

# “How to Cross the Border” of Historical Perceptions in the History Textbooks of Korea, China and Japan:

## *“Liquidation” of the Asia-Pacific War and Historical Reconciliation*

Sin Ju-back

### **Abstract**

*In their dealing with the Tokyo Trial, history textbooks of the five East Asian countries have exhibited their indifference to Asian identity, as can be seen from their description of historical facts specific to the region from nationalist viewpoints, which are a far cry from being a comprehensive and balanced historiography. While some Japanese history textbooks avoid dealing with the war responsibility of Japan, other four East Asian countries have failed to exactly frame and fairly present the facts. In a word, the history textbooks of East Asian countries, though they advocate globalization, have not delivered to students the conciliatory and cooperative frameworks that will help them realize the universal value of human beings.*

*The ideas of reconciliation and cooperation presuppose the fact-finding of a historical past, whether or not they be acceptable or unfavorable to oneself. There should be efforts to fairly deliver historical facts to the generations to come, which will be a starting point for a dialogue between the historical textbooks of East Asian countries.*

**Keywords:** history education, history textbook, “liquidation” of the past, Tokyo Trial, San Francisco Peace Treaty, war responsibility

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## Introduction

The twenty-first century has seen East Asia emerge as one of the largest and most powerful political and economic blocs in the world. Korea, China, and Japan have been actively engaging in economic cooperation, and about 24 percent of their trade volume comes from deals made amongst themselves.

One important point to keep in mind, however, is that though the three countries have expanded economic exchanges with one another, this does not mean that they have strengthened lines of communication or that solidarity among them has been achieved. If the East Asia region is to be a space not only of economic cooperation, but also of future partnerships that open lines of communication with each other, the people of the three countries must solidify their relations. Strong, solid relationships would foster the development of a common set of values and create an East Asian identity built on geographical proximity and cultural similarities.

It is necessary to come to terms with the past entangled among these three nations and their peoples, and thereby to pave the way for reconciliation and cooperation as well as the formation of a stabilized regional identity. There are exemplary European cases we can refer to in this regard. Germany as perpetrator reconciled with its victim countries, and Germany and France led reconciliatory and cooperative efforts to establish the identity of Europe, together creating the European Economic Community and ultimately the European Union. The time has come for East Asia to consider creating its own such identity. While the trade volume of Korea, China, and Japan accounts for a quarter of their total volume and is still increasing, debates over developing a regional community have just begun.

Moreover, the issue of history in East Asia gets in the way of developing smooth international relations. In the 1990s, the issue was limited to textbooks, but in the twenty-first century it was expanded to include Japanese leaders' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine; the naming of the sea between Korea and Japan; territorial disputes; and Japan's apparent lack of accountability for its history of imperial-

ism. While the three countries have been focusing on educating their people to "fit" globalization and at the same time promoting nationalism, these historical conflicts have been growing in severity, with little being done to solve them.

The purpose of this paper is to identify how history textbooks in Korea, Japan, and China describe Japanese imperialism and Japan's efforts to deal with its past wrongdoings since 1945. This paper also attempts beyond this issue to uncover why the three countries have different perspectives on history and the ways in which they might cross the border of these differing historical perceptions.<sup>1</sup> To this end, I refer to the principles set out by the international guidebook on textbook research recommended by UNESCO in 1949. These principles include accuracy, fairness, comprehensiveness and balance, world-mindedness, value and international cooperation. For my analysis, I will include value and international cooperation under world-mindedness since I consider these principles as either overlapping or ambiguous.<sup>2</sup>

A few opportunities have presented themselves to help East Asia come to terms with its past and achieve reconciliation: one is the Tokyo Trial in 1946 and the other is the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951. Unfortunately, those two opportunities ended up being just that, and not much more. In the 1990s, another opportunity presented itself, one created by East Asians themselves. This paper will review all three of these in detail and briefly touch upon the history textbooks published in North Korea and Taiwan, both of which suffered invasion and colonization by Japan. Let us first look at the state

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1. Given the common experience of invasion and colonial rule that East Asian countries endured and the consequent history conflicts that followed, it is time to review and think hard about how the history textbooks of these countries can offer ways to overcome the past and present a new future from an overall East Asia perspective. It is rare to find comparative papers on the different historical perceptions of Korea, China, Japan, North Korea, and Taiwan beyond the three I have published. Sin (2002a, 2002b, 2007).
  2. "A Model Plan for the Analysis and Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials as Aids to International Understanding," in UNESCO (1949, 78-79).

of history textbooks in Korea, China, and Japan and the basic trends in each country's history education.

### History Textbooks and History Education in Korea, China, and Japan

The history education of Korea, China, and Japan has reached a crossroads. The three countries are strengthening their national history education while also paying attention to world history as a way to prepare students for globalization. Japan, for example, incorporated national history with world history and teaches the newly integrated history textbook in middle school. The other two countries are following suit, creating a trend. Let us first review the history textbooks and history education of Japan.<sup>3</sup>

Japan revised certain articles of the School Education Law in May 2007, one of which now states the role of education as being "to nurture an attitude of patriotism." This provision represents a new goal of mandatory education and became a legal framework to reinforce "patriotism education."<sup>4</sup> Although the new guideline still emphasizes deeper understanding of and passion for the nation and its history, as well as nurturing the spirit of international cooperation,<sup>5</sup> this led to a big turning point in Japan's post-war education, whose basic ideology had been individual dignity since the Basic Education Law was proclaimed in 1947.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology declared the revised "Education Curriculum Guidelines" in Febru-

3. Considering the method of description in Sections 3, 4, and 5 in this paper, I will review Japan's history textbooks and history education first.

4. *Mainichi Daily News*, May 20 and 21, 2007. This provision is the result of a political compromise made between the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Clean Government Party (CGP). The LDP argued for the phrase "love the country," but the CGP argued for "cherish the country" because the former smacked too much of militarism and totalitarianism.

5. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (2008, 31-46).

ary 2008 based on the revised School Education Law. Consequently, the next round of approval of history textbooks will take place in 2009 for middle school and in 2010 and 2011 for high school. The approval is expected to even further encourage Japanese nationalism.

While Japan's history education becoming rapidly more conservative in the twenty-first century, the "nationalism" trend has already been reflected in its textbooks. Supporters have even argued publicly that textbooks must implant patriotism into the minds of students. Japan's decision to impose national history as a compulsory subject is one effort borne out of this argument. On February 14, 2008, the Education Committee of Kanagawa Prefecture, located near Tokyo, released the following statement: "Japanese history education will nurture patriotism . . . and the committee has decided to make Japan's national history a required course in all 142 public high schools within the prefecture by 2013."<sup>6</sup> This was the first time a local administration had ever made such a decision. The reason Kanagawa Prefecture set 2013 as the deadline is that high school history textbooks in compliance with the revised education curriculum guidelines are set to go into use that year.

Currently, history courses in Japan's high schools are incorporated under history and geography. Students must take *Sekaishi* (World History) A or B, as a requirement, and choose one out of four: *Nihonshi* (Japanese History) A or B, or *Chiri* (Geography) A or B.<sup>7</sup> World history is a requirement for high school graduation because students must study Japanese history to enter university. It is logical to expect, then, that world history would also be a requirement and on the university entrance test, especially in light of the globalization era. But this is not the case in Japan. World history is not one of the subjects on the university entrance exam. As a result, some high schools have

6. *JoongAng Daily*, February 16, 2008.

7. A total of forty-three history textbooks were used in Japan's high schools in 2008, thirty-four of which passed official approval in 2006 and 2007 and nine that did not. Of them, *Saishin nihonshi* (Latest Japanese History B) textbook written by the rightist organization Nihonkaigi and issued by Meiseisha, which did not even apply for approval, is nonetheless being adopted in some schools.

even gone against Japanese law, replacing world history with other subjects that are on the university entrance exam. This was a hot issue in 2007.

Japanese middle school history courses are incorporated under the social studies subject along with civics and geography courses. The Japanese government's original rationale was to cover world history with its national history at the center. However, Japanese history has increasingly taken more space in the history curriculum, which means less world history. At present, there are eight types of history textbooks for middle school and among them is the *Atarashii rekishi kyokasho* (New History Textbook: Revised Education) developed by the Japanese Society for History Text Reform and published by Fusosha. This textbook was responsible for raising the history textbook issue once again in Korea and other countries after 2001.

This paper reviews five types of high school history textbooks issued by Yamakawa Shuppansha, which have been widely adopted in schools in Japan; as well as the middle school history textbook released by Tokyo Shoseki, and two other rightist-leaning ones.

Now let me turn your attention to Korea's history education and the changes made in its history textbooks. Korea is in the process of implementing the seventh educational curriculum, but the year 2011 will witness a sea change in history education for middle and high schools. The Korean government has already implemented history education that aims to develop open-minded and active Koreans and equip them with a strong sense of identity, universal values and a global attitude—all of which are very much needed in this era of globalization and informatization. The eighth curriculum will serve to reinforce the government's intention.<sup>8</sup> To realize this goal, the publication system for national history textbooks will shift from government authorization to the official approval system. Although history is not separated from the social studies subject, it has become an independent course, unlike the general social studies and geography

8. The Ministry of Education has stated its intention to no longer use a curriculum number (e.g. the 7th and 8th curriculum). However, for the sake of clarity, I have retained the number in this paper.

courses also grouped under the subject. The government made this decision based on the fact that it had been in conflict with Japan since 2001 and China was set to pursue its Northeast Project. The Korean government deemed it necessary to "substantiate history education for the next generation in order to respond to the distorted history presented by its neighboring countries and boost history education so that young people can understand diverse history and cultures around the world."<sup>9</sup> This is why Korea, for the first time in East Asia, decided to establish East Asian history as an in-depth course for sophomores and seniors in high school, starting from 2012.

Currently, Korean middle school students learn national and world history through the government-authorized national history textbook in their second and third grades and through the official approval-based social studies (vols. I, II, III) textbooks. Contemporary history, under the scrutiny of this paper, is covered in Vol. II of "social studies" and there are nine types of textbooks. For high school students, freshmen study "national history" and sophomores and seniors study six types of "modern & contemporary Korean history" and three types of "world history," which are social studies electives. This paper will review all of them, focusing on Kumsung Publishing, and also review other publications if necessary.

Starting in 2011 and 2012, however, Korea's history education will undergo a major change. Unlike Japan and China, Korea's history education will focus more heavily on modern and contemporary history. Furthermore, Korea's newly incorporated education policy aims to strengthen history education so that students can learn national and world history together.<sup>10</sup>

9. Yang (2007, 1). Mr. Yang is an education researcher at the Ministry of Education.

10. From 2011, second-year middle school students will learn modern Korean and world history through *History: Volume 1*; from 2012, third graders will learn a portion through *History: Volume 2*, which separately describes the modern and contemporary history of Korea and the world. Also starting in 2011, high school freshmen will study history, which incorporates the modern and contemporary history of Korea and the world; sophomores will take one in-depth elective course from among *Korean Cultural History*, *East Asia History*, and *Understanding World Civilization*.

Finally, let us look at China, which is in the process of changing its history education system for the first time in 50 years. China is changing the guidelines of the “History Program” to “History Curriculum Standards.” This is because the country needed to maintain a unified multinational order while reacting and adapting to the fast changing social and economic environment since it reformed and opened its market to the world. Moreover, the twenty-first century has seen the economy evolve to the point where differing attitudes and cultures conflict with one another in the global marketplace. In light of this, China had to do something to keep the “Great Chinese Culture” alive and further foster its development, as well as infuse patriotism into the minds of students.<sup>11</sup>

Accordingly, the target for China’s history education has changed from the elite to ordinary students based on the History Curriculum Standards. China now strongly encourages students to participate in the learning process through the new standards, rather than just sit back and passively receive information from their teachers. By implementing a less ideological and practical history education, the country has reinforced its history education in a way that fosters patriotism and unity in its people.

However, as of 2008, not all textbooks written in China are following the new standards. Some high schools across the country maintain the old guidelines, implementing the new standards at their own discretion. For instance, “modern and contemporary Chinese history” as a requirement and elective courses such as “modern and contemporary world history” and “ancient Chinese history” all follow the History Program; while, *History I, II, III* as a requirement and *History I-VI* as an elective course follow the history curriculum standards. But textbooks using the new standards are increasingly being adopted, and beginning in the fall of 2009, the new standards will be adopted countrywide. High school textbooks in compliance with the old guidelines were exclusively issued by Beijing People’s Education Press, but there are five types of history textbooks now in compliance

11. Ministry of Education (2001, 1; 2003, 1).

with the new standards.

Unlike high school, all middle schools in China use history textbooks that follow the new standards. Chinese middle school history courses consist of either one of the following: Chinese history in the first and second years and world history for the third; or, “history and society” or “history” for the entire three years. Middle school students study a total of six history textbooks, one per semester. At present, there are thirteen types of textbooks published, with the one released by Beijing People’s Education Press being the most widely adopted. Students are expected to opt for one of the two types of textbooks. Those who take *Chinese History* and *World History* have to take a geography course separately; while those who take *History and Society* do not need to do so. In practice, the latter option is not welcomed by students because social studies are emphasized over history, putting them at a disadvantage at the next level of schooling.

To analyze China’s history textbooks, this paper only focuses on middle and high school history textbooks published by the Beijing People’s Education Press, whose books are most prevalent across the country.

### History Textbook Descriptions of the Tokyo Trial and War Responsibility

The war crime trials represented the first movement in international society to hold Japan accountable for its invasions and colonial rule. They were held in Japan, China, and other countries in East Asia, but the most symbolic of these was the Tokyo Trial as it brought top-level political and military leaders during the Asia-Pacific War to justice.

The International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE), or “Tokyo Trial” for short, began in May 1946 when General Headquarters (GHQ) prosecuted 28 Class-A war criminals including Tojo Hideki. In November 1948, seven were sentenced to death, sixteen to life in solitary confinement, and two to limited years of confinement. On

December 23 of the same year, seven convicts were executed; the next day, all Class-A war suspects including Kishi Nobusuke were released. The Tokyo Trial clearly did not end the way it was supposed to.

### Japan

Both the middle school history textbook *History* and the high school textbook *Nihonshi* cover the Tokyo Trial. Of course, it should be included, as it was a landmark historical event. However, the perspective taken by the Japanese Ministry of Education on the subject is troubling. The ministry clearly wanted the trial to be included in such a way as to explain the process of Japan's democratization, through which a defeated Japan reentered the international arena.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, many textbooks flatly state that soldiers and politicians who were assumed to be responsible for the war stood trial according to the "post-war reform" led by the GHQ. No middle school textbooks point out the fact that the purpose of the trial was to hold Japan accountable for its invasions and colonial rule. Likewise, it is difficult to find a single Japanese high school history textbook that brings up the Class A war crimes or "crimes against peace" named at the Tokyo Trial. *Kaiteiban shosetsu nihonshi B* (Revised Japanese History B), called Japan's "historical bible" and issued by Yamakawa Shuppansha, is the only exception, including in its pages a special section under the heading "The Tokyo Trial."<sup>13</sup>

Similar international cases, such as the Nuremberg Military Tribunals (NMT) that sentenced twelve Nazi leaders to death in October 1946, are, by and large, not even mentioned at all in Japan's textbooks.<sup>14</sup> The core policy of the allied forces in dealing with post-war destruction was aimed at preventing war and maintaining peace in

12. Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (1998a, 110-111; 1998b, 100-101).

13. Ishii Susumu et al. (2007, 349).

14. Sibata Mitio et al. (2007); Kimura Seiji et al. (2007); Nakamura Tadasu et al. (2007); Mukaiyama Hiroshi et al. (2007); Mukaiyama Hiroshi et al. (2007); Sagara Masatoshi et al. (2007); and Sibata Michio (2008).

the world; punishing the German and Japanese invaders; and establishing democracy. Any introduction to world history should include this fact and mention the basic policy of dealing with the post-war issues and the historical process of the establishment of the cold war regime.

There are also cases in Japan's history textbooks where the events of the Tokyo Trial are presented in a deliberately misleading way. The Fusosha version history textbook includes a one-page essay entitled "Think about the Tokyo Trial." The essay begins as follows: "Judge Pal, representing India, argued that the Tokyo Trial was groundless and against international law because it intended to apply 'crime against peace retroactively'. Thereby all the accused were found not guilty." The essay goes on to say that there was "some doubt as to the validity of the Tokyo Trial in light of international law."<sup>15</sup> The essay also implies that Japan was not responsible for the Asia-Pacific War, and ends by saying that the trial and GHQ propaganda forced the Japanese to feel guilty and impacted Japan's post-war historical view. The main point here is that the trial was the starting point of the so-called self-torture historical perspective (*jigyaku shikan*). The same argument can be found in an essay entitled "Tokyo Trial and International Peace" published by Meisesha.<sup>16</sup>

Actually, while Judge Pal believed there was enough evidence of Japan's military's atrocities in Nanjing, China, he did not insist on Japan's guilt because he believed Japan's acts were justifiable during war. The judge gave an example of the atomic bomb the United States dropped on Japan, saying that the trial was for the winner and had thereby lost its legality; all the accused were then found not guilty. Eight countries among the eleven that dispatched judges endorsed the ruling, and Judge Pal claimed commutation. Two Japanese rightist textbooks exaggerated the story, failing to deliver the truth in a precise and accurate manner.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the two

15. Huzioka Nobukazu et al. (2006, 215).

16. Murao Zirou et al. (2003, 256).

17. It is understandable that former Minister Abe Shinjo would meet with the judge's descendants in August 2007 on a visit to India.

rightist textbooks are oblivious to the fact that the Tokyo Trial proceeded on the assumption that the U.S. occupation policy and anti-communism strategy in East Asia acquiesces to Emperor Hirohito.

Thus, the problem with Japan's historical perspective of the Tokyo Trial is that while it does not raise the issue of the self-torture historical perspective and rather focuses on the emperor's responsibility for the war, it still ignores the actual nature of the trial and the political compromise from which it started. This is a problem in many of Japan's textbooks.

However, the Japanese history textbook published by Jikkyo Shuppan at least points out the problems of the trial. The section called "Window to History" reads as follows:

This trial shocked the public because it clearly explained the Nanjing massacre. But, the trial proceeded in the interest of the United States. Only three judges out of the eleven came from Asia and none of them were from neutral countries. The chief public prosecutor was selected by the United States. Also, the emperor and his imperial family were not prosecuted. In addition, Japan's Unit 731 soldiers, who conducted medical experiments on living bodies, facilitated germ wars, and used poisonous gas, were found not guilty.<sup>18</sup>

Yet, even the Jikkyo Shuppan textbook fails to note that other colonized countries, with the exception of the Philippines and Taiwan, could not send judges to have their voices heard. And unlike the Nuremberg Tribunal, the Tokyo Trial did not prosecute Class-C war criminals, that is, "crimes against humanity." The textbook did not point out this fact.

#### *South Korea and North Korea*

The Tokyo Trial is not included within the scope of Korean history. It is not even mentioned in the Korean middle and high school text-

18. Miyahara Takeo et al. (2007, 148; 2008, 210). Similar criticism can be found in Ooyama Kyouheii et al. (2008, 358); and Iwasaki Hiroshi et al. (2007, 126).

books such as *Guksa* (National History) and *Hanguk geunhyeondae sa* (Modern and Contemporary Korean History). Then, what about the *world history* textbook written in Korea?

Nine types of middle school textbooks under *social studies II* do not mention the Tokyo and Nuremberg trials; and only two high school textbooks out of three under world history mention war crime trials.<sup>19</sup> In particular, Kumsung Publishing's textbook covers the Tokyo Trial in a section entitled "Widening the Idea" under the theme of "Dealing with War Criminals—Military Tribunals in Tokyo and Nuremberg" as follows:

After World War II, world history defined invasion as a crime. So, political and military leaders were held accountable in legal terms. The International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg that began in November 1945 and the International Military Tribunal for the Far East in Tokyo in May 1946 are examples.

In Nuremberg, 24 were prosecuted and 12, including Hermann Göring, were executed, with three, including Rudolph Hess, sentenced to life. At the Tokyo Trial, 28 were prosecuted and seven, including Tojo Hideki, were executed, with 16, including Araki Sadao, sentenced to life in prison.

However, the Tokyo Trial had a limitation in that it excluded then Emperor Hirohito, who was the culprit behind the war. Moreover, the intention of the United States to keep Japan on its side under the cold war regime enabled Japanese war criminals to take over the politics and economy of their country once again and remain in conflict with nearby countries. Japan's non-reflexive attitude stands in stark contrast to Germany, which brought Nazi war criminals to justice on its own, even after the Nuremberg tribunal was over, and offered compensation for war victims.<sup>20</sup>

This passage should be highly praised for its illustration of the procedures of the two international war crime trials. Beyond that, it also discusses the process of the Tokyo Trial and its problems while relat-

19. Only the Jihaksa textbook does not mention the trial. Oh Chang-hun et al. (2004).  
20. Oh (2004, 288).

ing these to the historical background of history conflicts in Asia. But it still falls short in that it does not address Asia's perspective at the trial. Further, it should have mentioned the Koreans who were unfairly convicted as Class-B and Class-C war criminals at war crime trials.

Class-B war criminals are those who violated the common war engagement rule; while Class-C criminals are those who committed "crimes against humanity." The Tokyo Trial was held to bring to justice Class-A war criminals and others who were classified as Class-B and Class-C. Class-B and Class-C war crime tribunals were held from October 1945 through April 1951 in 49 courts across the countries of East Asia and included 5,700 criminals.

The problem is that the Class-B and Class-C tribunals focused only on the murder of innocent civilians and the abuse of prisoners of war, and failed to hold Japan accountable for the cruel acts its military perpetrated on the locals of the countries it colonized. That explains why rank and file soldiers and civilians working for the Japanese military in direct contact with POWs and citizens were executed more than war leaders. Among them were forced draftees from Korea and Taiwan and civilians working for the military. Korean Class-B and Class-C war criminals totaled 23 out of the 984 executed, and 125 Koreans were sentenced to life.

The Class-B and Class-C war crime trials did not consider the reality of the convicts being drafted by force under colonial rule. Since they are also considered victims in historical terms, they could not be treated in the same way as Japanese perpetrators. Although the Korean world history textbook mentions their unfair treatment, it does not provide a context through which the students can understand their predecessors' hardships.<sup>21</sup> This limitation can also be found in a section entitled "The Tokyo Trial" of the *Kaiteiban shosetsu nihonshi B* published by Yamakawa Shuppansha, which briefly touches upon the trial but fails to describe the fact that some Koreans were unfairly forced to serve the Japanese army. The Jikkyo Shuppan

21. One of the reasons is that until 2002, when the world history textbook was written, there was little research on Class-B and Class-C war crime tribunals in Korea.

version, *Shinteiban koko nihonshi A/B* (New Edition High School Japanese History A/B), is the only one that indicates that Taiwanese and Koreans were also tried as Class-B and Class-C war criminals.

North Korean textbooks also do not appropriately mention the Tokyo Trial. *Segye ryeoksa* (World History) for high school seniors states in Chapter 2-1 "Return of Japanese Militarism" that "the United States reinstated the emperor system in Japan, thereby attempting to resuscitate the past military forces led by the emperor and create military and pro-U.S. political forces under the emperor."<sup>22</sup> The North Korean textbook only talks of the emperor system for its political purposes, but does not make a direct link to or speak of the Tokyo Trial. Even though the textbook describes the United States and Japan as imperialists and attempts to explain all historical phenomena from an anti-U.S. and anti-Japanese perspective, it would be wrong to expect more; this is a characteristic limitation of North Korean textbooks.

For both perpetrators and victims alike, history education that does not consider "the rest of Asia" and is not balanced in terms of the region's unique history that can be found in history textbooks in China and Taiwan and other Asian countries across Asia.

#### *China and Taiwan*

As previously mentioned, China's history education is moving toward incorporated education, History, that includes national and world history. However, China's revised history curriculum standards rarely touch upon issues like the war crime tribunals, thus erecting another roadblock to East Asia coming to terms with its past. Likewise, Taiwan, which revised its curriculum before China published *Shehui* (Social Studies) for middle school and *Lishi* (History) for high school, also does not mention the war crime tribunals in its textbooks.<sup>23</sup>

22. Kim Gwang-won (1995, 89).

23. Taiwan established the History Curriculum Standards in 1995. It revised its middle school education curriculum in 1998 and 2000 to include *Shehui* (Social Studies) 1-6 which covers national and world history. In high school, history covers these subjects.



China and Taiwan simply present international relations after August 1945 in the context of creating the UN and the cold war regime.

Moreover, China's high school textbook *Lishi—xuanze 3* (History-Optional 3), whose theme is "War and Peace in the Twentieth Century," avoids mention of the war crime trials altogether. The textbook discusses the establishment of the Yalta system without mentioning the UN. This is because the textbook allocates too much space to the Yalta period, which was actually a very short period of time, leaving no room for the post-war treatment of Germany and Japan.

Meanwhile, the Taiwanese high school textbook *Lishi* (History) is filled with Taiwanese history after the Civil War in China and fails to discuss the war crime trials held by the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party in China. In general, recent Taiwanese history education at the middle school, high school, and university levels emphasizes nationalistic pride and there is little reason to expect any change in the near future.

The history education of China and Taiwan should bring the issue of the Tokyo trials to the surface by openly presenting the issue in a comprehensive and balanced manner. A change in education policy in these two countries is the first step to make this happen.<sup>24</sup>

### History Textbooks Descriptions of the San Francisco Peace Treaty and Post-War Responsibility

The San Francisco Peace Conference, held in September 1951, offered another international opportunity to hold Japan accountable for its war crimes. However, in the end, the conference was not enough to finish World War II.

When the Korean War broke out, the United States notified member countries of the Far Eastern Commission that it would conclude a

24. Likewise, as the Taiwanese history textbook does not mention topics related to Sections 4 and 5, I will not explain the Taiwanese case.

peace treaty with Japan in September 1950.<sup>25</sup> The United States hoped to create an anti-communist bloc in East Asia with Japan at the center, a plan it had begun devising after it witnessed the communization of China and the war waging in Korea. Out of 55 countries invited, 52 participated in the conference in September 1951.<sup>26</sup> South and North Korea were not invited, as Japan opposed their participation, claiming that the two Koreas were not belligerent countries. The United States opposed China's participation, so it, too, was banned from participation.

Of the participating countries, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Poland refused to join the treaty, which left 48 countries that did. The treaty included recognition of Japan's sovereignty; approval of foreign forces stationed in Japan; agreement on the allied forces giving up the right to demand compensation; acknowledgement of South Korea's independence; and Japan's abandonment of the right to claim sovereignty over Taiwan, etc. As a result, Asia-Pacific post-war negotiations finally came to an end in the international arena. That is why the treaty is a so-called peace treaty. Afterwards, the United States and Japan signed the treaty and a security treaty at the same time.

### Japan

As with the Tokyo Trial, the San Francisco Peace Treaty was a very important event in Japan's history. In April 1952, when the treaty took effect, the United States ended its occupation of Japan. All Japanese history textbooks describe this treaty. Nevertheless, the way the contents of the treaty are described, especially on the issue of "the right to demand compensation," differs greatly depending on which textbook is read.

First, let us look at middle school textbooks published by Tokyo

25. After World War II, 11 countries including the United States, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines participated in the GHQ to deal with Japan.

26. India, Myanmar, and Yugoslavia did not attend the conference.

Shoseki and five types of high school textbooks published by Yamakawa Shuppansha. Tokyo Shoseki's *Shinpen atarashii shakai rekishi* (New Edition: New Society and History) states that the United States was in a rush "to make Japan a member of the Western bloc." It also later says that "most of the countries did not demand compensation because Japan could not afford to pay such a staggering amount. So, East Asian countries once under Japanese colonial rule established a series of measures of economic cooperation with Japan instead of demanding compensation."<sup>27</sup> This is enough to explain the background of the treaty, but the part claiming that Japan "could not afford" the compensation is simply not true.

The amount that Japan paid to those countries was not truly compensation, as it was not based on Japan's reflection on its invasion and colonial rule. It was also not accompanied by an apology for its past wrongdoings. Furthermore, the economic cooperation that came out of the San Francisco Peace Treaty did not place a financial burden on Japan's economic growth. That is, while Japan paid 33 trillion yen to its victim countries from 1952 to 1991, the amount paid to 28 colonized countries from 1954 to 1977 only amounted to a total of 1.362 trillion yen (1.5 billion dollars).<sup>28</sup> Such a small amount certainly had no negative impact on the Japanese economy. "Japan, already enjoying high economic growth, could easily compensate its victim countries. In fact, this late compensation brought with it a great opportunity for Japan to once again advance into the South East Asian market, taking advantage of free economic cooperation."<sup>29</sup>

Many countries did not demand compensation because the United States was making aggressive moves to achieve its goal by drawing an anti-communist line in East Asia and rushing Japan and other countries to establish foreign relations. Further, taking advantage of the U.S. preoccupation with its own plans, Japan made strenuous

27. Gomi Humihoko et al. (2006, 209). The description is identical to that of the 2002 version.

28. Tanaka H. (2000, 69).

29. Tanaka H. (2000, 68-69).

efforts to hide its past wrongdoings. Thus, the middle school history textbook published by Nihon Shoseki Shinsha states that "the United States did not call on Japan for compensation since it wanted to strengthen its relations with Japan and many other countries followed suit."<sup>30</sup>

Indeed, the money Japan paid in compliance with the 1965 Korea-Japan Basic Treaty was also not for compensation. Korea referred to it as a fund that acknowledged its claims, while Japan thought of it as a congratulatory reward. The Shimizushoin's high school textbook claims that "treaties were made for compensation and economic cooperation," which is clearly a distortion of the facts. In this aspect the Yamakawa Shuppansha version of high school textbook, which reads that "the money was a springboard for Japanese corporations to make advances into East Asia," and that "Japan paid an equal amount of compensation to Thailand and Korea which are non-belligerent countries," is a more accurate account of the circumstances.<sup>31</sup> And for even more accuracy, it is necessary to turn to Tokyo Shoseki's middle school history textbook, which explains how "payment in the form of economic cooperation replaced 'compensation'," or to the same publisher's high school textbook which uses the terms "free economic cooperation" (semi-compensation).<sup>32</sup>

Textbooks which tend to justify Japan's post-war compensation display two features. The first, to be reviewed in more detail in Chapter 5, is that they do not delve into much detail about Japan's post-war deals and civic-based movements to "liquidate" the past. Middle school textbooks published by Fusosha even go too far in attempting to justify the country's invasions.

Meanwhile, textbooks that point out problems with the treaty are more likely to mention these issues. For instance, Jikkyo Shuppan's *Shinpen koko nihonshi A* (New Edition High School Japanese History

30. Minegisi Kenntarou et al. (2006, 224).

31. Sasaki Hiroshi et al. (2007, 74); Ishii Susumu et al. (2007, 360); and Takamura Naosuke et al. (2008, 255).

32. Tanaka Akira et al. (2007, 177).

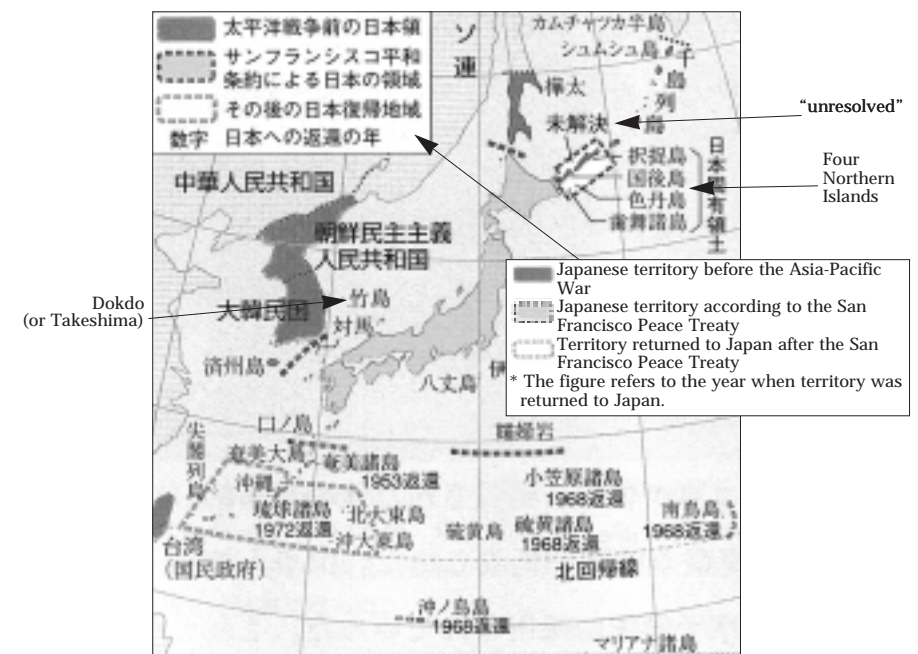
A) (2007) covers the San Francisco Peace Treaty through two pages, and deals with the treaty and Japan's relations with Asian countries in a section entitled "Window on History." The textbook also deals in detail with Japan's movements to get over the past in sections entitled "Contemporary Japan and Korea" (2007, 170-177) and "Think about Post-War Compensation" (2007, 190-191).<sup>33</sup> In addition, Tokyo Shoseki's high school textbook, *Nihonshi A* (2008) includes sections entitled "People in Asia and Post-War Compensation" (2008, 178) and "Global View" (2008, 179).

The second feature in textbooks that attempt to justify Japan's post-war compensation is that though they describe how the treaty reduced Japan's compensation responsibility, they go on to reveal how territorial nationalism, which they call "territorial limits," were strictly applied. Specifically, the majority of these types of history textbooks stop short of mentioning the return of the four islands in the northern part of the country. Some, in particular, Yamakawa Shuppansha's all high school history textbooks, cite the island that Koreans refer to as "Dokdo" as Takeshima (Bamboo Island) (as in Figure 1), and the status of the other four islands as "unresolved." Meanwhile, other textbooks mark the Senkaku Islands as if they are resolved territory. In this context, we can see that the territory issue has been increasingly presented in Japanese history textbooks, albeit mostly to the benefit of Japan.

In reality, Korea has claimed Dokdo, and China and Taiwan have claimed the Senkaku Islands. Thus, if Japan wants to state its right to sovereignty from its point of view, it should also offer the view of the other countries involved in the interest of fairness. *Nihon Shoseki Shinsha's* middle school textbook is the only one that makes some attempt at fairness, describing in a section entitled "Territory Issues" that "there is a problem between Korea and Japan with Takeshima (Dokdo in Korean) Island located in the Japanese Sea." Similar issues in relation to China and Russia are also described in a fairly balanced

33. The section "Think about the Past" is also included in Takamura Naosuke et al. (2008, 242-243).

Figure 1. Japanese Territory according to the San Francisco Peace Treaty



Source: Ishii Susumu et al. (2007, 360); and Takamura Naosuke et al. (2008, 255).

manner in this textbook.<sup>34</sup>

#### South and North Korea

All Korean history textbooks note the establishment of the UN during the post-war treatment process right after World War II. But many of them do not describe the San Francisco Peace Treaty. Only three types of middle school textbooks out of nine briefly present the issue. Kyohaksa Publishing's *Sahoe II* (Social Studies II) is one of these, and states how "Japan was occupied by the United States but recovered its

34. Umitu Masatomo et al. (2006, 43).

sovereignty with the San Francisco Conference.”<sup>35</sup> Two out of three high school world history textbooks mention the conference. Kyohaksa Publishing includes it in the section under “Post-War Treatment” under “World History” and explains its problems and processes as follows:

Issues related to the territory of Korea and the division between the North and the South came to light during the process of post-war treatment. . . . As the division symbolically shows, how defeated countries should be treated was a very difficult problem to solve because the United States and the Soviet Union remained in deep conflict with one another. Consequently, each country had no choice but to conclude individual treaties.<sup>36</sup>

The part that relates post-war treatment to the division issue is well interpreted from the point of view of Korea. But the section “Learning Materials: Treatment of Post-World War II” fails to maintain a regional perspective in that it does not explain how Japan’s invasion and colonial rule were dealt with from the perspective of East Asia.

The problems of the world history textbook can likewise be found in many Korean history textbooks. Six types of high school textbooks on Korean modern and contemporary history refer to changes after World War II as background information for Korea’s contemporary history. Among them, a textbook published by Doosan Publishing is the only one that mentions the peace treaty.<sup>37</sup> Yet, the Doosan Publishing textbook only states that Japan recovered its sovereignty, achieved economic development under the U.S. protection and developed its international status. Five of the nine *Sahoe II* textbooks published by Daehan Printing & Publishing Company, Kyohaksa Publishing, Kumsung Publishing, Sungji Publishing, and Jihaksa Publishing also maintain a similar statement as that of Doosan Pub-

35. Hwang Jae-gi et al. (2002, 107); Lee Jin-suk et al. (2002, 117); and Jo Hwa-ryong et al. (2002, 121) contain a similar part.

36. Kim Eun-sook et al. (2004, 338).

37. Kim Gwang-nam et al. (2006, 252).

lishing. The descriptions provided in Korean history textbooks could, unfortunately, lead to Korean students’ having a negative perspective on their own history.

For one, the ways in which the descriptions are given do not enable Korean students to see the world from their own point of view, and instead foster a more “Western” historical mindset. The San Francisco Peace Treaty basically defined the 1965 Korea-Japan Basic Treaty, which has been the main cause of historical conflict between Korea and Japan since the time it was signed. Nevertheless, Korean textbooks fail to give students an opportunity to study—in a comprehensive and balanced manner—how the peace treaty affected Korea and East Asia as a whole.

For another, these descriptions nurture a distorted image of Japan. All of the textbooks that mention the peace treaty go on to write of Japan’s recovery in terms of its sovereignty, its rapid economic growth, and the U.S. protection of the country. They also attribute the reason for Japan’s economic growth to the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Of course, it is true that U.S. protection and the wars waged in East Asia contributed to Japan’s development. Others’ misfortunes were Japan’s fortunes. However, Korean textbooks do not take notice of the internal dynamics of Japan that led to such economic developments, advanced technology, and greater investment in education. The slanted views offered in these textbooks may lead Korean students to view Japan and its wrongdoings lightly rather than deeply, and on an emotional level.

While these South Korean textbooks focus on the fact that Japan grew very fast after it regained sovereignty, North Korean history textbooks view the treaty as showing an “invasive” nature, with the “independent Japan” being used by the United States as a kind of “shock troop.”<sup>38</sup> The implication here is to view the U.S. intention in a larger context, but instead neglected to pay attention to “liquidation” of the past and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula and in East Asia.

38. Kim Gwang-won (1995, 89).

### China

Textbooks on Chinese history and Chinese modern and contemporary history used in Chinese middle and high schools do not mention the San Francisco Peace Treaty, neither do they mention the Tokyo Trial, and both were probably left out for the same reason: in China's view, these are foreign history. Only the textbook titled *Shijie jinxindai shi* (Modern and Contemporary World History), Vol. II for high school students describes the major capitalist countries since World War II as follows:

Since World War II, Japan implemented nationwide social reform and eliminated feudal and under-performing elements in production, laying the foundation for economic development. During the period when the Cold War regime took root and China's topography changed, the United States changed its policy and began to support Japan. In 1951, the United States maneuvered a peace treaty to protect Japan and ended its occupation of Japan.

After World War II, Japan demilitarized its national economy to give it a boost, and established a long-term economic development strategy focused on enhancing production efficiency and renewing and replacing products. At the same time, the country developed education to nurture high-quality human resources. After 1955, Japan enjoyed fast growth. Around this period, the Korean War and the Vietnam War broke out. Accordingly, the United States ordered many strategic materials from Japan for those wars, enabling Japan to develop its economy even more.<sup>39</sup>

The textbook does not mention the San Francisco Peace Treaty that was enacted in accordance with U.S. strategic needs, and is not critical of how the treaty failed to help East Asia reconcile its past. In fact, it is very difficult to find Chinese history textbooks that deal with the issue of resolving its past relationship with Japan.

This textbook expresses Japan's efforts in relation to China's eco-

39. Basic Education Curriculum Material Development Center (2006b, 102-103).

nomie growth and combines them with the external condition of war. This attitude is a balanced description which cannot be found in Korean history textbooks.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, the Chinese textbook gives the impression that Japan's democratization process was done by the Japanese themselves. This is far from true. One thing that is clear is that the GHQ's occupation policy was the core strategy that led to the democratization of Japan. Thus, to say that Japan achieved democracy on its own is entirely inaccurate.

### History Textbooks' Descriptions of the Efforts for Reconciliation and Cooperation

Since the 1990s, Korean's civil society-led movements that called on Japan to reflect on its past wrongdoings and apologize have gained momentum. Korean society started to pay more attention to its self-respect as it achieved political democratization through the June 10 democracy movement of 1987. Luckily the cold war regime was removed, which led to more stable relations between the two Koreas. In Japan as well, civic campaigns were launched to encourage the Japanese government to recognize its wrongdoings in the rest of Asia. These campaigns mostly started when disputes over Japanese history textbooks arose in 1982.

As political barriers and ideological pressure disappeared, victims and their bereaved family members, who could do nothing under the security and economic pressures of the time, began to take action. Consequently, the Association for Pacific War Victims was formed in January 1990, and the Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan was founded in November of the same year. In

40. This can be found in the high school textbooks published by Beijing Normal University Press (2006, 123) and Daxiang Publishing House (2008, 196-197). The textbook published by People's Education Press asserts that the United States released Japan from compensation responsibility. 『義務教育課程標準實驗教科書世界歷史 9年級 下冊』 (World History for 9th Grader. Vol. II) makes the same point. Beijing Normal University (2006, 54); Yuelu Publishing House (2006, 59); and Jianjie Publishing (2006, 93).

particular, the sexual slavery issue drew huge international attention because it was both a national and a feminist issue.

Entering the twenty-first century, movements in East Asia to liquidate the past expanded to include other issues such as visits to the Yasukuni Shrine and history textbooks.<sup>41</sup> Rather than focusing on compensation, these movements demanded truth and an apology from the Japanese government. Moreover, Korea and China have continued to engage in conflicts surrounding historical perception since 2003 with the beginning of China's Northeast Project. The flame of conflict on this issue was put out temporarily through diplomatic means, but it has not been solved academically, leaving the high possibility of it flaring up again in the near future.

Although the chasm of conflict seems to be growing deeper, there have been efforts to resolve some of these issues. The Japanese government, affected by other countries' movements to liquidate the past, admitted in 1993 through a statement by then Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono that it engaged in mobilizing "sexual slavery" for the Japanese military. And the Korean government, for its part, has financially supported the Korean victims of Japan's sexual slavery.<sup>42</sup> There have also been many organizations that have acted in an effort to pursue conciliation and cooperation in East Asia. In 2004, the Korean government formed the Truth Commission on Forced Mobilization under Japanese Imperialism to give victims a chance to voice their sufferings and receive compensation. Some commission organizations are working hard to promote reconciliation and cooperation by making strenuous efforts to deal properly with the past. In addition, a variety of personal exchanges have taken place through youth camps, and *History That Opens the Future* (Seoul: Hankyore Daily, 2005) was the first book jointly written and published by Korea, China and Japan. All these efforts were made to hammer out differences over historical perceptions among the three countries. At

41. Regarding movements to "liquidate" Japan's past, refer to Sin (2005b).

42. Regarding the two countries' reaction to movements to "liquidate" the past, refer to Sin (2007).

the government level, the Korea-Japan Joint History Research Committee and the China-Japan Joint History Research Committee were established in 2002 and 2006, respectively, to keep official lines of communication open.

These efforts lead us to ask a couple of questions. How do history textbooks in East Asia explain this trend? How often do they actively cover these various efforts for reconciliation and cooperation?

### Japan

Out of eight types of middle school history textbooks in Japan, only four—Nihon Shoseki Shinsha, Osaka Shoseki, Teikoku Shoin, and Shimizu Shoin—either introduce the state of Japan's post-war treatment and movements to correct Japan's past wrongdoings or define these issues as unresolved.<sup>43</sup> In addition, only nine high school textbooks out of 34 that passed official authorization in 2006 and 2007 present these issues. Compared to the past, not only the amount of content but also the number of books that describe the issue have decreased. This is because the mode of description became more conservative after the publication of rightist textbooks like that of Fusosha.

Tokyo Shoseki's middle school textbooks and five high school textbooks issued by Yamakawa Shuppansha do not make specific statements about post-war treatment and compensation. This trend is also in line with their historical perceptions of the Tokyo Trial and the San Francisco Peace Treaty, implying that Japan possesses little responsibility for its past acts. Meanwhile, Jikkyo Shuppan's *Shinpen koko nihonshi A* (New Edition High School Japanese History A) (2007), *Shinpen koko nihonshi B* (2008), *Kaiteiban shosetsu nihonshi* (2008); Tokyo Shoseki's *Nihonshi A* (2008) and *Sekaishi A* (2008); and Sanseido Publishing's *Nihonshi A* (2008) offer at least one page each to explain the background of post-war treatment and efforts to solve the treatment issue. These textbooks also cover problems of the

43. For more information, refer to Sin (2005a).

Tokyo Trial and the San Francisco Peace Treaty.

*North Korea, South Korea, China, and Taiwan*

South Korea, which was controlled by Japan, now takes great pains to have its history textbooks “identify the hardships Korea went through under severe colonial rule.”<sup>44</sup> Accordingly, not only *Guksa* (National History) but also *Hanguk geunhyeondaesa* (Modern and Contemporary Korean History) for middle school explain these hardships including exploitation of human and natural resources and have a special section on the military “sexual slavery” perpetrated by Japan.

Unfortunately, no history textbooks pay attention to the many efforts made not only by Korea, but also by international society to deal with these issues. And none explain the reasons why an adequate reckoning with the past has not been achieved, nor do they pinpoint the limitations in this regard of Korean society itself. Ultimately, Korean textbooks present victims in such a way as to reinforce the repression and illegality of Japanese colonial rule, and do not make any efforts to include the movements in Korea that have attempted to obtain compensation for the victims. They also do not offer any suggestions for the next generation as to which actions they can take to find the truth, achieve reconciliation and realize universal values in East Asia.

The limitations of Korean history textbooks can also be found in North Korean and Chinese history textbooks. In North Korean textbooks, the writing constitutes a kind of emotional confrontation with Japan’s invasion and colonial rule policy and a denouncement of Japanese imperialism in general. Chinese textbooks have similar problems, but differ from Korean textbooks in that their anti-Japanese sentiment focuses on exposing Japan’s invasions and atrocities.

Overall, Japan’s Jikkyo Shuppan and Tokyo Shoseki textbooks, mentioned in Section 4 of this paper, give students a chance to think

44. Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development (2000, 691).

about how they can overcome the past through reconciliation and cooperation. But it is doubtful that this content is being well understood by students in reality, as most Japanese schools do not teach post-1945 history.

As we can see, the history textbooks of East Asia are sorely lacking in introducing to students avenues through which they can attempt to realize reconciliation, cooperation, and ultimately, a solid East Asia identity.

## Conclusion

Throughout this paper, I have reviewed the Asia-Pacific War and related post-war settlements and the very different ways these issues are dealt with (or not) in the history textbooks of East Asia.

We looked at the Tokyo Trial, the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the movements to come to terms with Japan’s past wrongdoings, as well as the ways that history education in East Asia emphasizes globalization but does not teach avenues for reconciliation and cooperation. Worse, in the twenty-first century of globalization when Korea, Japan, and China have nurtured their own nationalism, various history issues abruptly surfaced at once. This led to conflicts among these countries. Now we can see that the conflicts have reached a point where diplomatic relations have become uneasy.

We do not judge to cause problems or to cling to past emotions. We do need judgment to “liquidate” the past and leave it behind. To judge, we must know the truth and specific facts. The same goes for history education. Specific facts should be conveyed to students if we hope to achieve real reconciliation and cooperation in East Asia. However uncomfortable the truth may be, the next generation should not be allowed to avoid it. And we should also place emphasis on relating to students all of the positive efforts that have been made and are being made to pursue universal values in East Asia. Students need to know where and why differences between countries arise. Taking different historical perceptions into consideration will help

East Asian countries find common value with one another, which will in turn serve as a foundation for resolving conflicting historical perspectives and a shortcut to reconciliation and cooperation in East Asia. Finding a way to cross the border of historical perceptions is nothing special and nothing distant to overcome.

The majority of history textbooks issued throughout East Asia should be reconsidered from this point of view. Put bluntly, they need to present the truth, without trying to cushion it. Specifically, the process of disclosure should be to find out and acknowledge differences in compliance with accuracy, fairness, comprehensiveness and balance, and world-mindedness. To do this, we need to open up and continuously expand the scope of our historical debates. Joint history materials like *History That Opens the Future*, simultaneously published in Korea, China, and Japan in 2005, are representative of how East Asians can and should develop textbooks in the interests of reconciliation and cooperation. In the years ahead, I hope many more textbooks are written by East Asia in the spirit of the one written by Germany and France, *Histoire, L'Europe et le monde depuis 1945* or *Geschichte, Europa und die Welt seit 1945* in 2006.

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