



National History Textbooks in the Era of Global Citizenship Education: *Coexistence of Global Objectives and Nationalist Narratives on the History of Ancient Korea*

Dong Jun JEONG and Eun Jung CHANG

Abstract

Based upon the analysis of nationalist narratives in the ancient Korean history chapters of eight official Korean history textbooks published in or after 2014, this study attempts to assess how Korean history textbooks meet their stated objective of “Korean history within and alongside world history” drawn from the global citizenship education point of view. This study presents an analytical inquiry into the nationalist narratives embedded in these textbooks—despite appearances to the contrary—notably in the portions dealing with ancient history. Nationalist narratives found in the treatment of ancient Korean history in these textbooks can be categorized into overstatements on the emergence of a single ethnic group, an earlier timeframe for historical events, territorial exaggerations, and misinformation about neighboring countries. It is important to bring the extended stakeholders, particularly history scholars, into the authorship of textbook-making processes to reflect up-to-date findings for objective narratives in textbooks and to take serious account of issues that transcend borders, regions, and cultures from a global and comprehensive perspective. In history education, a balanced understanding of history among learners can be realized only through global citizenship education that goes beyond nationalism.

Keywords: history education, nationalism, global citizenship education, Korean history textbooks, ancient Korean history

* First author: Dong Jun JEONG is a visiting professor at Sungkyunkwan University. E-mail: skkukgb1@hanmail.net.

Corresponding author: Eun Jung CHANG is an education specialist at the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). E-mail: eunjungchang1@gmail.com.

Introduction

Entering the 21st century, Korea has experienced dynamic transformations. One of the most iconic transitions in Korean society is surely the emergence of multiculturalism. In the previous century, there was a tendency among Koreans to consider their country a monoethnic state. However, the substantial inflow of non-Koreans into the Korean Peninsula, combined with the development of information and communication technology, the wide adoption of social networking services, and the proliferation of Korean pop culture, have made the notion of a single ethnic state untenable and obsolete (Bélanger et al. 2010). As a consequence, people have started to raise questions about the content of Korean history education that has long been presented from a Korea-centered point of view. Given these new contexts, the narratives of Korean history education began to naturally move away from the history education of the 20th century that emphasized monoethnicity (NIKH 2000, 1–2).

More specifically, the subject of history teaching shifted its focus during the 1990s, from fostering anti-communist perspectives and ethnic pride to a greater to imparting a shared appreciation of universal values and global interdependence with the goal of teaching “South Korean history within the context of world history” (H. Kim and S. Kim 2019, 256). The state-issued public single textbook, *National History (Guksa)*, was abolished and in its place from 2011 various textbooks titled, *Korean History (Hanguksa)*, certified by the government began to be offered by different private publishers. Simultaneously, East Asian History was created as a new subject as part of history education in Korean high schools. A series of reforms helped the government-authorized publication system take root.

Since 2014, a total of eight Korean history textbooks by eight different publishers, namely Chunjae Education (CJ), 2014; Doosan Dong-A (DD), 2014; Jihaksa (JH), 2014; Kumsung (KS), 2014; Kyohaksa (KH), 2014; Liber School (LS), 2014; Mirae-N (MR), 2014; Visang Education (VS), 2014, have been authorized by the government for use in high schools. All of these textbooks are comprised of six chapters. This study attempts to analyze the language and narrative used in these texts, particularly in the chapters

covering the ancient history of Korea. This study utilized textbooks published in 2014 (the 2014 version) for analysis while comparing parts of the contents from the formerly used textbook published by the National Institute of Korean History (NIKH) in 2000 before the introduction of the government-authorized publication policy.

A previous study has pointed out problems with the contents of previous Korean history textbooks, notably the nationalist narratives found in the chapter on ancient history, to include a pride over the nation's long history, an emphasis on a single ethnic group, bloodline, and superiority over neighboring nations (N. Kim 2014, 154–164). The nationalist narratives commonly found in the ancient history portions of the 2014 Korean history textbooks can be categorized into four themes: 1) overstatements regarding the emergence of a single ethnic group; 2) overstating the age of historical events; 3) territorial exaggerations; and 4) misinformation about neighboring countries (Jeong 2019a). However, in previous studies, some of the representative items of these four categories were not analyzed, while only proposals for improvement measures were given and no educational policy approach was taken.

Even though the government-authorized publication system allowed multiple textbooks to be published, these textbooks have much in common. One example is that the textbooks emphasize Korean history *within and alongside world history* in their stated objectives or forewords (VS 2014b, 15; KH 2014, 2–3; KS 2014, 3; LS 2014, 2–3; VS 2014a, 2–3; JH 2014, 2; CJ 2014, 3). This demonstrates that the core objective of Korean history education is indeed to teach Korean history to students in the context of world history. This study therefore attempts to evaluate the current status and educational values of Korean history textbooks for high school by reviewing the extent to which these textbooks are meeting their stated objectives to evaluate the current status and educational values of Korean history textbooks.

This stated objective is indeed closely related to the value of global citizenship education incorporated in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.7 (adopted by the United Nations in September 2015) to ensure all learners acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development through an appreciation of global citizenship and cultural

diversity. As the role of education in cultivating global citizenship built on an extended worldview around diversity for peaceful coexistence is increasingly emphasized in the era of globalization, history education in parallel has been influenced to incorporate the emerging theme of global citizenship education into the traditional focus on *nation-building* and *responsible (national) citizenship* (Grever and Van der Vlies 2017).

Therefore, in this study, we attempt to assess how the language and narratives used in eight Korean history textbooks published in or after 2014 have contributed to their stated objective from the perspective of global citizenship education to provide meaningful insights into the educational relevance of history education. To this end, we focus on the ancient history chapter of these texts to analyze their nationalist narratives, something has not examined in previous studies, and to propose ideas for improvement in an attempt to broaden the horizon of history education in the era of global citizenship education. In particular, in analyzing the contents of these texts, this study adopted a historical methodology based on the perspective that textbooks are also historical texts. However, due to length limitations, this paper does not use any direct quotations from the textbooks under examination.

Table 1. Classification of Eight Korean History Textbooks

| Group | Publisher | Formation of author (on ancient history) | |
|-------|-----------|--|------------------|
| | | Professional historian | Schoolteacher(s) |
| A | KS | 1 | 1 |
| | JH | 1 | 1 |
| | CJ | 1 | 0 |
| B | KH | 0 | 1 |
| | DD | 0 | 1 |
| | LS | 0 | 2 |
| | MR | 0 | 2 |
| | VS | 0 | 4 |

Source: Author.

Of the eight textbooks examined in the study, five of them (KH 2014; DD 2014; LS 2014; MR 2014; VS 2014a) were written exclusively by history teachers while the CJ textbook was written by a professional historian. History teachers and professional historians co-authored the KS and JH textbooks. Given this difference, the authors categorized the textbooks into two groups depending on the involvement of professional scholars: Group A consists of textbooks written exclusively by professional historians or co-authored by such historians and schoolteachers, while Group B consists of texts authored solely by schoolteachers (Table 1). In this article, we intend to examine the accuracy of the common expectation that works by professional historians are more likely than those by schoolteachers to reflect the latest research trends, while schoolteachers are more likely than professional historians to author history textbooks that are more accessible to students.

Examining Chapters on Ancient History and Features of Nationalist Narratives

This study sought primarily to analyze nationalist narratives found in history textbooks. To achieve Korean history within and alongside world history, in its true sense, Korean history needs to be written and described in a balanced manner without any biases and exaggerations. The common nationalistic approach to writing about ancient Korean history often results in overstating the facts of Korean history, and the concomitant understating of the history of other countries.

Some may ask how promoting global citizenship education in a globalized world is related to tackling nationalist narratives in textbook chapters on ancient history. This study suggests the following.

First, the concept of physical borders was not so strong during the ancient period because it is modern nationalism that shaped and solidified the notion of national borders. Nationality and borders were all abstract ideas before nationalism took hold. During the ancient period, many groups and individuals moved across and between several different states. Likewise, it was not uncommon for an event in one country to affect conditions in

neighboring countries. Unity and a sense of national community that went beyond social hierarchy were still in the making. Taking this into consideration, it may be more relevant to identify commonalities and draw comparisons between the ancient era and the globalized 21st century. Given nationalism was the overarching ideology of the 19th and 20th centuries, this endeavor is much more relevant today.

Second, prior to the advent of post-nationalism, research on the ancient period, along with history education, were heavily influenced during the modern age by the nationalistic historical perspectives that had gained dominance. Ancient history as depicted in the state-issued textbook was so distorted and twisted by nationalistic views to suit the interests and desires of historians that some even called it “made-up ancient history” (S. Lee 2001). As explained above, ancient history is not just history far-removed from contemporary reality. There are commonalities that bind different ages together, and this fact makes ancient history a good subject for global citizenship education.

Before going into more detail, we will briefly touch upon academic theories associated with nationalist narratives. School textbooks provide important sites for a modern nation-state to govern its people by creating and disseminating narratives (Nozaki and Inokuchi 2000, 97). Particularly, since the rise of the nation-state, history textbooks have been used by states as “instruments for glorifying the nation, consolidating its national identity, and justifying particular forms of social and political systems” (Podeh 2000, 68).

National narratives are utilized in history education to involve people in a shared sense of identity by defining who “we” are and where “we” come from (Nozaki and Inokuchi 2000, 119). For example, German history textbooks provide the traditional narratives of the origins, historical progress, and consolidation of the nation, from the Romans and Greeks and Christian Middle Ages to the coming of age of the nation-state (Soysal 2000, 135). In the textbook-making process, there is always the inherent problem of the “sifting of knowledge,” as selective knowledge is given to represent a collective identity whether it is national or regional (Nozaki and Inokuchi 2000, 121–122). Identity constructed through this process necessarily

includes some people while excluding others. Noticeably, ethnic history emphasizes how a given ethnic group existed long before the rise of the nation-state and focuses on the narrative that the ethnic group emerged and was forged through its struggles with other ethnic groups.

This nationalist narrative began to influence Korea from the early 20th century when Korea was experiencing Japanese colonization. During the struggle against Japanese imperialism, independence activists and scholars such as Shin Chaeho, Park Eunsik, and Jeong Inbo strengthened the nationalist narrative. After liberation from Japan in 1945, former Korean presidents Syngman Rhee (1948–1960) and Park Chung-hee (1961–1979) used ethnic nationalism to legitimize their authoritarian politics. History education during this period therefore was utilized to instill students with a sense of ethnic national identity based on ideas of common bloodline and shared ancestry among the Korean “nation” (H. Kim and S. Kim 2019, 255). There was a need for coping with Japanese colonialist historiography in research and education. Nationalistic perspectives were adopted as a response to colonialist historiography. Under such circumstances, the Internal Development Theory (Naejaejeok baljeollon, the notion that Korean history has been constantly developed independently by intrinsic power) grew into a mainstream viewpoint among Korean historians in the 1960s. The nationalist narrative played a positive function of expediting social development by helping develop a collective identity (Kwon 2000, 46–47).

Even though the Internal Development Theory remains a dominant force in Korean historiography, its clout is in gradual decline. This change was sparked by the post-nationalistic approach to history that emerged in the mid-1990s (B. Anderson [1991] 2002; Park 2019, 37–52). With the Internal Development Theory continuing to be a mainstream approach, all historic events tended to be viewed and interpreted from a nationalistic point of view until the 1980s. From the mid-1990s, however, more and more historians began to argue that nationalism should not be the sole standard for assessing Korean history. Consequently, research topics and approaches began to differ from those of the past. Although not every historian accepted post-nationalism as the compass to guide their academic endeavors, the rise of this new approach touched off a cascade of debate over historical

narratives and has altered the landscape of academia. The Internal Development Theory is challenged not only by post-nationalism but by East Asian history theory and post-modernism (Park 2019, 52–75). It can be argued that the nationalist narrative is no longer an appropriate response to the needs of the times (N. Kim 2014, 150).

However, the South Korean government's inability to accept history textbook content that is not in sync with nationalism can be explained by the dominance of a nationalist historiography as well as its refusal to consider recent academic findings. Even with the change in the textbook publication system, this issue of nationalist content could not be solved in a short period of time. It should be noted that, contrary to public perceptions, even the progressive discourse in South Korea has a strong nationalistic character regarding the North Korean issue and is not connected to post-nationalism (H. Kim and S. Kim 2019, 258–259). It is also necessary to consider the paradox that globalization has worked to actually strengthen national identity in Korea (Shin 2006, 214). Hence, the reduction of excessive nationalist narratives, rather than the strengthening of post-nationalist narratives, would be a realistic improvement in the pursuit of global citizenship education.

The Writing Standards for Textbooks and Nationalist Narratives

The composition and contents of a government-authorized textbook are heavily influenced by the formal writing standards used to approve the text's authors, and this is the case for Korean history textbooks as well. When the nationalist narrative is already emphasized in the writing standards, the content of the resulting textbook will inevitably reflect a strong nationalist narrative. In this regard, the writing standards for the eight aforementioned textbooks are reviewed before analyzing the four facets of nationalist narratives mentioned in the introduction.

The 2014 version of the Korean history textbooks reviewed in this article was produced by the writing guidelines for the 2009 curriculum (later revised in 2011). These writing guidelines are divided into five categories: 1)

the process of forming a nation, 2) Old Joseon and early Iron Age, 3) Three Kingdoms and Gaya, 4) Unified Silla and Balhae, and 5) cultural exchange in East Asian international relations.

Among these, strong nationalist narratives were found principally in four areas: 1) the consideration of blood-related elements in the process of forming a nation; 2) parity in exchange and conflict between Yan and Old Joseon; 3) Balhae as successor to Goguryeo; and 4) the diffusion of the Three Kingdoms' culture to Japan. However, details regarding bloodline in the process of forging a nation are not necessarily based on evidence but influenced by the ideology of a single Korean ethnicity, while the position of Old Joseon is overestimated in terms of its relationship with the polity of Yan. Furthermore, some narratives are inconsistent, in that Balhae is described as a fusion between Goguryeo and Malgal, while the perspective of cultural diffusion is rejected in other sections of the writing standards.

Korean academia criticized the application of these writing standards to the 2014 Korean history textbooks not only because of the standards' nationalist narrative, but also for its micromanaging of terminology, such as whether to use the term "Unified Silla" or the "Northern and Southern states." Furthermore, these standards specifically directed the following: the Three Kingdoms must be compared with Gaya, and described in the order of Goguryeo, Baekje, then Silla; the culture of Unified Silla is to be presented as the basis of national culture and its character must be presented with examples; the economic, social, and cultural exchanges between Unified Silla and Balhae must all be described.

Overstating the Emergence of a Single Ethnic Group

As discussed in the introduction, overstatements regarding the emergence of a common ethnic group is one of the most difficult challenges facing Korean history textbooks in the 21st century. The overstatement is primarily found in narratives pertaining to Balhae history as forming a part of Korean history.

In dealing with Balhae, the KH, KS, and LS textbooks recognize that

the country was created by a descendent of Goguryeo (KH 2014, 39–40; KS 2014, 57–64; LS 2014, 47). The former government-designated textbook also provided the same narrative (NIKH 2000, 64). However, the KH (Group B) and KS (Group A) textbooks present data showing the cohabitation of Malgal tribes in Balhae society while the LS textbook (Group B) does not mention anything about Malgal's position in Balhae. The KH textbook says that the percentage of Malgal tribes as part of Balhae's population was very small, thus underscoring Balhae's status as the successor state to Goguryeo (KH 2014, 40). While the KS textbook recognizes the relationship between Balhae and Goguryeo, it states that the share of Malgal tribes was not insignificant in Balhae (KS 2014, 61). It goes a step further to state that the integration between Goguryeo descendants and the Malgal tribes played a pivotal role in creating the identity of the Balhae people (KS 2014, 59). By providing different descriptions of the relationship between Malgal and Balhae, KH and KS clearly exhibit a different stance on history.

This difference highlights the importance of a balanced approach to both aspects of Goguryeo and Malgal. From this perspective, we believe the KS textbook's narrative (Group A) to be more balanced than that of the KH textbook (Group B). Indeed, the KH textbook's content is founded on theories prevalent in the 1980s. On the other hand, the KS textbook's narrative reflects more recent scholarship undertaken since the 1990s (Song 1995, 17–19). When discussing the identity of the Balhae people, it would be best to understand them as an entity that embraced all Goguryeo descendants, the Malgal tribes, and the cultural influence of Tang China, rather than defining it from a single perspective.

To realize their stated objective of incorporating Korean history into global history, current Korean history textbooks need to take a balanced approach to Balhae, one that incorporates both the Goguryeo refugees and the Malgal tribes. Yet, the one-sided narrative that favors a view of Balhae as a state of Goguryeo refugees demonstrates how Korean history education is still under the sway of the idea of a single Korean ethnicity. The internal contradictions within the textbook writing standards have also contributed to this situation.

Overstating the Age of Historical Events

The next manifestation of a nationalist narrative is the practice of providing an earlier timeline for specific historical events to deliver the impression that achievements in Korean history were made earlier than they actually were. Such narratives are evident in sections that talk about the policies implemented during the period of King Goi of Baekje.

Narratives about policy implementations during the reign of King Goi share problems in terms of their presented timeline. Discussions of policy implementations during King Goi's reign are found in all eight textbooks (KH 2014, 26; KS 2014, 41; DD 2014, 26; LS 2014, 30–31; MR 2014, 23; VS 2014a, 29; JH 2014, 32; CJ 2014, 24–25). This study focuses on the analysis of the promulgation of the Luling (a code of laws) and the initiation of 16 official ranks. The KH, KS, MR, and CJ textbooks discuss the Luling, while the LS and CJ textbooks talk about the 16 official ranks (the discussion of this in MR [2014] is somewhat vague and thus not treated here). The former state-issued textbook also dealt with a series of policies unveiled during the period of King Goi. However, it used abstract and ambiguous expressions, such as “a new system of government offices” (NIKH 2000, 46).

As for the promulgation of the Luling, there is no extant historical record of when it was first promulgated in Baekje, which means the dating of the Luling can only be presumed based on circumstantial evidence. Until the 1970s, the mainstream theory was that the Luling was promulgated during the reign of King Goi. From the 1980s, theories on the Luling became divided and three periods—that of King Geunchogo, King Jeonji, and King Gaero—were proposed as possible origins. Today, no historian argues that the Luling was first promulgated by King Goi. The main reason past experts speculated King Goi had promulgated the Luling is a passage in the 12th-century *Samguk sagi* (History of the Three Kingdoms) that records, in its section dealing with the reign of King Goi (234–286 CE), that a law was promulgated “aiming to prevent the corruption of public servants” (KS 2014, 41). In the 1980s, it was found that the “Biographies of Baekje” section in the *Jiu Tangshu* (Old History of Tang), which predated the *Samguk sagi*, contained the identical passage, but recording that the promulgation

occurred during the Sabi period (i.e., when the capital was located at Sabi) of Baekje (538–660) (Noh 1988, 266). As a result of this academic discovery, the Luling stopped being mentioned as having occurred in King Goi's period. Furthermore, no academic evidence has ever been put forward explaining why King Goi would have been compelled to promulgate the Luling.

Baekje's system of 16 official ranks faces the same problem. Content related to this can be found in the "Biographies of Baekje" portion of the *Zhou shu* (History of Zhou), which also predates the *Samguk sagi* and relates how the system of 16 official ranks was initiated during Baekje's Sabi period (Y. Kim 1998). It is difficult to identify any academic studies on the Baekje official rank system that disregards this evidence to argue that the system was first instituted during the era of King Goi.

To sum up, the textbooks under review here do not properly reflect the findings of academic scholarship undertaken since the 1980s. The textbooks reveal a blind acceptance of the account of the *Samguk sagi* without any critical thinking. In the interpretation and analysis of historical records for the ancient period, more cautionary approaches are required. However, it seems that the 2014 history textbooks failed to conduct any rigorous review of the evidence and accepted earlier timeframes without questioning them. In this context, it is worth noting the DD textbook, which only mentions the implementation of the *jwapyeong* system and official rank system, but without much detail, as well as the JH textbook, which offers a detailed explanation of Baekje's official rank system.

Territorial Exaggerations

Another issue in nationalist narratives found in history textbooks is that exaggerations relating to territorial expansion during the period of Baekje's King Geunchogo. Mention of territorial expansion under King Geunchogo are mentioned in all eight textbooks (KH 2014, 27; KS 2014, 41; DD 2014, 26; LS 2014, 34–37; MR 2014, 23; VS 2014a, 31; JH 2014, 32; CJ 2014, 28). This study analyzes portions related to Baekje's advancement into the Liaoxi

area in present-day China and into Gaya territory. Five textbooks (KH, LS, MR, VS, and CJ) discuss this Baekje advancement into the Liaoxi area, while three textbooks (LS, VS and CJ) elaborate on Baekje's advancement into Gaya territory. The former government textbook provides narratives of both these events (NIKH 2000, 53–54).

The theory of Baekje's advancement into the Liaoxi area was first put forth in the 1960s and was largely accepted as a truth until the 1980s. Since the first challenges to the validity of the theory in 1989, proponents and opponents have continued to debate its merits and demerits (Yoo 1989). At present, there is no scholar of the subject who argues that the advancement into the Liaoxi area resulted in a *de facto* territorial occupation by Baekje (Kang 1992; Yeo 2001). Putting aside controversies surrounding the issue, it is not reasonable for textbooks to describe advancement into the Liaoxi area by Baekje when the nature of that "advancement" cannot even be clearly defined. More importantly, the KH and VS textbooks (Group B) introduce a counter-theory that rejects this advancement into the Liaoxi area by Baekje, by mentioning that such an historical account is not found in the *Samguk sagi* or *Samguk yusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms) (KH 2014, 27; VS 2014a, 31). The counter-theory argues that Baekje's advancement into the Liaoxi area is not based upon accurate historical data and that confusion remains as to who actually advanced into the Liaoxi area, Baekje or Lelang (Yoo 1989). Naturally, it is not easy to put forward all historical evidence in textbooks. However, delivering wrong or false information can do much more harm than good.

Baekje's advancement into Gaya can be found in the section of the *Nihon shoki* (Records of Japanese History). However, scholars have raised questions about whether it was actually Baekje that advanced into Gaya. Indeed, judging from artifacts discovered in former Gaya territory, it is hard to conclude that the country was under the influence of Baekje in the 4th century. In addition, the *Nihon shoki* contains many errors in terms of both chronology and content. Such unclear and questionable records should not be used in history textbooks. This may even generate distortions about the history of Gaya.

These two cases demonstrate that history textbooks have failed to

reflect the scholarly findings and discoveries produced since the 1980s, and have blindly bought into the *Nihon shoki* and other sources without a critical examination of their accuracy or veracity. For instance, even though the *Samguk sagi* only presents King Geunchogo's victories against Goguryeo, he has been perceived as a king who expanded Baekje's territory more than this. In conclusion, we found that three history textbooks provide exemplary narratives on this topic (KS 2014, 41; DD 2014, 26; JH 2014, 32): The KS textbook emphasizes the establishment of diplomatic ties with Wa (Japan) instead of focusing on Baekje's putative advancement into Gaya; the DD and the JH textbooks exclude content related to Baekje's advancement into both the Liaoxi area and Gaya.

Misinformation about Neighboring Countries

The final manifestation of nationalist narratives in history textbooks regarding the ancient period is misinformation about neighboring countries. Such misrepresentations can be found in narratives related to how the culture of the Three Kingdoms was diffused to Wa territory (Japan).

With respect to the Three Kingdoms' cultural influence on Wa, seven textbooks contain relevant content (KH 2014, 45; KS 2014, 69; LS 2014, 60; MR 2014, 47–48; VS 2014a, 57; JH 2014, 58; CJ 2014, 41). The content itself is factually correct and not at all misleading. The problem is not so much the content as how it is written. Excepting the KS and JH textbooks (Group A), all the other textbooks mention what the Three Kingdoms provided to Wa but fail to mention what the Three Kingdoms received from Wa. This is not a simple error in narratives. It may represent a serious problem in Korean history education. The same error can be found in the former government textbook (NIKH 2000, 100–101).

These narratives may be a reflection of common images associated with relations between Korea's Three Kingdoms and Wa, narratives that give students the impression that the Three Kingdoms were superior to Wa. However, actual relations between the Three Kingdoms and Wa were basically relations between two sovereign states that engaged in fair and

equal treatment and exchanges. There may have been inequalities in trade and exchange owing to unequal national strength; nonetheless, they formed relationships on an equal footing. The five textbooks' narratives only give the false impression that Wa only received assistance from the Three Kingdoms. This of course, is problematic. If we take a step forward from these narratives, we arrive at the anachronistic ideology that Wa (later Japan) betrayed Korea by repaying the former assistance from the Three Kingdoms with wars.

Thus, the JH textbook's narrative that Wa gave something back to the Three Kingdoms in exchange for their assistance qualifies as a balanced and desirable narrative (JH 2014, 58). The KS textbook details the appearance of Wa's culture on the Korean Peninsula (KS 2014, 69). The case of relations with Wa illustrates how history textbooks can distort Korean history by relating a story biased to one side. The textbooks under examination here should have made greater efforts to look at history from the perspective of Wa. Again, the internal conflicts within the textbook writing standards contributed to this problem.

History Education in the Globalization Era and the Relevance of Korean History Textbooks

With the emergence of the nation-state, history education in particular has come to be seen as essential component in "nation-building" and fostering "responsible citizenship" (Berger and Lorenz 2008), and schools have played a pivotal role in making of the masses a homogenous national citizenry. Mass schooling was critical for nation-building due to its ability to transform individuals into productive national citizens (Heater 2003).

Hence, the formal curriculum, often called the *national curriculum*, was designed to ensure that students acquire the appropriate norms and behavior for functioning and identifying as loyal members of the broader national polity as defined by the national authority (Zajda 2015). As the national curriculum serves as the primary carrier of *official knowledge* of a given society, textbooks are prepared to reflect the goals and intentions of

that national curriculum (Apple 2014). History textbooks are therefore critical educational resources produced with the aim of supporting or determining the contents of formal history teaching and learning, primarily in schools (Grever and Van der Vlies 2017).

As a core component of formal education, history education is, in this regard, an important means of creating and maintaining national citizenship. Although school education nowadays is still employed to create a sense of national identity by instilling national values and ideals, it is now increasingly sought after to incorporate sub-national and supranational values eventually, embracing the notion of global citizenship (Banks 2014). There is a visible chasm between formal history education that places exclusive emphasis on the nation-state as a form of *national curriculum* and current history education that seeks to incorporate global values and ideals beyond national boundaries as a part of “global education” (Anderson 1979).

It is thus axiomatic that history education in the 21st century needs to reflect the global ideal that the role of education is not limited to the development of knowledge and cognitive skills but more importantly to the building of values and attitudes among learners (Pigozzi 2006, 3). Going beyond the traditionally domestic orientation of education as a tool for nation-building, education in the global era calls for a major shift in discourse and practice to recognize the relevance of education and learning in the expansion of the scope of understanding of learners and the resolving of diverse global issues across social, political, cultural, economic, and environmental spheres.

In today's globalized environment, issues such as poverty, conflict, infectious disease, climate change, energy, and food security have become increasingly interconnected. As a coordinated global endeavor to resolve these issues that transcend traditional borders, the United Nations agreed to push forward aligned international development goals in the form of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and later the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are a set of global goals agreed upon by 193 countries to be achieved cooperatively by 2030. They encompass a wide range of development areas, including more traditional goals for education, health, and rural development, as well as evolving areas such as

climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace, and justice. Education in the era of SDGs is therefore meant to equip learners not only with knowledge and skills but also values, attitudes, and lifestyles to cope with the fast-changing global society, and more importantly, to build just, peaceful, and tolerant societies for all to live in.

Sustainable Development Goal 4 is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. It has seven targets and three means of implementation. The subordinate SDG 4.7 goal is that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development through the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and the appreciation of cultural diversity. As inequalities among and between individuals, groups, societies, countries, and regions loom large, the promotion of peace, human rights, equality, tolerance of diversity, and sustainable development has become a major component of education.

Given that current Korean high school history education textbooks commonly emphasize Korean history *within and alongside* world history to help students perceive their national history as a part of the broader global stream, we need to acknowledge the value of global citizenship education as a lens for evaluating the current status and educational values of Korean history textbooks. Complicated global issues across geographic borders, sectors, and cultures require not only open minds and attitudes that can see beyond the traditional *nation-ness* and nationalism, but also more extensive understanding and learning on peace, human rights, equality, tolerance of diversity, and sustainable development.

Through the lens of global citizenship education, Korean history textbooks should be re-read, re-interpreted, and re-written from the global perspective of peace, equality, diversity, and development, identifying Korea within and alongside the global community while fulfilling the objective of Korean history education in line with SDG 4, which aims to ensure that learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development. Korean history textbooks need to recognize and embrace the value and context of global citizenship by interpreting and narrating Korean history in a multilateral and plural manner as a means to resolving

interconnected global issues.

It is thus critical that global citizenship education be promoted throughout the education process, from principles and objectives to curriculum. Not only the prefaces of Korean history textbooks, but the narratives of those textbooks should be rigorously examined so that global citizenship education can be adopted in ways that facilitate practical discussions in educational settings. Yet, it is also imperative to acknowledge that global citizenship education might also be heavily influenced by the neoliberal agenda and the continued politicized use of textbooks in Korea (Choi and Kim 2020).

The first step should be to establish national writing standards and guidelines for textbooks that ensure diverse social, political, economic, cultural, and environmental perspectives that can provide a well-balanced understanding and learning of Korean history alongside the history of other nations. Important themes and issues both in global citizenship education and history education, such as peace, gender disparity, justice, and inequalities, also need to be promoted, first by providing objective as well as multi-faceted and open narratives while acknowledging that a certain event might be interpreted and narrated in totally different ways depending on the stance of the authors.

Implications of Embracing Global Citizenship Education for Korean History Education

This study reviewed the ancient Korean history chapters in eight government-authorized high school textbooks and identified nationalist narratives that contravene the purported objective of history education—Korean history within and alongside world history. Within these textbooks, we found nationalist narratives to take the form of: 1) overstating the emergence of a single ethnic group; 2) overstating the age of historical events; 3) territorial exaggerations; and 4) misinformation about neighboring countries. Problems associated with these narratives are as follows.

First, the findings of recent scholarship, especially studies conducted after the 1990s, have not been adequately reflected in the content of history textbooks. Overestimations of Balhae as a successor state of Goguryeo, overstating the age of certain historical events associated with the reign of Baekje's King Goi, and territorial exaggerations pertaining to the achievements of Baekje's King Geunchogo all fall in this category. With the emergence of post-nationalistic views, much scholarship produced since the mid-1990s has generated narratives different from nationalist ones. The failure to incorporate the latest scholarly findings into textbooks has resulted in a failure to account for newly established historical facts as well as variant perspectives on Korean history.

Second, one-sided nationalist narratives that put *our country* ahead of *their country* have resulted in the distortion of many historical facts, as seen in overstatements regarding Balhae as successor to Goguryeo and misinformation about neighboring countries, demonstrated in narratives about the Three Kingdoms' cultural influence on Wa. Despite the need to share history from the perspectives of all parties involved, including both victors and losers, Korean history textbooks tend to tell one-sided stories.

How then can we cope with these complex challenges? Although there can be no easy and simple solution, we will attempt to present ways existing historical narratives might be improved in terms of the history textbook-writing process.

First, bringing more professional historians into the textbook-writing process will help incorporate up-to-date findings into textbooks. This study found that not all publishers recruited experts to write history textbooks (Table 1). It was found that the ancient history chapters in five of the textbooks (Group B: KH, DD, LS, MR, and VS textbooks) were written by history teachers. The other textbook group (Group A) involved professional historians in their production. This is not to argue that bringing historians on board would automatically make textbooks flawless. That being said, it is worth noting that Group B textbooks (except for the DD textbook) contain more errors. By the same token, when researchers participated in textbook-writing, desirable narratives were more likely to be produced, as shown by the three textbooks that researchers contributed to (Group A). Among

Group B textbooks, the DD textbook is the only textbook with some desirable narratives.

Table 2. Analysis of Nationalist Narratives in Eight Korean History Textbooks

| Item | | Group A | | | Group B | | | | |
|--|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | KS | JH | CJ | KH | DD | LS | MR | VS |
| Overstating the emergence of a single ethnic group | Building the Korean nation | - | 0 | 0 | 2 | - | - | 0 | - |
| | Unification of the Three Kingdoms and nation-building | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Characterization of Balhae history | 0 | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | - |
| | Balhae refugees' defection to Goryeo | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - |
| Overstating the age for historical events | Dating the use of iron agricultural implements | - | - | 0 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | King Goi's promulgation of the Luling | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - |
| | King Goi's initiation of 16 official ranks | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - |
| | King Goi's initiation of 6 <i>hwapyeong</i> | - | - | 0 | - | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Territorial exaggerations | Old Joseon's territory | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | - |
| | King Geunchogo's advancement into Liaoxi | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | King Geunchogo's advancement into Gaya | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Misinformation about neighboring countries | Three Kingdoms' cultural influence over the Wa (Japan) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Crucial diplomacy during the 7th Century | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | End process of Silla-Tang War | - | - | - | 1 | 0 | - | - | - |
| Total | | 4 | 1 | 8 | 15 | 1 | 10 | 7 | 8 |
| Number of items | | 5 | 3 | 11 | 10 | 3 | 10 | 8 | 7 |
| Average | | 0.8 | 0.33 | 0.73 | 1.5 | 0.33 | 1 | 0.88 | 1.14 |

Note: 2 = Extreme nationalist narrative, 1 = Moderate nationalist narrative, 0 = Neutral narrative, - = No relevant contents. The items examined in this article are presented in boldface type. Other items refer to Jeong (2019a).

The same applies even if cases other than those examined in this article are included. According to Table 2, on average, nationalist narrative appeared stronger in Group B than in Group A textbooks. The difference is even more pronounced, especially in KH, LS and VS, if one considers DD in Group B, which has the least nationalist narrative (Table 2), as an exception. Among the textbooks in Group B, LS and VS were written by multiple teachers without the participation of a professional historian (Table 1). In the case of KH, which has the most nationalist narrative, descriptions relating to the time of the nation’s formation followed the narrative of 1960s Korean history textbooks (N. Kim 2014, 154–159).

Table 3. Composition and Frequency of “We” in Eight Korean History Textbooks

| Group | Publisher | Length of ancient history section (in pages) | Composition | | | Congruity with NIKH (2000) | Frequency of “we” | Average from Table 2 |
|------------|-----------|--|-------------|---------|-------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| | | | Para-graph | Section | Sub-section | | | |
| A | JH | 62 | 5 | 16 | 66 | 78.2 | 24.2 | 0.33 |
| | CJ | 52 | 4 | 15 | 54 | 86.3 | 28.8 | 0.73 |
| | KS | 72 | 5 | 16 | 71 | 71.7 | 55.6 | 0.8 |
| B | DD | 46 | 7 | 0 | 32 | 94.9 | 37.0 | 0.33 |
| | MR | 52 | 5 | 16 | 66 | 88.5 | 32.7 | 0.88 |
| | LS | 60 | 6 | 19 | 62 | 87.3 | 78.3 | 1 |
| | VS | 56 | 5 | 13 | 46 | 90.6 | 46.4 | 1.14 |
| | KH | 44 | 5 | 12 | 38 | 94.5 | 72.7 | 1.5 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Comparison | NH | 92 | 6 | 19 | 70 | 100 | 31.5 | – |

Note: Congruity (NIKH) = Number of compositions matching NIKH in content / Total number of compositions. Frequency of “we” = Appearances of “we” to denote Korea (Koreans) / Total pages (Ancient history chapter).

According to Table 3, the extent of congruity with NIKH and the frequency of appearance of the word “we” (*uri*) to denote Korea (Koreans) in the Group A textbooks was generally lower than in Group B. The extent of congruity with the NIKH textbook (2000) is reviewed in order to evaluate

the extent of deviation from the existing table of contents and composition. The results indicated that the more new compositions there were in a textbook, the lower the figure. The frequency of the word “we” (to denote Korea/Korean people) is reviewed in order to evaluate the extent of nationalist narratives, since the word “we” appears when an attempt is made to distinguish Korea from other nations and peoples by exclusion.

To speak more specifically, the extent of a textbook’s congruity with NIKH (2000), from lowest to highest, was, in Group A, KS, JH, CJ, and in Group B, LS, MR, VS, KH, and DD. However, in this case, it is necessary to note that the smaller the number of subsections, the higher the congruity. The frequency of “we” (*uri*) was similar seemed relatively concomitant with the level of congruity with NIKH (2000) within a group, with the exception of KS. Among the B group, DD and MR showed significantly lower figures, and thus were similar to the results in Table 2. This tendency was also found in other research studies of factual errors in political history, which indicated KS, JH, DD had few errors while VS, MR, LS, and KH had many (Nam 2016, 139).

However, as suggested, historical expertise represents only one part of the solution. With their distance from classrooms and schools, it would be hard for historians to adequately address the needs of students. In order to create textbooks that are in line with the academic levels and expectations of students, history teachers must be involved to some degree. The adequate division of responsibilities between historians and history teachers in the composition of textbooks will be key to resolving the issue of inaccuracies and nationalist narratives in textbooks. Without the input of historians, textbooks will be full of anachronous ideas and content. Without history teachers, textbooks risk being overly abstruse and complex for students to properly comprehend. These risks can be effectively addressed by creating an enabling environment for both historians and history teachers to collaborate in the writing of textbooks.

Second, reducing the one-sided narratives that put *our country* first will undoubtedly be a difficult task. In the academic realm of ancient history, even experts have varied levels of understanding of the history of other countries. Despite the more recent trend of post-nationalism influencing

many researchers to acquire knowledge and understanding of the histories of other countries, many senior scholars tend to adhere to their past views. This is why it would be more appropriate to involve mid-level and emerging scholars whose intellectual capabilities have been verified, rather than relying on more experienced and senior-level scholars. More fundamentally, Korean history textbooks need to be written in connection with East Asian History (*Dongasiasa*) textbooks. If writing is already in its final stage, it will be difficult to change textbook content, even if professional historians provide ample feedback. Comparisons with already completed textbooks are also unlikely to yield any meaningful results.

However, the effects of such actions will be limited in addressing the problem as they follow the current government-authorized history textbook publication policy. Although a return to the previous history textbook policy that only allowed for a single national history textbook is unlikely, the stronger the influence of government on the textbook-making process, the greater the possibility that nationalist narratives will be perpetuated within the textbook, as witnessed by the Chinese case. In 2017, the Chinese government revived the previous government-designated textbook system. The only history textbook that was strongly supported by the Chinese government has faithfully reflected the national Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project and the One Belt, One Road project, while the united multi-ethnic nation theory dominated the entire structure and contents of the resulting history textbook (PEC 2016). As a result, the current Chinese history textbook is not only filled with exaggerated claims regarding China's history and intentional misinformation regarding neighboring countries, but is also employed as a tool for emphasizing unification and centralization, while suppressing segregated history and historical periods of decentralized political power (Jeong 2019b). Currently, a single perspective advocated by the government is imposed upon Chinese learners.

This tendency to perpetuate a nationalist narrative is commonly found in government-led history textbook efforts, such as with an official government-designated textbook. History education is essentially a vehicle for developing citizens holding diverse values—what we now call global citizenship—but not a tool for intentionally inculcating learners with a

specific historical viewpoint. Historians and experts in history education, rather than the government, need to take the driver's seat in the history textbook-making process.

In this regard, the government-imposed writing standards for the eight textbooks reviewed in this article severely hampered autonomous composition through excessive management and control of the content and with standards that continued to favor nationalistic narratives. Hence, the reform of textbook writing standards will be pivotal to revising the nationalist narratives of Korean history textbooks.¹

Conclusion

In this study, we analyzed nationalist narratives in the ancient Korean history chapters of eight official Korean history high school textbooks published in 2014 to assess how Korean history textbooks are meeting their stated objective of teaching a Korean history *within and alongside* world history.

The nationalism that helped shape and solidify the notion of national borders appeared in the modern age. In the ancient period, the concept of physical boundaries was not strong, nationality and borders were all abstract ideas, and national unity and a sense of community were still in formative stages. During the ancient period, many groups and individuals moved across and between different countries and an event in one country could easily affect the conditions of its neighbor. Thus, it may be more relevant and

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1. In the current writing standards for the nine Korean history textbooks in high schools (as of the 2015 curriculum, revised in 2018), the contents corresponding to ancient history were simplified to three precautions because the proportion of pre-modern history (to mean from the ancient period to the Joseon dynasty) in the textbook was decreased significantly, from three chapters to one, which made the portion dedicated to ancient history even smaller. By contrast, the middle school history textbook volume 2 (Korean History) has two chapters dedicated to ancient history guided by simpler writing standards, in which nationalistic narratives are hardly found.

appropriate to identify commonalities and draw comparisons between the ancient era and the globalized 21st century, whereas distinct nations and nationalism defined the 19th and 20th centuries.

Prior to the advent of post-nationalism, ancient history scholarship and education were heavily influenced by nationalistic historical perspectives, and the state-issued textbook was therefore distorted and twisted to suit the interests and objectives of the state. Ancient history is not simply dead history far removed from today's realities. There are commonalities that bind different ages together and narratives change concomitant with changes in perspectives. Global citizenship education requires these diverse and open perspectives that can re-interpret a country's history within and alongside world history. History education that focuses narrowly on the history of a particular country does not fit the needs of a globalized world that is becoming increasingly interdependent. Instead, it would be more desirable if education on ancient history provided a broader context of East Asia in which states were more closely interlinked. We hope that history textbooks in the future will pay more attention to the wider world beyond the Korean Peninsula that influenced and shaped the history of Korea.

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