

SHORENSTEIN APARC EVENTS



Transnational Grassroots Efforts to Redress Forced Labor in Wartime Japan

Seminar Series

DATE AND TIME

March 11, 2010
4:30 PM - 6:00 PM

AVAILABILITY

Open to the public
👤 RSVP required by 5PM March 10

SPEAKER

William Underwood - Independent Researcher

Some 700,000 Koreans, 40,000 Chinese and 35,000 Allied POWs performed forced labor for private companies within Japan during the Asia Pacific War. Kyushu coal mines were a wartime center of this injustice and Fukuoka is a major locus of ongoing redress efforts, which the presenter has closely observed. A front-row account of the interaction between community activists in Japan, Korea, China and North America will be provided and key results will be discussed. The Japanese government has been prodded into sending the remains of Korean labor conscripts to South Korea and handing over the long-suppressed records that Seoul needs to fully implement its own compensation program. Lawsuits in Japanese courts stemming from forced labor by Chinese proved partially successful, raising expectations that more Japanese firms may voluntarily settle the especially strong Chinese claims. Amid the controversy surrounding former Prime Minister Aso's admission that there were POWs at Aso Mining, Japan issued new official apologies and is expanding a POW reconciliation program. Fluid networks of independent researchers and Internet-empowered activists continue to influence developments within Japan's changing political landscape. This transnational grassroots activism also faces barriers and limitations.

Mr. Underwood's doctoral research at Kyushu University analyzed the reparations movement for Chinese forced labor in Japan during World War Two, locating it within the global trend toward repairing historical injustices. His articles for *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* (www.japanfocus.org) provide the fullest descriptions of forced labor redress activities involving Chinese as well as Korean victims. He played a key role in forcing former Japanese Prime Minister Aso Taro to admit there were Allied POWs at Aso Mining during the war. His Web site is www.williamunderwood.org.

Topics: [Coal](#) | [China](#) | [Japan](#) | [North America](#) | [South Korea](#)

LOCATION

Philippines Conference Room
Encina Hall
616 Serra St., 3rd floor
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305
» [Directions/Map](#)

FSI CONTACT

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