in the National Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan. The compiler of this report was affiliated with the Korean Association of Japan, Hiroasaki office. The report is dated just one week after an attempt was made to bring the case to Japanese court.
48. Headquarters of Aomori Korean League in Japan to Commanding General of Occupation Troops, "Report on Investigation in connection with S.S. Ukishima Maru Incident (December 22, 1945), GHQ/SCAP Records (RG 331). This report estimated the ship carrying 8,000 passengers.
49. Memo to chief Investigations Division, "Ship Sinking" (January 29, 1945).
50. Kim, *Ukishima-maru*, 202–203.
51. Ilch'e kangjŏm hakang chedongwon p'ihae chinsang kyumyŏng ünñhüi, *Uk'ishimaho*, 47–48.
52. Ilch'e kangjŏmha kangchedongwon p'ihae chinsang kyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe, *Uk'ishima-ho sakŏn sosong charyojip*.
53. Aoyanagi Atsuko reviews this compensation plan in her *Ukishima-maru ha Pusan ni mukete shukkō shita*, 26. Kim Insung addresses one problem with compensation as a means of resolving this issue being that many of the victims were without direct descendants. "Kusulchosa ūl t'onghae pon Uk'ishimaho sosong ch'amgajadūr ūl sakkōne taehan kiŏkkwa insik" (구술조사를 통해 본 우키시마호 소송 참가자들의 사건에 대한 기억과 인식 The Plaintiff's Experience and Memory of the Ukishima-maru Incident Suit), *Minjok yŏn'gu* 65 (March 2016): 103.
54. Kim, "Kusulchosa ūl t'onghae pon Uk'ishimaho sosong ch'amgajadūr ūl sakkōne taehan kiŏkkwa insik," 103; Ilche kangjŏm hakang chedongwon p'ihae chinsang kyumyŏng ünñhüi, *Uk'ishimaho*, 94. These two publications both call for the South Korean government to assume greater responsibility in bringing closure to this issue.
55. See Cho, *Haunting the Korean Diaspora*, 171. The documentaries *Ukishima-maru ha Pusan e mukawazu*" and *Han no Umi*" both discuss the issue of critical documents not being provided for the plaintiffs' lawyers.
56. Ilch'e kangjŏm hakang chedongwon p'ihae chinsang kyumyŏng ünñhüi, *Uk'ishimaho*, 46.
57. The Maizuru Repatriation Memorial Museum (Maizuru hikiage kinenkan) homepage informs that the city welcomed 346 ships carrying 660,000 overseas Japanese into its port between 1945–1958. Many ships brought men who had been transported from northern Korea and Manchuria to Siberia for hard-labor purposes. <https://m-hikiage-museum.jp/english-education/04-repatriation.html> (accessed January 3, 2019).
58. The "Maizuru kankō gaidomappu" (舞鶴観光ガイドマップ Maizuru Tourist Guide map) that the city distributes to tourists notes the position of the memorial on its map but does not include it among the 29 short descriptions it gives of the city's top tourist sites.

59. See Laura Hein and Mark Selden, “The Lessons of War, Global Power, and Social Change.” In Laura Hein and Mark Selden, eds. *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany and the United States*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000, 3–50.
60. Upon a visit to Yūtenji two years ago a temple representative confirmed to me that the temple did (reluctantly) accept the remains of the ship’s victims, along with those of other Korean wartime victims, as no other temple would take them. On August 24, 2018 50 people gathered at the temple to attend the 30th Wartime Victims Memorial Service (*Sensō higaisha tsuitōshiki*) to honor the souls of the 700 Korean wartime dead whose remains are kept at the temple, down from the 2327 in 1970. “Chōsenjin sensō giseisha tsuitōshiki hiraku: Yūtenji hondō ni neru Ukishima-maru giseishara” (Wartime Victims Memorial Service Held for Ukishima-maru Victims and others at Yūtenji), *Tōitsu nippō*, August 28, 2018) <http://news.onekoreanews.net/detail.php?number=84938&thread=04> (accessed January 13, 2019).
61. Stoler, *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination*, 2.
62. Grace M. Cho reports the film gaining screen time in Moscow, Hong Kong, and even New York where a North Korean film festival was held in 2002. Cho, *Haunting the Korean Diaspora*, 171, 174.
63. Sang-Hun Choe, “Ship Tragedy Involving Thousands of Koreans, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 24 August 2001.
64. “A Conversation between Mark Carnes and Oliver Stone,” in Mark C. Carnes, ed. *Past Imperfect: History According to the Movies* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996), 311.
65. The belief that Japanese colonial intention was to eliminate all Koreans was brought to my attention by a student of Korean ancestry enrolled in a course on Modern Korean History that I taught at UCLA in 2013. In an email message the student inquired whether I planned to lecture on the “Korean holocaust” that history classes tend to ignore.
66. Kumagai Taru warns of the “historical risk” (*rekishi risuku*) that nations accept that past wartime atrocities will return to haunt the state should they remain unresolved. He argues that compensating such victimized peoples is more out of concern for future Japanese generations to ensure that they do not have to carry the guilt of their ancestors. Kumagai Taru, *Nihon to Doitsu: futatsu no sengo* (日本とドイツ二つの戦後 Japan and Germany: Two Postwars) (Tokyo: Shueisha shinsho, 2015), 130–131.
67. Jie-Hyun Lin, “Victimhood Nationalism in Contested Memories: National Mourning and Global Accountability,” in *Memory in a Golden Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories*, edited by Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 139.
68. Ships sinking, as in the case of the *Ukishima-maru*, was just one of a number of dangers that Japan-based Koreans had to consider when contemplating repatriation to the peninsula. For a review of these dangers see Caprio, “Kiken na kikan: Nihon rettō to Chōsen Hantō no hazamano nanmin.”

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