

History Textbook Dialogue in Northeast Asia and the European Experience: *From the Transferring of Experience to Mutual Exchange**

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Abstract

This paper analyzes how textbook dialogues are carried out between countries that have experienced colonialism (as either imperial power or colony) or have been a victim or an assailant in a war. In particular, it examines how the European experience was accepted in the Northeast Asian history textbook dialogue over the last 20 years and what the limitations of this acceptance have been. The Northeast Asian textbook dialogue has been reached as a post-war settlement of imperialism and an historical awareness of mutual respect. Post-war issues were clearly settled in the Germany-France, Germany-Poland textbook dialogue but most European countries have not initiated textbook dialogues with their former colonies. This paper argues that it is a significant achievement that Korea, a former colony, has established a new type of textbook dialogue for settling issues of colonialism while at the same time embracing the achievements of the European textbook dialogues. Further, this paper suggests that such experiences in Northeast Asia could contribute to efforts in Europe.

Keywords: Post-colonialism, historical dialogue, history textbook dialogue, Northeast Asia, joint textbooks

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Introduction

From the late 1990s, rightwing political groups in Japan started to compile a new middle-school history textbook.¹ In 2001, the textbook finally passed the government's screening process to qualify as an official school textbook. Since then, the conflict over the understanding of history became one of the most important diplomatic issues in the Northeast Asian region. With China's launching of its Northeast Project (Dongbei gongcheng 東北工程) in 2002, the history battle over the ancient history of China's northeast region commenced between the two Koreas and China.² Recently, the situation has become complicated by territorial issues.

However, there have also been widespread efforts towards historical reconciliation. While conflict mostly became more entrenched at the state (national, governmental) level, reconciliation largely made progress at the civic level. While there have also been efforts at the state level to solve historical conflict through dialogue, it developed in ways that mostly confirmed differences. On the other hand, textbook dialogues were carried out at the civic level, dialogues that ended in the publication of joint auxiliary textbooks.³

Undoubtedly, the historical dialogue in Northeast Asia has been heavily influenced by the European experience. However, the substance of such influence is somewhat limited, partly due to the fact that the experiences of

1. In Japan, people who attempt to revise textbooks are called "history revisionists." However, attempts to revise textbooks in Japan since the 1990s are closely linked to the revisionist project of the conservative rightwing. Therefore, in this paper, I refer to them as "rightwing political groups."

2. Begun in 2002, the Northeast Project was a five-year research project launched by the Chinese Academy of Social Science that aimed at reinstating the northeastern frontier of China into the Chinese national narrative. The Project's claim on this region, where ancient Korean states had once existed, sparked a historical dispute between the two Koreas and China. Even though the Northeast Project had been officially terminated, the embers of dispute still burn between the three countries.

3. "Historical dialogue" refers to the comprehensive act of trying to solve historical conflict between nations, while "history textbook dialogue" refers to activities aimed at solving historical conflict through a joint history textbook or auxiliary textbook. In this paper, the term "textbook dialogue" refers more specifically to history textbook dialogue.

Europe and Northeast Asia differ significantly. Yet, the European example has been considered a model case for reference in the Northeast Asian historical dialogue. In the case of the European dialogue, the core issues addressed were the damages incurred during World War II and the historical remembrance of that experience. By contrast, in Northeast Asia—especially in the case of Korea and Japan—rather than damages done by the Asia-Pacific War, settling imperialism and colonialism has become the central issue.

It goes without saying that there have been long-term efforts in Europe to overcome Eurocentrism and colonialism. In France, the Contemporary History Institute (Institut d'histoire du Temps Present) promoted new research on the Algerian War of Independence, with over 50 scholars participating. In 1996, seven scholars from Algeria and seven from France gathered to discuss the same subject (Thenault 1996). There has also been research on Algeria and post-colonialism regarding the new direction for French education (Lange 2003). In 2001, the Taubira Law was passed, which stipulated that any participation in the slave trade or recognition of slavery would be treated as a crime against humanity (Oryu 2009).

There has also been research conducted on what kind of reformist thinking and development the former European colonies of Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, and Nigeria pursued in their education after gaining independence (Woolman 2001). One study even broke away from the perception that Britain spread civilization to its colonies and addressed instead British atrocities in Kenya (Elkins 2005).

However, not many studies have adopted the colony's view when it comes to the relationship between the British Empire and its former possessions. Rather, as Denis Judd and Peter Slinn point out, most think that the dissolution of the British Empire meant the end of Britain's responsibility for its colonies (Judd and Slinn 1982). There have been criticisms that such a view does not reflect the colony's perspective (Maekawa 2009). Debate is also ongoing in France and Germany regarding the settlement of colonialism but it is hard to say it has produced significant outcomes (this issue will be discussed in more detail later).

It is in this context that this article argues that the textbook dialogue in

Northeast Asia has made significant progress and suggests the need for Northeast Asia and Europe to pursue mutual exchange in order to overcome their limitations. First, this article will analyze the characteristics and limitations of the Northeast Asian textbook dialogue. This process will reveal how the structure in which the characteristics of the Northeast Asian textbook dialogue are developed emphasizing the settlement of colonialism. Lastly, the article will explore what lessons Northeast Asia might learn from the European experience regarding how to overcome its limitations, and conversely, what influence the Northeast Asia experience might have on European efforts.

History Textbook Dialogue in Northeast Asia

Joint Auxiliary Textbook at the Civic Level

1) Korea and Japan's Joint Auxiliary Textbook

The textbook dialogue between Korea and Japan was initiated by UNESCO in 1965 but did not make any significant progress due to complications from the Japanese side. Therefore, the first dialogue did not take place until 1987, when between that year and 1989 a research team led by Kato Akira 加藤章 from Joetsu University of Education in Japan and Korean scholars including Lee Won-sun carried out a joint academic research project. They held four joint academic seminars titled, "Basic Research on History Textbook Writing in Japan and Korea," alternating their venue between Seoul and Tokyo. Their ambitious goal was to come up with "recommendations" and a draft for a "joint textbook" to be provided to relevant officials in history education of both countries. However, they failed to meet this goal (Nikkan Rekishi Kyokasho Kenkyukai 1993, 34; Kimura and Jeong 2008, 171). Although this group of scholars conducted four academic seminars, their efforts did not result in any substantial achievement.

A second attempt started in 1991. This dialogue was led by Fujisawa

Houei 藤澤法暎, a Japanese history expert, and Lee Tae-yeong, a German history expert inspired by the German historical dialogue. They respectively organized the Japan-Korea History Textbook Research Group 日韓教科書研究會 (Nikkan Rekishi Kyokasho Kenkyukai) and the International Textbook Issue Research Institute (Gukje Gyogwaseo Yeonguso), and held four “Korea-Japan Joint History Textbook Research Seminars” through October 1992. Through these seminars, they reviewed and discussed the problems in the textbooks of both countries. They also tried to compose a joint recommendation with the publishing of a joint textbook in mind, but could not reach specific outcome (Nikkan Rekishi Kyokasho Kenkyukai 1993). The two textbook dialogues were encouraging in the sense that they both took the textbook issue as the main theme of their discussions and considered proposing a recommendation and publishing a joint textbook. However, trying to imitate Europe’s achievements without building its own experience was too premature to result in visible achievements.

In 1997, a textbook dialogue group emerged which aimed for more long term, substantial joint research. The Korean side was the History Textbook Research Group (Yeoksa Gyogwaseo Yeonguhoe) at the University of Seoul, and the Japanese counterpart was Tokyo Gakugei University’s History Education Research Group 歴史教育研究會 (Rekishi Kyoiku Keku-kai). They organized the “Korea-Japan History Textbook Symposium” and made a concerted effort to develop a joint auxiliary textbook. The History Education Research Group president, Kato Akira, and author Kimijima Kazuhiko 君島和彦 from the Japanese side, and advisor Lee Won-sun and author Jeong Jae-jeong from the Korean side had been participants in the 1987 and 1991 textbook dialogues (Kimijima 1996). Based upon such experience and trust, they finally completed a joint history auxiliary textbook for high school students (Hanguk Yeoksa Gyogwaseo Yeonguhoe-Ilbon Yeoksa Gyoyuk Yeonguhoe 2007).⁴

While in the midst of their joint research efforts in 2001, the middle school history textbook (the Fusosha edition) that justified Japan’s colonial undertakings and war was published. It was a grave incident that might

4. The Japanese version was published by Akashi Shoten Publisher with the same title.

have instantly undermined the trust built by progress in Japan-Korea textbook dialogue in the 1990s, symbolized by the inclusion of the “comfort women” issue.⁵ However, ironically, this incident strengthened the depth of historical dialogue between Korea and Japan.

The reaction to the Japanese textbook issue from Korean civic society was qualitatively different from the 1980s. In the 1980s, it was mainly the anti-Japanese movements relying heavily on nationalistic sentiments. However, in the 2000s, voices that argued for addressing the issue in a rational manner became the mainstream. Some invited Japanese NGO activists to hold joint academic conferences to seek joint action. One of the most impressive was the activities by the Coalition to Correct Japanese Textbooks (Ilbon Gyogwaseo Baro Japgi Undong Bonbu). This group hosted a symposium in Seoul in June 2001 in which Miyahara Takeo 宮原武夫, a member of the Japanese History Educators’ Council (Rekishi Kyoikushya Kyougikai), gave a presentation under the theme of the “Textbook System and Textbook Movement of Japan” (Ilbon Gyogwaseo Baro Japgi Undong Bonbu 2001).

Such developments were also evident in various Korea-Japan textbook dialogue groups that emerged during this period. From July to December 2001 as many as three groups were organized with the goal of publishing a joint Korea-Japan auxiliary textbook. The first group to emerge was, of course, teachers from both countries who were at the center of history education. The members of the Korean History Teachers Organization (Jeonguk Yeoksa Gyosa Moim) and Japanese History Educators’ Council 歴史教育者協議會 (Rekishi Kyoikushya Kyougikai) came together in common effort. This group decided to publish a book for the public. They divided their joint project into two stages and postponed the writing of controversial modern history to the second stage (Jeonguk Yeoksa Gyosa Moim [Hanguk]-Yeoksa Gyoyukja Hyeopuihoe [Ilbon] 2006, vol. 1, 4–5). They were able to agree on writing a joint auxiliary textbook as soon as they met because most of the participating teachers already had the experi-

5. The “comfort women” issue was included in the Japanese high school textbook in 1994, and in the middle school textbook in 1997.

ence as part of various Korea-Japan historical dialogues. Many of the Japanese participants thought that, as they witnessed the Fusosha textbook emerge, “the xenophobic nationalism has become a concern to East Asia.” As a solution, they believed it necessary to “foster a sense of history open towards the world” (Jeonguk Yeoksa Gyosa Moim [Hanguk]-Yeoksa Gyoyukja Hyeopuihoe [Ilbon] 2006, vol. 2, 247).

In December of the same year, another teachers group was born, consisting of teachers from Daegu, Korea, and Hiroshima, Japan. They agreed to write a joint auxiliary textbook. This group also took the textbook incident in Japan as an opportunity to discuss ways to seek alternatives on a regional level. Their long-term goal was to write a joint textbook on modern history, but thinking it was beyond their capacity, decided to write about the most representative examples in the history of Korea-Japan exchanges. Their first goal was reached after the second joint project was completed in 2012. Kim Yang-gi, who was an advisor to this group, proudly stated that, “while Germany and its neighboring countries’ project to share a historical awareness was led by the state,” the result of their work was the first in the world to find “a common awareness of history led by a socially known civic organization” (Han-Il Gongdong Yeoksa Gyojae Jejaktim 2005, 10). Although he devalued the role civil society played in the German historical dialogue, the quote nevertheless shows that this group was influenced by the historical dialogue in Europe.

In October of the same year, another dialogue group emerged, this time consisting of women. This was a group of women who had already been pushing for the resolution of the Japanese military “comfort women” issue. Therefore, they had a slightly different agenda from other groups. Of course, the catalyst for them writing a joint auxiliary textbook was the 2001 textbook incident in Japan. However, the group’s goal, as stated in their completed textbook, *Korean and Japanese Modern History Seen through the Eyes of Women* (Yeoseong-ui nuneuro bon Han-Il geunhyeondaesa), was to “write, based on the facts, that Japan avoided settling their past history of invasion and colonial rule while being under the protection of the U.S. during the Cold War era after the war, and such irresponsibility has left the ‘post-war compensation’ issue unsolved even until now” (Han-Il Yeoseong

Gongdong Yeoksa Gyojae Pyeonchan Wiwonhoe 2005, 394). Hence, this group focused on the “comfort women” issue in the narrow sense and the post-war settlement of Japanese colonialism in the broader sense.

The various groups that emerged after the 2001 incident published auxiliary textbooks, starting from that of the Daegu-Hiroshima teacher group. Such active publishing of joint auxiliary textbooks was possible, above all, because of the sense of crisis that followed the emergence of a Japanese textbook that distorted history. As it was highly possible that the Fusosha textbook would be used in compulsory education classes, Japanese civil society needed a new alternative. The Korean side was also starting to realize that they could not persuade Japanese civil society with one-sided criticism. It was also helpful that the social atmosphere was mature enough to expand such understanding. In 2001, with the Korea-Japan joint FIFA World Cup soccer games approaching, there was unprecedented amity between the two countries. Furthermore, in January, 2001, a Korean student named Lee Soo-hyeon died in an attempt to save a drunk Japanese man. This incident shocked Japanese society, and also changed Japanese perceptions of Koreans. Needless to say, the Hallyu (Korean Wave), which soon followed, was also a positive influence on the Korea-Japan joint auxiliary textbook movement.

2) Korea-China-Japan Joint Auxiliary Textbook Publishing Movement

The 2001 Japanese textbook incident certainly was a catalyst for the Korea-Japan textbook dialogue. However, there was another equally important change. This was the formation of networks between former colonies of Japan and Japanese civil society. The emergence of the Fusosha textbook sparked a strong backlash from neighboring countries, just as in the 1980s, but the implications were starkly different. As a civil society network was formed among North Korea, South Korea, China, and Japan, the history and textbook dialogue, which had been carried out mainly between South Korea and Japan, transformed from a bilateral effort to a wider regional—more specifically, Northeast Asian—one.

In this period, China’s change in attitude towards the debate and active

efforts helped propel the historical dialogue to a regional Northeast Asia level. In order to address the Japanese textbook issue, the Japan Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences hosted an international symposium in Beijing in July 2001. Experts from Korea, Japan and even North Korea attended this conference. After the symposium's conclusion, with the exception of the North Korean scholars who had to return early, the attendants held a separate meeting where they agreed to establish a regular forum as a way of strengthening mutual exchanges and cooperation. In January 2002, a working-level meeting took place in Seoul. The name of the forum was decided as the Historical Awareness and East Asia Peace Forum (hereafter, Peace Forum). Since 2002, the forum has been held annually, with the three countries taking turns as hosts.⁶

The participants of the Peace Forum's Nanjing conference (2002) agreed to publish a joint auxiliary textbook as an alternative to the Japanese textbook. This issue had been raised by the Japanese and Korean sides at the Peace Forum working-level meeting in Seoul in January 2002, but at the time the participants could not reach an agreement due to the Chinese side's reluctance (Tawara 2005). China's change in attitude at the Nanjing Peace Forum was somewhat sudden, but it was an important change indicating the start of China's continuous and active engagement in the Japanese history distortion issue. With China's participation, the Northeast Asia textbook dialogue entered a new phase. However, as North Korea did not participate, it was not a fully comprehensive Northeast Asia textbook dialogue. As Taiwan can also be considered a stakeholder in the Northeast Asia textbook dialogue—in a regional rather than a political or historical sense—the dialogue was still missing two important partners.

The Korea-China-Japan textbook dialogue that was now in full swing published the first trilateral joint auxiliary textbook, *History Opening the Future* (Mirae-reul yeoneun yeoksa), in 2005, after three years of joint research (Han-Jung-Il Samguk Gongdong Yeoksa Pyeonchan Wiwonhoe 2005). In this process, there was a total of 54 authors, including scholars

6. The author has been involved in this forum since its 2002 working-level meeting in Seoul.

and teachers. An interesting characteristic of this project is that although a handful of the authors had some textbook dialogue experience from the 1990s, most had none. Meanwhile, some were participating in other simultaneous textbook dialogues.

Nevertheless, despite such inexperience, the participants were easily able to agree on the composition of a joint auxiliary textbook and to actively engage in the process because there was an East Asian particularity as well as a stimulus from the European experience. This can be explained in three aspects. First, the textbook dialogues in this period were sparked by the revisionist interpretation of history manifested in the 2001 Japanese textbook. In the case of Europe, although Germany's war crimes issue was one of the most pressing issues, the situation there is different in the sense that there had been a mutual understanding among the neighboring countries, including regarding the pre-World War II period. Therefore, while there are active bilateral textbook dialogues in Europe, to include those between Germany and France, and German and Poland, in East Asia, a multilateral textbook dialogue is possible.

The interesting point here is that the History of Korea-Japan Exchanges group, which was heavily influenced by European textbook dialogues, took the entire history from the prehistoric period to the present as their subject matter. Also, this group dealt with the "history of exchanges"—in other words, the "history of relations." The two teachers' groups also focused on the history of exchanges. All three groups that emphasized the history of exchanges in the pre-modern era recognized "mutual understanding" as the most important principle, which is one of the essential principles in the European textbook dialogue.

The *Korean and Japanese Modern History through the Eyes of Women* group and the *History Opening the Future* group directly addressed the controversial modern history of Korea. These two groups believe that Japan's "settlement of the past" is more important than the European-style of mutual understanding. This is a natural perception for the former group as it began from the standpoint of resolving the "comfort women" issue. However, although the Korea-China-Japan Joint Auxiliary Textbook group places great emphasis on writing a "joint auxiliary textbook," their focus

remains on controversial issues in modern history. Their core issues are the “expansion of Japanese imperialism and the resistance from Korea and China” and “the invasive war and its damage on the people.” Their follow-up project also concerns modern history.

Of course, the ultimate goal of all auxiliary textbook groups is to overcome the textbook incident in Japan. However, in case of the Korea-China-Japan Joint Auxiliary Textbook group, it is noteworthy that Japan’s “settlement of the past” must be solved to some extent in order to move on to the next task. If North Korea and Taiwan join this dialogue, such a tendency will likely become even stronger.

Second, Korean and Japanese civil societies had widened their views. In Korea, the Coalition to Correct Japanese Textbooks played a leading role in this effort. This group changed its name to the Asia Peace and History Education Network (Asia Pyeonghwa-wa Yeoksa Gyoyuk Yeondae) in 2002. This was for two reasons: first, because of criticism that the former name was considered excessively nationalistic by Japanese civil society; and second, to reflect the group’s aim of not only raising the issue of Japan’s distortion of history, but striving for universal peace education in Asia, including Korea. Such a change in Korean civil society’s awareness was undoubtedly influenced by Korea’s democratization and the growth of its civil society, which had been steadily developing since the late 1980s. The Japanese civic groups which had considered textbook issues a domestic problem also began to recognize the universality of the issues of colonialism and war crimes and actively sought international coordination.

Third, civic solidarity was possible beyond the borders of Korea, China, and Japan because the Cold War conditions, which had blocked borders and interactions, had collapsed. South Korea and China had been enemies during the Korean War. However, after the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1992, the sense of fellowship that the two countries had shared from pre-modern times played a role in diminishing such hostility. Furthermore, the inter-Korean summit of 2000 played the role of accelerating the advent of the post-Cold War era in Northeast Asia and had a positive influence on civic-level historical dialogue (Lee 2013a).

Inter-governmental History Textbook Dialogue

In the 2000s, China clearly sought to change its history policies regarding Japan. This was probably because the importance of historical issues grew constantly in terms of hegemonic rivalry in Northeast Asia. Considering China's characteristics, the Chinese participation in the 2001 Beijing academic conference or the following Peace Forum establishment process would have been impossible from the beginning without the approval of the government and the Chinese Communist Party. The fact that the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the host institution of the Korea-China-Japan textbook dialogue, is under direct supervision of the Chinese government clearly bespeaks this situation.⁷ As China needed to keep in check Japan, which spoke for the United States in the hegemonic rivalry in Northeast Asia in the post-Cold War era, there was no reason to refrain from publishing a Korea-China-Japan joint history book that criticized Japan's past invasion.

When we examine the historical dialogue between Northeast Asian governments during this period it becomes even clearer that China took part in the textbook dialogue based on political rationales. When the history confrontation broke out between Korea and China due to the Northeast Project, China worried the conflict might become political. During his visit to Korea in February 2004, Wang Yi, then Deputy Foreign Minister in charge of Asian affairs, suggested that the Goguryeo history issue be approached at the academic level, not the governmental one, to keep it from negatively affecting bilateral relations. Korea agreed to this proposal.⁸

Soon after this agreement, another conflict arose due to Korea-related content on the Chinese Foreign Ministry's website. However, Korea and

7. Since 2006, the Chinese side had the Human Rights Development Foundation 人權發展基金會 (Renquan Fazhan Jijinhui) participate as another agent in the forum. This agency is closely linked with Chinese political power—the vice chairman of the China People's Political Consultative Conference also serves as the chairman of the foundation.

8. "Jung yeoksa haebeop ijungseong 'Na-neun romance, neo-neun bullyun'" (China, Duplicity of Historical Solution, "Mine is Love, Yours is Adultery"), *Yonhap News*, August 8, 2004.

China agreed to a verbal understanding that they would “make efforts to solve the Goguryeo history issue and prevent it from being politicized” at a high-level consultative meeting.⁹ During this period, Chinese academics visiting Korea routinely rejected any opinion offered by the Korean side regarding the Northeast Project. Chinese researchers participating in the Peace Forum or the Korea-China-Japan joint auxiliary textbook writing showed the same attitude.

As such, China reacted toward Japan on a governmental level but, conversely, was extremely wary of letting the history confrontation with Korea become political. Neither did the Korean government desire political friction with China. It could be said that Korea was keeping in consideration the warm mood between Seoul and Pyongyang and China’s role in the Six-Party Talks (Lee 2013a). This indicates that government-level textbook dialogue would not be easy unless it used Japan’s colonial and war crimes as a medium.

Government-level textbook dialogue is not easy because it is inevitably and closely linked with the country’s future strategies and national interests. This is not only the case of Northeast Asia or China. For a historical dialogue—especially a textbook dialogue—between two countries or more to become a reality, the countries must share a common goal. Otherwise, the possibility for dialogue is ironically highest when confrontation between two countries is at its most intense. While Europe is a case of the former, the latter scenario is more applicable to the case of Northeast Asia. The same rule applies when governments support civic historical dialogue. The Korean and Chinese governments actively sponsored civic textbook dialogues because there was a common interest. On the other hand, the Japanese government did not support civic dialogue in any way. For Japan, there was no common interest.

The state-level historical and textbook dialogue was based on such factors. At the historical dialogue between the Korean, Chinese, and Japa-

9. “Han-Jung ‘goguryeosa waegok bangji’ o-gae yangha sahang” (Five Kinds of Consent to “Stop Distorting Goguryeo’s History” between Korea and China), *Yonhap News*, August 24, 2004.

nese governments, the common interest between Korea and China was stronger. However, this was limited to the Japanese history issue; it did not include the history conflict between Korea and Japan. Japan only acted according to the conflict with China or Korea. Under such circumstances, in Northeast Asia, historical dialogue was only possible between Korea and Japan, and between China and Japan. The content of the dialogue was also limited to what was necessary for, and agreed by, the governments.

Between Korea and Japan, the Korea-Japan Joint History Research Committee (Han-Il Yeoksa Gongdong Yeongu Wiwonhoe) operated for two terms, from May 2002 to March 2010. This committee published reports in six volumes in its first term and ten volumes in its second. These reports show that the Committee faced a constant series of confrontations. Throughout the reports one reads only each side's assertions and it is hard to find proof of dialogue and compromise. The confrontations worsened in the second term. The second committee began in 2007, after more than a year's gap, but exposed discord from the very beginning. It was fortunate that a Textbook Committee was established after a long debate.

However, the Textbook Committee meetings experienced confrontations every time and were often suspended. In the end, it was hard to even broach the notion of writing a textbook. One scholar from the Japanese side wrote in a review of an academic paper from the Korean side that "the history textbook joint research achieved nothing." He personally attacked the Korean side, saying "I do not recall being particularly stimulated in an intellectual way by the Korean side regarding how to examine history textbooks" (Han-Il Yeoksa Gongdong Yeongu Wiwonhoe 2010, 162).

On the other hand, although the Chinese and Japanese governments could not hold a textbook dialogue, they did start an historical dialogue. It was not as heated as the Korea-Japan dialogue but did expose differences in their understandings. The China-Japan History Joint Research Committee 中日歴史共同研究委員會 (Zhong-ri Lishi Gongtongyanjiu Weiyuanhui) was launched in December 2006, and submitted its final report containing over three years of research in January 2010. The report mostly covered the history of friendly exchanges between the two countries in the pre-modern period. However, regarding modern history, their different

stances showed. Yet, contrary to claims made by the Japanese rightwing, the Japanese participants did acknowledge the “Nanking massacre” as a “massacre committed by the Japanese military.” Yet the two sides could not reach an agreement on the number of victims. Rather, they reached just enough of an agreement to sooth public outrage back home.

As such, the state-level historical dialogues between Korea and Japan, and China and Japan, had just taken their first steps. The outcome of the dialogue only identified differences in their respective understandings. The textbook dialogue that was finally begun between Korea and Japan was mostly about criticizing each other rather than having substantive discussions. The outlook for both dialogues is unsure.

From the Transferring of Experience to Mutual Exchange

Historical and Political Implications of the Northeast Asian and European Experiences

Europe’s experience had a large influence on the Northeast Asian textbook dialogue. In the 2000s, the experience was applied at an even deeper level. On the other hand, and simultaneously, an independent model was taking shape in East Asia. During this period there were frequent direct exchanges with Europeans with dialogue experience. In particular, in Korea, programs by the Northeast Asia History Foundation, or various programs by groups like the History NGO World Forum and the East Asia History Awareness and Peace Forum invited those with experience in European historical dialogue. Most of these individuals were from the Georg Eckert Institute in Germany while some teachers with historical dialogue experience also participated.

Based on such exchanges, the Georg Eckert Institute developed a program for sharing experiences between the historical dialogues of Northeast Asia and those of Europe. The institute invited the Japanese civic group Peace Boat, as well as people with experience in the Korea-China-Japan dialogues and Germany’s historical dialogues, for an international workshop in Beijing

in November 2008. Eckhardt Fuchs from the Institute participated in the Peace Forum which took place immediately following the workshop and reported on the European experience and the workshop. The Institute's attempt to combine the European experience and the Korea-China-Japan historical dialogue received positive feedback from the participants. As a result, this workshop has developed into an annual academic conference in Japan for sharing textbook dialogue experiences from around the world.

Now, by sharing the European experience, the textbook dialogue in Northeast Asia is moving toward another stage. This is shown in two tendencies. The first is a movement to make a "recommendation" that can be provided to each country's textbook authors based on the Korea-China-Japan historical dialogue. Another movement is the effort to develop the experience of Northeast Asia into a universal understanding which is different from the experiences of Europe.

Of course, these two concerns share a common thread. The former started because, in order to create a joint textbook for Northeast Asia, we must go through the process of making a recommendation as in Europe. However, in order to make a recommendation, it is essential to review whether we can directly apply the European recommendation (Germany-Poland, Germany-France) or UNESCO's principles for historical dialogue (1949) to Northeast Asia's situation. Here, we face two concerns. There needs to be empirical analysis and a process for making universal those principles the civic-made joint auxiliary textbooks share, and how they differ from the European recommendations.

Regarding the former, it is worth noting the "Expert Workshop to Realize a Korea-China-Japan Joint Textbook," which started in 2009 and is held annually by the participants of the Korea-Japan and Korea-China-Japan historical dialogue. Since 2012, this meeting has been seeking ways to formulate a recommendation.¹⁰ Regarding the latter, individual researchers have raised ideas. For example, there has been an attempt to apply the historical dialogue principles suggested by UNESCO to the Northeast Asian

10. This workshop is co-hosted annually by the Northeast Asian History Foundation, the East Asia Institute at Sungkyunkwan University, and the Asia Peace and History.

historical dialogue (Kim 2007). Another case compared and analyzed history textbooks of former empires and colonies in the context of the Korea-China-Japan historical dialogue (Han and Shin ed. 2009), and there has also been research examining the Korea-China-Japan historical dialogue in comparison with the European experience (Shin 2007; Saitou 2008).

However, in order to further develop this new effort, we must first compare the internal and external political environments of Europe and Northeast Asia and the outcomes of the textbook dialogues of the two regions to identify their similarities and differences. Of course, there will be many differences in the outcomes as the two regions have very different historical and political backgrounds. However, there will also be a wide range of similarities. If we expand the exchanges between the two regions based on such differences and similarities, it will prove very helpful for historical dialogues worldwide in the future. Unfortunately, such discussion has not yet begun in full force, therefore, I shall only examine several core issues here.

Above all, the main common aspect between the two regions' historical and political background was that there was a gap in historical understanding regarding the post-war settlement of World War II. On the other hand, there were various differences. The first difference in historical background was the colonial experience. None of the nations participating in the European dialogue had the experience of being colonized. This differs from Northeast Asia, where neighboring countries had the relationship of empire and colony. In the Northeast Asian history conflict, especially in the confrontation between Korea and Japan, the issue of colonization is considered a much more important and fundamental element than the issue of post-war settlement. Japan, like the western European countries, does not recognize colonial rule as an issue of responsibility, but as a lawful rule, while Korea considers it a clearly forceful occupation. Therefore, the gap in awareness is not narrowing. In Northeast Asia, without solving this issue, it is highly unlikely a joint textbook will emerge.

The second difference is the existence of a regional community based on post-Cold War dynamics. In the case of Europe, the nations shared the

large goal of Europe's integration and as that goal was accomplished, there is a sense of solidarity incomparable to that in Northeast Asia. To be sure, there has been discussion of an Asian economic community, however, the neo-Cold War system built on the hegemonic rivalry between China and Japan is a more decisive situation. Furthermore, communist countries, namely China and North Korea, still remain undiminished in the region. The dialogue experience between capitalist West Germany and communist Poland may be insightful for the historical dialogue in this region with China and North Korea as stakeholders. To set a common goal that goes beyond the Cold War would be the shortcut to success in the Northeast Asian textbook dialogue.

The third difference is the existence of a "central country" in settlement of the past. In Europe, Germany was the central country committed to settling its past. On the other hand, in Northeast Asia, Japan, which should play the role of the central country, still has not broken away from colonialism and imperialism. In this region, unless Japan changes its attitude drastically or another central country for realizing common values appears, the outlook for the Northeast Asian historical dialogue is grim.¹¹

The fourth difference concerns the different forms of civil society that support the settlement of the past. In the case of Germany and France, there were internal debates on a joint textbook. Nevertheless, these were based on nationalistic sentiments, and it can be said that in these countries civil society had enough capacity to overcome such challenges through mutual understanding. However, in the case of Japan, as symbolized by the rise of the conservative rightwing that rejects the settlement of the past and pursues regional hegemony, the internal conflict is troublesome. In Korea, also, a "New Right" history textbook based on a Cold War mentality, anti-communism, and colonialism has come out, which has heated the debate on historical awareness (Lee 2013b). For both Korea and Japan, the capacity of civil society to overcome regressive and hegemony-oriented

11. The "central country" concept is used for the first time in this article. It can be said that Korea and China played the role of joint semi-central countries in the Northeast Asian historical dialogues. A detailed definition and case studies of this concept will form the topic of my future studies.

historical awareness will be the yardstick for measuring the possibility for the development of a textbook dialogue.

Various differences other than those mentioned above also exist between Europe and Northeast Asia and directly affect textbook dialogue. The differences of the two regions should be thoroughly considered during the process of writing recommendations for the Northeast Asian region in the future. However, all of the differences discussed above, except for the first, have a political-diplomatic background. Among them, regarding the regional community issue, making a regional ideology based on a post-Cold War, post-ideology approach and peaceful coexistence is a prerequisite. The issue can be solved only if the hegemonic rivalry in Northeast Asia ceases, but as the confrontation between the United States and China is a fundamental element of this rivalry, this will be extremely difficult.

In order for Japan to become the “central country” willing to settle its past, the development of democracy in civil society and diplomatic pressure from other countries are highly important factors. However, regarding post-war settlement or post-war compensation, currently Japan is willing to settle the past but is extremely reluctant when it comes to issues related to colonial rule. This is because the colonialism issue has never been settled in world history. It is also because this issue was handled only vaguely in the San Francisco Peace Treaty (1951) and the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea (1965) that was a follow-up to that treaty. The position of Korea, with its experience as a colonial subject state, is not only an issue in the Northeast Asian textbook dialogue, but also one in the European historical dialogue, which has thus far avoided or otherwise lacked dealing with such experiences.

Limitations of the European Experience

In the European textbook dialogue experience, colonialism and racism are certainly perceived as subjects of settlement, but from a former colony's position that does not suffice. For example, when summarizing the post-colonization process after 1945, the Germany-France joint history textbook explained as follows:

In the late 19th century, Europe spread out across the whole world in various ways. By doing so, Europeans migrated to every corner of the globe, and European products and capital were exported. The powerful nations of Europe conquered Africa and had most of Asia and Oceania in their hands. During this process, the unofficial imperialism with more economic characteristics along with direct colonial rule acted as two sides of the same coin, impossible to be separated.

Latin America had already gained political independence by the nineteenth century, but again was put under American imperialist influence. . . . The post-colonization process was, as mentioned, sometimes peaceful and sometimes violent (Geiss et al. 2008, 94).

The above excerpt gives us a sense of the subtle differences between the explanation of Europe and the account of America. The authors linked the European nations' process of acquiring colonies to the process of *spreading out across the world in various ways*. This reminds us of the situation wherein Japan triggered controversy by describing its invasion of neighboring countries as an advancement. Also, the expression, "unofficial imperialism with more economic characteristics," weakens Europe's colonial domination and imperialistic character.

By contrast, regarding the United States who have influence in Latin America after the 19th century, the book simply says it was imperialism. This shows a Eurocentric view as well as a beautifying of colonialism. Such writing recalls Japan's rightwing textbook that actively addressed the issue of Germany's war crimes while denying or hiding its own (Fujioka 2001).¹² Further, by contrasting the peaceful and violent cases in the post-colonization processes, there is a risk of making the readers take a negative view of so-called "violent" independence movements that aimed at the overthrow of colonization. This reveals the perspective of an imperial power, not a colony.

Colonialism and Eurocentric views are also apparent in the description of the liberalization of various Asian countries. For example, on the

12. This book actively criticizes Germany's war crimes under the Nazi regime alongside Stalin's dictatorship.

independence and partition of India, it says “as there was signs of civil war, Mountbatten, the Viceroy of India, decided India be partitioned” and “as Britain hurried to withdraw, numerous people from both India and Pakistan crossed the border to pursue their own religion, and many incidents of bloody collisions occurred during the process” (Geiss et al. 2008, 96). Without any mention of Britain’s responsibility for its colonial rule, it writes in a way as if Britain had been preventing bloody collisions between the two religions, and tried to avert such conflicts by partitioning India.

Also, about the Vietnamese independence process, it says, “as negotiations between the colonial power France and Vietnam failed, the First Indochina War commenced. . . . Through the Geneva Agreement, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam were each approved as independent states” (Geiss et al. 2008, 96). The fundamental reason the first Indochina War broke out was not the failure of negotiations between empire and colony, but France’s ambition to rule Vietnam. However, we would not know that from this writing. Also, from whom did the newly independent former colonies receive approval? This writing implies that the agent of approval was the West, or Europe. Is there a reason why newly independent nations should have to acquire the approval of their former imperial rulers?

On the other hand, regarding Japan’s apology about the war and its colonial rule, the textbook states, “Japan officially expressed its apologies to neighboring countries in Asia about the cruelties committed by its army, but among the Chinese people, who have not forgotten them, there remains a deep resentment against Japan.” The book then adds a part of the Murayama statement of 1995 as material (Geiss et al. 2008, 42–43). This account is written in a way that suggests that although Japan has apologized, the Chinese will not accept it. Korea’s demands for the Japanese settlement of colonialism does not even appear in the book. Such a description is not only focused on the apology for war crimes, but also demonstrates the perception that Japan’s act of apology was sufficient. This writing reveals a lack of understanding of the essence of the historical conflict in Northeast Asia.

Although the Germany-France joint textbook holds the basic position that imperialism and colonialism must be settled, as examined above, the

work lacks sufficient treatment of the issue of colonialism when viewed from a former colony's perspective. It can be said that such limitations reveal the European nations' lack of historical awareness regarding the colonies they once ruled. Such lack of awareness was already indicated in the early 1990s. In 1992, Frederic Delouche and his colleagues published *History of Europe (L'histoire de l'Europe)*, which claimed to be a common history of Europe. Following the French version, this book was published in various European languages and garnered enough attention to be printed in Korean and Japanese. However, this book faced criticism—even in Europe—that it lacked any approach regarding “the relationship between the European world represented by colonialism and the non-European world” (Kondo 2006, 187). Unfortunately, the Germany-France joint textbook was not free from such criticism either.

As such, the outcomes of post-colonial research have not been sufficiently considered in Europe's education and textbook dialogue with former colonies. As mentioned in the introduction, France denounced slavery with the 2001 Taubira Law and is making efforts to improve people's understanding of Algeria. However, the sections on Algeria in French textbooks are still written from the empire's point of view and such a tendency is actually being strengthened. For example, in February 2005, the French parliament passed legislation that ordered the development of an educational program to teach the “positive aspects” of French colonial policies, especially its policies regarding the North African region (Lantheaume 2006). Despite strong opposition from historians, the legislation was not suspended and the debate continues even today.

The same is true for Germany. A recent report on Namibia, Germany's former colony, clearly demonstrates the current state of Germany's settlement of the past. On September 30, 2011, the German government invited 73 representatives from every tribe of Namibia to a memorial ceremony where they returned the skulls of 20 Namibians. Some of the skulls were presumed to have belonged to victims of Germany's mass killings in Namibia. Also, they were presumed to have been taken to Berlin for studies to prove Europeans were a superior race to black Africans, and had been exhibited at the German Medical History Museum for more than a

100 years. It was not until 2001 that the German government officially acknowledged their culpability in engaging in slavery during their colonization of Namibia, Tanzania, Togo, and other areas.¹³ In 2012, leftwing legislators from the German Bundestag (federal parliament) called for a textbook dialogue with Namibia, but this has not thus far been realized.

When we consider such cases, it is easy to recognize that the European experience regarding the settlement of colonialism cannot help the historical dialogue in Northeast Asia. Rather, the fact that the Northeast Asian textbook dialogue is based on the settlement of colonialism indicates that it not only supplements the European experience, but should also be received by Europe as a lesson in its own textbook dialogues.

Conclusion

In the 2000s, the textbook dialogue in Northeast Asia experienced dramatic developments. The most notable of these was the active participation of China. With China's engagement, the Korea-China-Japan textbook dialogue commenced, the first of its kind in Northeast Asia. At the same time, textbook dialogue between Korea and Japan was also undertaken by various agents under various themes. Textbook dialogue between Korea and Japan was carried out in the context of varied historical dialogue experience accumulated since the 1980s, and because there was a shared understanding throughout Korean and Japanese civil society of the need for a future-oriented alternative.

However, an important foundation common in both the Korea-Japan and Korea-China-Japan textbook dialogue in this period was the critical view of Japan's invasive war and colonial rule. It was very different from the European textbook experience, which focused on post-war settlement

13. "Dok 'baengnyeon neomeun wonjumin yugol' isip-gu, apeurika namibiagong-e banhwanhan sayeon-eun" (Why Germany Returned Twenty Skulls taken over a Century Ago to the Republic of Namibia in Africa), *Munhwa Ilbo*, September 28, 2011; "Dogil, namibia-e haegol banhwan" (Germany Returns Twenty Skulls to Namibia), *Yonhap News*, October 1, 2011.

and mutual understanding. In Northeast Asia, unlike Europe, a common political goal symbolized by a regional committee did not exist, and neither did a central country like Germany in the textbook dialogue. Nevertheless, textbook dialogue was possible in this region because the common goal of settling Japan's imperial past was widely shared by the civil societies of Korea, Japan, and China.

Despite such achievements, it remains almost impossible to write a joint textbook in a combined form of inter-governmental dialogue and civic-level dialogue without a change of attitude by the Japanese government, which has been reluctant in settling the colonial issue. The Japanese government is reluctant in settling the colony issue, because settlement of colonialism has not been carried out sufficiently in world history. It is no exaggeration to say that the European historical dialogue made no substantial progress in terms of the issue of settling colonialism, to include the joint textbook of Germany and France. Furthermore, this Germany-France joint textbook still needs to address the issue of its Eurocentric views. This is why we need a historical dialogue between Europe and Northeast Asia.

When the Northeast Asian experience of settling colonialism is added to the European experience, historical dialogue between former imperial powers and their former colonies can be vitalized. The fact that the European experience—especially the German one—was based on self-reflection upon the war, an understanding of invaded countries, and a spirit of mutual respect and coexistence, would indicate that the possibility is high for post-colonial historical dialogue beyond specific regions. If a global historical dialogue is vitalized based on the settlement of colonialism, this, in turn, will be the driving force to upgrading the historical dialogue in Northeast Asia. This will provide an opportunity for building an historical dialogue that encompasses the governments and civil societies of all Northeast Asian countries. Such change will be the very work to opening a venue for new historical awareness and new historical dialogue that can go beyond borders, and even overcome regional-centric views.

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