

Perception of August 15 Remembered in and Forgotten from Korean Textbooks

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There seems to be a significant variation in the memory of August 15, 1945, between the nation and individuals despite the fact that this memory is histori-cization of shared experiences, i.e., collective memory. This can be seen by examining the memories at the national level. South Korea remembers August 15 in terms of defeat, liberation, and restoration, whereas North Korea remembers this event in connection with victory and liberation, Japan with end of war or defeat, China with victory and liberation, and Taiwan with end of war and restoration.

South Korea and North Korea at first remembered this day as “Liberation Day,” but the name of this day changed after independent governments were established in each nation. South Korea changed the name of this day to “Independence Day,” whereas North Korea called it “Memorial Day for National Liberation.” This division in names represents a giant barrier as great as the division of the system, and the rift in the two different celebrations of the same memory became wider, aggravated by the asymmetric development of economics and exclusiveness between the two nations. Especially in the case of South Korea, August 15 has been remembered as a mixture of the day of liberation and restoration, but it became firmly established as Independence Day in the 1970s, which continued to the present. On the other hand, the term liberation has been strictly excluded as being a derogatory leftist word.

Transformation in the memory of the process of liberation or restoration is apparent now that socialism has fallen, the Cold War system has been dismantled in recent years, and confrontation between the North and South Korea have been mitigated. This will soon lead to a transformation in the memory of August 15.

Keywords: Memory, liberation, restoration, theory on the legitimacy of Korean provisional government, textbook.

Introduction

Everyone remembers certain historical moments in their own different ways. The circumstances surrounding that person and the interest the person takes in the issue generally make the difference. The human memory is not an accumulated, over-layered end result, but is a rather constantly shifting presence based upon its own interactions with the present. When written letters were invented and typography was introduced to the public, the memories of the individuals started to be managed and controlled by the government. The concept of a “People’s nation” became popular after the French Revolution in the 18th century, and ever since, collective memories, in the name of commemoration began to be controlled through symbolization by devices such as encyclopedias, policies regarding age-old documents, anniversaries and souvenirs, devices which are all part of a huge image system.

Today, education has become an obligatory and essential course for the public, and schools play instrumental roles in establishing a collective image system controlled by the government. In school education, the textbooks serve as basic tools in shaping the group’s memories in a collective fashion. In other words, in the process of educating individual students with textbooks that would help them become matured members of the society, their individual memories regarding specific objects or facts become a collectively shared one. In fact, education is the process of creating a collective consent regarding specific memories.

The public’s memories of August 15 represents the same case. Most Koreans were informed of Japan’s defeat by the broadcast made by the Japanese Emperor declaring surrender to the Allied Forces on August 15, 1945. And most of them, with the exception of the pro-Japanese collaborators who allied themselves with the Japanese, cheered at the news. But each person had different memories of the day itself (“the Restoration Day”) and of themselves, due to certain specific positions the persons were in, or specific regions he or she was in, or even specific time points of his or her actually hearing the news.

Until now, the matter of how Koreans remember August 15, and the question of whether there is any kind or way of recollection which could be considered as one outside the generally accepted norm have not been issues of academic studies. In this article, how the day has been symbolized or remembered in Korean textbooks published since the year 1945 will be examined.

And also, how the roles that were played by Americans and Russians, or the relationship between those two powers, and the role that was played by Koreans

until they achieved liberation will be examined as well. The Korean role in that time was directly related to their anti-Japanese struggles that continued during the Japanese Occupation period, so the political meaning of the sentiment arguing the legitimacy of the Korean provisional government will also be examined.¹ This will help us see how the Korean perspective in viewing such historical matters has changed over the years.

In chapter 2, the various reactions demonstrated by those Koreans who had just heard the news of liberation after the noon of August 15 will be examined, with numerous cases that occurred in different regions and different situations reviewed as well. And then in chapters 3, 4 and 5, we will see how all those various and different memories of August 15 were molded into a collective, unitized form of memory by the intent of the ones in power during the establishment of the administrative aspects of the government.

Chapter 3, 4 and 5 respectively deal with 3 periods, of which the perimeters among them are determined by the changes made in governmental policies regarding publishing official textbooks: Chapter 3 deals with the time period 1948-1973 in which textbooks had to be “approved” and “sanctioned” by the Ministry of Education. Chapter 4 deals with the time period 1974-2001 in which the textbooks had to be “authorized” by the government. And finally, Chapter 5 deals with the time period of 2002-present in which the textbooks again have to be “approved.” In the meantime, changes that occurred in education policies should also be taken into consideration, so the period of the U.S. military government’s control, the period of the so-called “New Teaching Requirements” that existed after the foundation of the South Korean government, and Phases 1 and 2 of the Education Curriculum are examined in Chapter 3, while Phases 3, 4, 5 and 6 are in Chapter 4, and the current Education Curriculum Phase 7 is in Chapter 5.²

1. One of the first studies in this field can be consulted from the work of Kim Jeong In (2003). Yet this research did not address the six types of “Korean Modern and Contemporary history” textbooks which have been used in high schools since 2003.

2. For the Education Curriculum, the direction of history education, and governmental policies regarding the publication of national school textbooks can be consulted in the work of Kim Han Jong (1991, Winter). Regarding the Education Curriculum Phase 7, there will be more discussion by the author, later.

The 15th Day of August—From Private Memories to an Official Collective Recollection

What would have been the exact reaction from Koreans after they heard the news on August 15, 1945 from the broadcast made by the Emperor Hirohito? Generally, the Korean reaction to the news of the end of occupation and the advent of liberation at last are epitomized in the two photographs featured below.



Picture 1.



Picture 2.

Picture 1 is a photograph taken of the cheering public and also the chairman of the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence Yeo Un Hyeong during a mass in session, and Picture 2 was taken of the freedom fighters cheering with the public who had just been released from Seodae-mun penitentiary. But both of these pictures depict situations that happened on August 16, and not the 15. The pictures are not showing us what happened on August 15.

As we all know, Yeo Un Hyeong was already preparing to deal with issues such as social order, at the request of the office of Governor-general in Joseon, before even the Emperor declared surrender. The O.S.S. operatives stationed in Sector 2 of the Korean Restoration Army inside the Seo-an region in China were

3. Kim yugil jeung-eon jaryo” (Testimonials of Kim Yu Gil, November 19 and 23, 2003). Conducted in the office of the Gwangbok-hoe organization. Receiver of the testimony is Shin Ju Baek. Kim Yu Gil had been recruited as a student soldier, and later escaped from his Japanese unit which was located in China, went to the Korean provisional government in Junggyeong, and finally moved to the Seo-an area. He said that he still vividly remembered hearing the U.S. army training officer saying that “Japan surrendered unconditionally.”

also informed of the news in advance around August 10 by a U.S. military instructor who was bringing out champagne to celebrate the news.³ The personnel involved in these two cases would not have known that the Japanese Emperor would declare surrender on August 15, but surely they would have been aware of the fact that such an event would occur in a matter of days.

Then, what would have happened with the people who were not aware of the upcoming news in advance? In different regions, there were different situations. A man named Yi Yeong Hi, a senior (4th grader) in Gyeongseong Public Industry School who was staying in his hometown on August 15, the Changseong-gun, Cheongsan-myeon area in North Pyeongan Province was not aware of the Japanese defeat and the liberation of Korea on that day, and was later almost perplexed by the news (Yi Yeong Hi 1988: 90-91). This was the same case with other people who heard the news on August 15 as well.

Seo Tae Weon, who was recruited as a student-soldier by the Japanese army and stationed at the Mapo base in the Gyeongseong area was aware of the rumor that the Japanese were going to surrender before long, and later recollected his experiences he had with his unit and on Jongno (a central street in Seoul).

On that day, there were no drills or training, and the Japanese soldiers were whispering with each other, saying something about an impending “Major Announcement” which would be made by the Emperor himself. They were staring at me, and were certainly very hostile. I could sense that from their eyes. And at noon, they listened to the news of the “Unconditional Surrender” broadcast, and then the unit leader gathered us and announced that “the Japanese Emperor declared that the Japanese troops would be temporarily suspending battle.” Weeping, he also ordered us “to maintain discipline, until further notice.”

On that night, although it seemed dangerous, I seceded from the base and went out to the street..... I walked that night, straight along the electric railway from Mapo to Seodae-mun. Curious of the sudden change of events, people were talking with each other everywhere..... the street was dark, and only faint lights were coming out of a few open stores, and I almost ran in the dark, where I could not even see the faces of people right in front of me, across the Gwanghwa-mun crossroads and to Jongro. I also passed the Hwashin store. At that moment, there was a strong light coming out of the main gate of the YMCA..... I passed through people talking on the first floor of the YMCA building, and went up to the sec-

ond floor, to meet..... Mr. Yu Jin Oh. Without hesitation, I hugged him and cried. (Seo Tae Weon 1984: 44-46)

Most of the Korean population was in no condition to immediately express joy or cheer at the sudden news of the Japanese surrender of August 15. They, at that moment, remained restrained and continued to listen to incoming news. In fact, the news was not only sudden to the public, but also incomplete, so some of the population considered the news to be announcing a “temporary halt” in the war, and like Yi Yeong Hi, some of them were not even aware what was going on. Added to that, the office of Governor-General in Joseon was maintaining order and security with 4,000 Japanese policemen and over 10 thousand Korean policemen on the street up until August 15. So, the Korean population was not able to freely express their feelings of alleged liberation and restoration. Such a condition could be confirmed from the recollection of Seo Tae Weon. People were only quietly expressing their feelings. According to security reports filed by the Japanese military regarding the situation between August 15 and 18 in the area below the 38th Parallel, on August 15 only in the Haeju-bu area were there thousands of people engaged in demonstrations. And, as seen from Picture 1, it was only later that a public demonstration was arranged in the Gyeongseong capital area when the repressed collective feelings of the entire population burst out into flames and into open areas. There were also demonstrations cheering the liberation on August 16 in the Pyeongyang, Daejeon, Chuncheon, Hongseong, Jinnampo, and Weonsan regions as well.⁴

In the meantime, a somewhat different situation was noticed in both the Hamgyeong South and North Provinces. On August 9th 1945, Soviet troops entered the Manchu region and the Korean peninsula after declaring war upon the Japanese. After Soviet bombers bombarded the Najin area, the Japanese started to evacuate Najin on August 10 and Cheongjin on August 12. As a result, Koreans residing in those regions were able to experience liberation before August 15 (Takasima Souzi 2002: 188-189). To them, the army that liberated the Korean people was the Soviet one. By August 28, they advanced to the Haeju

4. Gyeongseong Ilbon-gun Yeonlak Bujang (Head Communications Officer of the Japanese Army at the Gyeongseong capital area), 『Jae—Namseon Ilbon—gun Budae Gaehwang Bogo (Brief reports of the Japanese troops located in the Southern part of Joseon)』, Ilbon Bangwi-cheong (Japanese Ministry of Defense) Bangwi Yeonsu—so Doseo—gwan (Library of Defense Studies) Manju Joseon Vol. 44.

area of Hwanghae Province and secured the entire region above the 38th Parallel. Compared to that, U.S. troops of the 24th Corps arrived at the Seoul area on September 9th and begun their advance inside the Korean peninsula. The foundation of the U.S. military government in Korea was announced on that day.

As we can see, Koreans were experiencing liberation in different forms and different fashions. The diversity of those situations should have been beyond our current presumptions. But today, we are all remembering and commemorating that day basically in the same way, and think that the day must have been like what was described in the pictures mentioned above. The atmosphere depicted inside the pictures symbolizes the joy itself of being liberated from Japanese occupation rather than the actual day of August 15.

It was when law No. 53 regarding national holidays were enacted in October 1949 when the commemoration of August 15 began to be managed by the administration in South Korea (*Chosun Ilbo*, September 21, 1949; September 22, 1949; and October 6, 1949). Since 1946 up until 1948 when the South Korean government was founded, on August 15 there were Commemoration anniversaries for the Liberation, and the day was referred to as “Liberation Day.”⁵ Then after that, August 15 started to be called “Restoration Day,” and the commemorations for the day arranged by the government resulted in the creation of a collective memory, a collective fashion of recollection of the day August 15 and a grand image which belonged to the South Korean region alone. On the other hand, although it held its “First Anniversary of Liberation Day” itself, the government of the Joseon Democratic People’s Republic (North Korea) also started to form its own image of the day, calling it the “Memorial Day for National Liberation.”⁶ As the Korean peninsula witnessed separate governments being established in both its southern and northern regions, the Korean people in the south and north also witnessed the official images and ways of commemoration being severely divided and also differentiated between them as well. Inside South Korean society, “rebel history,” or “private memories” started to be excluded from the “Official memory,” and were creatively removed from the public minds.

5. *Seoul Newspaper*, August 16, 1946; *Chosun Ilbo*, August 16, 1948. At this time, March 1st, Constitution Day and Korea Foundation Day also became national holidays.

6. The author could not confirm when this change occurred. Further research is required.

15th of August Depicted in the Textbooks in the Era of Approval and Sanctioning for Textbooks from 1945-1973/1974: Recollection Fashioned to Remember National Liberation⁷

The time period that will be examined here in Chapter 3 includes the era of “Emergency Management Regarding Education” which lasted from 1945 till 1946, the era of “Professor Requirements” which lasted from 1946 till 1954, and both Phases 1 and 2 of the Official Educational Curriculum, which respectively lasted from 1954 till 1963, and from 1963 till 1973(for Middle schools) and 1974 (for High schools). During this period, the area of Korean history was included in the subject of society and social lives, or in Society 2 (during the Curriculum Phase 2) along with the subject of World History. In political terms, important periods or events, such as the era of the U.S. military government rule, the foundation of the government of the Republic of Korea (South Korea) in 1948, the Korean War that broke out in 1950, and the May 16 Government takeover in 1961 occurred during this time period.

Naturally, the contents of textbooks published in this time period mirrored and reflected the changes that occurred in education curriculums and programs as well, along with the political incidents and phenomena of that period. We shall see how the memories of August 15 were changed and modified into a collective recollection in a chronological order. The first official textbook for Middle and High schools published by the U.S. military government was the *Guksa gyobon* (National History Manual, released in 1946). In chapter 2 of this book entitled *The National Liberation*, and the chapter of “Remaining Thoughts” the 15th of August was referred to as below..

..... But the evil ones always pay the price by the will of God, so those who oppressed humanity and abandoned justice had no other choice but to unconditionally surrender to the Allied Forces of the U.S., Great Britain, China and the U.S.S.R on August 9th, 1945. Japan lost all its territories which they had previously occupied, and was placed under control of the Allied Forces, leaving us, the Joseon people, to embrace liberation from their rule which lasted for 35 years. How refreshing. We suf-

7. Years 1973 and 1974 respectively marked the Education Curriculum Phase 3 for the middle schools and high schools.

ferred long enough. We should put those times of testing behind us, and found a new country based upon true democracy and our proud culture, and eventually become a contributive member of world society, playing our part for world peace and freedom.⁸

The examples of anti-Japanese struggles cited inside the National History Manual included the March 1st Movement in 1919, the establishment and activities of the Korean provisional government, the anti-Japanese student movement that occurred in the Gwangju area in 1929, and other militia struggles led by numerous patriots. This kind of attitude and perspective is still being maintained even inside the textbooks designed and distributed for the implementation of the Phase 7 Educational Curriculum. And as we will see in chapters 4 and 5 of this article, the logical structure of the textbooks continued to be refined and, between the victories of the Allied forces and the Koreans' own Anti-Japanese struggles, the latter came to be more emphasized than the former, in actual writing.⁹

Up until June 1948, a total of 40,600 issues of the national history manual were distributed, but considering the fact that the total number of middle school students back then was 124,468, we can see that two thirds of them would not have been able to receive textbooks at all (Kim Han Jong 1991: 92). So there were many students who learned things about Korean history through a certain book entitled Joseon History authored by Kim Seong Chil, or quenched their thirst for learning their own history.¹⁰ In Kim Seong Chil's book, there were portions saying that the U.S. and U.S.S.R. promised Koreans liberation and independence in an international conference, but retreated from that initial promise and instead separately occupied parts of the Korean peninsula after the end of

8. The Jindan Society ed. (1946: 175, 177) was authored by Lee Byeong Do, and the same section was later published as an independent book authored by Lee Byeong Do as well, in 1950.

9. "Ministry of Education Instruction" Issue No. 1997-15 (revised and reprinted on December 30, 1997). Standards for Education Curriculum for the Society and National History Subjects in the Elementary, Middle, and High Schools (1946-1997), p. 610 and p. 697. These are related to the "national history" textbook for middle schools, and "korean Modern and Contemporary History" for high schools.

10. Shin Gyeong Rim recalls that around 1946, Joseon yeoksa (History of Joseon), authored by Kim Seong Chil, was published by the Financial Association (the current Agricultural Cooperative Association). Books were a rare commodity at the time, so more than one hundred copies allotted to the financial association in our area immediately sold out (Shin Gyeong Rim 1991, Winter: 92).

World War II. He also wrote that, although the Korean people were deeply grateful to the Allied forces for bringing them their long awaited liberation, they were also significantly perplexed and reasonably shocked by the unexpected price they were forced to pay. Initially, Kim Seong Chil did not mention the Korean struggles and efforts to repel the Japanese in his first edition of the book (Kim Seong Chil 1946: 284-285), but later in the revised edition he added a chapter entitled “National Liberation Movement” and inserted parts similar to those inside the National History Manual (Kim Seong Chil 1947: 106-107).¹¹

Yet, regarding the process leading to August 15, 1945, there were some notable nuances coming from the references’ interpretation of the situation. Both texts acknowledged that the victory of the Allied Forces and the “agreement” established between all four major powers, the U.S., Great Britain, China, and the U.S.S.R. were indeed the major factors that enabled the liberation of Korea. But while they were mentioning both the U.S. nuclear bombing of Japan and the U.S.S.R. troops’ entrance to the Korean peninsula in 1945, the latter was being slightly criticized, and was being described in a certainly negative tone. Then the other issue was how anti-Japanese struggles outside the Korean peninsula, except the activities of the Korean provisional government, and actions of the Korean Restoration Army (organized in September 1940) guided by the Korean provisional government at Junggyeong, should be tied into the advent of August 15. The Korean History Manual and the Joseon History both ignored these aspects.

In order to compare them, we should take a look at middle school national history textbook authored by Shin Seok Ho, which was published according to the guidelines laid out by the “New Teaching Requirements” instructed by the Ministry of Culture and Education around August 1948 when the South Korean government was founded.¹² The book consists of a total of nine chapters, and mentioned in the last chapter, entitled “The Ninth Chapter,” is the Junggyeong Korean provisional government declaring war against the Japanese in 1940 and

11. His perspective is very much evident also in the “The History of Our Country” published as a history textbook meant for middle schools (Jeong’eumsa, approved in 1950 and published in 1955).

12. The reason for quoting his remarks and proceeding with discussions based upon them is because: 1) the book was published on August 31, 1948 on the eve of the foundation of the Republic of Korea, 2) the book was a definite yet rare example among other textbooks by explicitly demonstrating a negative and critical position against U.S.S.R. troops entering the war, and 3) as it will become clear after examining the quotes that the book described the process of Korea being liberated in considerable detail.

the war efforts of the Restoration Army, described as part of the process leading up to the ultimate liberation (Shin Seok Ho 1948: 218-220).¹³ Although the activities of the Restoration Army were not described in enough detail, it is worth noting that the author indeed mentioned the official name of the organization and, furthermore, acknowledged their efforts as part of the ongoing Korean national liberation movement at the time. His active recognition of the subject was unique in that it was very different from those of Lee Byeong Do or Kim Seong Chil. He also mentioned not only the March 1st Movement, the Gwangju Student Movement, other militia struggles, but also other notable organizations like the Society for the Fostering of Activists, the New Trunk Society, the Gando Communist Party, and the June 10th Movement in the first chapter of his book. As a result, he expanded the outer boundary of the existing studies and research dealing with the history of the national liberation movement (Shin Seok Ho 1948: 215). In the meantime, another aspect that should be noted is that the author described the U.S.S.R. troops coming into the Manchu area and the northern part of the Korean peninsula chasing the Japanese army as an act of invasion. There is no mention of the fact that the incoming U.S.S.R. troops were only acting as agreed at the Yalta conference arranged in February 1945, rather the event itself was described in a very negative tone. This kind of reference inside the textbooks would have forced the students to perceive the U.S. troops as liberating forces, and the U.S.S.R. troops as invasion forces. Such an attitude marked the beginning of a historical perspective which typically belonged to the era of separation, and it must have been encouraged by the political status of the peninsula with the separate foundation of governments in both parts of the Korean peninsula.

Then, how was the role of the U.S.S.R. troops described in other textbooks? These Korean History textbooks, while referring to the history leading up to August 15, 1945, usually only mentioned the Cairo declaration made in December 1943 and the Potsdam declaration made in July 1945 but did not have any comments regarding the Yalta Conference arranged in February 1945. This kind of attitude in references was essentially neglecting the historical fact that Soviet troops entering the North Korean region was indeed sanctioned by international consent, and often led to portraying that the U.S.S.R. was acting

13. This can also be found in the *Junghak-gyo sahoe saenghwal-gwa guksa* by Dongguk Munhwasa (1957: 175).

upon private interests and ulterior motives (Yeoksa Gyoyuk Yeongu-hoe 1956: 159; Kim Sang Gi [1960] 1965: 247). Moreover, the U.S.S.R.'s role was completely ignored in historical studies (Choi Nam Seon 1962: 164 and 1964: 207).

Also, some authors mentioned that because the Soviet troops refused the proposals of the Japanese and entered Manchuria and the Korean peninsula, Japan had no other choice but to surrender (Jo Jwa Ho [1962] 1964; Han Wu Geun 1968). In the end, the concept of "separate occupation" was first mentioned by Kim Seong Chil, but was never mentioned again until the concept resurfaced in the high school history textbook (*History of Modern and Contemporary History*) designed for the Education Curriculum Phase 7, which will be examined in chapter 5 of this article.

Many textbooks did not convey properly the situation which led to August 15, 1945, especially in terms of certain external factors that should have been taken into consideration, so students could not have been informed of certain crucial facts including issues such as "which party was responsible for what." It eventually prevented the students from obtaining a balanced and reasonable, unbiased knowledge regarding the historical facts, including the roles played by the U.S. and U.S.S.R. Furthermore, only the U.S.S.R. was rendered the one to be blamed for all the events.¹⁴ As the division of the Korean peninsula became more and more permanent, not only new fashions of collective recollection were created, but also new forms of ignorance, or new kinds of forgetfulness, were being created. Such ignorance could prove lethal to us as we should be particularly well informed of historical facts in our efforts to overcome the present division and to establish our own concrete and reasonable perception of world events. Yet, very unfortunately, the education at the time served the very role of preventing students from achieving such a level of understanding.

Now we should examine how the anti-Japanese struggles which continued up until the liberation on August 15 were documented and evaluated in historical writings. As we have seen earlier, the main direction for historical mentioning was basically established in the *National History Manual* authored by Lee Byeong Do. He first mentioned the March 1st Movement of 1919, then the activities of the Korean provisional government, then the anti-Japanese struggles

14. There are also examples mentioning both the U.S. and Soviet troops agreeing to enter the Korean peninsula and stay, but they then blame only the U.S.S.R. for the establishment of the 38th Parallel that followed (Shin Seok Ho [1968] 1973a: 241).

which continued inside the Korean peninsula, and then finally the patriotic figures' righteous resistance against the Japanese invaders. Added to this were the June 10th movement and the activities of the Restoration Army mentioned by Shin Seok Ho.¹⁵

The biggest characteristic of the Korean history textbooks up until the mid-1960s was the fact that no one really paid any kind of attention to the liberation movements that continued in the Manchu area. Only Choi Nam Seon was a notable, albeit slight, exception from that trend. In his studies he not only mentioned the activities of the Korean provisional government located in the Junggyeong area, but also the Joseon Euiyong-gun Army which was under the guidance of the Chinese Communist party, and the anti-Manchu resistance against the Japanese that continued inside the Manchu area (Choi Nam Seon 1947: 229). He also took a very unique position compared to other authors of Korean history textbooks published up until around 1967, as he also referred to the anti-Japanese efforts that were continuing in the Yeonan and Manchu areas as efforts of the "partisans," a detached force. This quote was mentioned in the "National History for the People," which was republished as a history textbook for middle school students after it was approved by the government in 1952 under the guidelines of the New Teaching Requirements issued by the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Culture). In 1955, the 12th edition of the original version was issued, but in that edition the quote or any other mention containing similar references were completely gone. As the personnel in charge were intent upon establishing a historical reference exclusively concentrating upon and emphasizing the activities of the Korean provisional government, it is obvious that they deliberately excluded any mention or notion regarding the nationalists' or socialists' activities that happened in the Manchu area, or the socialists' activities in the Yeonan area.

Changes that occurred in Choi Nam Seon's writing could have been caused by the changes that occurred in his personal position. But considering other textbooks that were published up until around 1967 were sharing a similar color in references, the possibility of a bigger cause should be acknowledged. The policy of the Ministry of Education regarding school textbooks which was reflecting the Korean experience of civil war, clashes between the Left and Right, and the

15. For details, consult Kim Jeong In's dissertation above (2003: 75). Shin Seok Ho's perspective was adopted by Lee Byeong Do as well (1949: 204 and 1956: 184).

divided status of the Korean peninsula should have played a certain role in these changes that were becoming apparent. The Education Curriculum Phase 1 for middle school students indicated that the liberation on August 15 and the foundation of the (South) Korean government should be explained to the students through Chapter 7, the last chapter entitled “Democratic Korea.” Then the Education ministry was also dictating that in Korean history classes “the ultimate task for the Korean people, which is the unification of Korea, and the issue of overcoming Communism, should be linked with the overall flow of the class in order to help the students understand the importance of the subject” (Ministry of Education 1955: 246, 249). From their position, the Anti-Japanese struggles that continued in the Yeonan and Manchu areas had nothing to do with the foundation of the Korean government, and such struggles certainly did not match the government’s anti-communist policy for unification, so they were dropped altogether from being part of official Korean history. On the other hand, the legitimacy of the Korean provisional government continued to be emphasized. From all this, we can understand that people in power usually tried to exclude certain memories that happened to be in a competitive position with other favorable memories, so they deliberately attempted to prevent those memories from being remembered and recollected by the public and eventually prevented them from being official knowledge or even an acknowledgement of historical facts. Active recollection and active ignorance in fact goes together.

But then, in other history textbooks published respectively by the Education Ministry and other researchers published in 1968, the activities of the liberation army in the Manchu area were referred to in great detail. For example, Shin Seok Ho, who had earlier mentioned the activities of the Restoration Army, did not mention for a single line the armed resistance of the Manchu area in the History textbook he authored for middle school students published in 1957. Then, in the history textbooks published in 1968 and 1973, he devoted an entire paragraph to documenting the activities of the armed resistance groups that surfaced after March 1, 1919, and also the great Battle of Cheongsan-li that happened in October 1920 (Shin Seok Ho 신석호 [1968] 1973b: 236). Other textbooks also mentioned the Battle of Cheongsan-li in detail, and some of them even mentioned the anti-Manchu resistance against the Japanese which was led by the nationalist front in the 1930s (Lee Weon Sun 1973: 233-234).¹⁶

16. A notable exception is Lee Hong Jik’s *High School National History for General High School* (Donga Chulpansa, 1968).

This new trend included several references to the term “Restoration Army” and also the scope of their activities (Yun Sae Cheol and Shin Hyeong Shik 1968: 227-228; Byeon Tae Seob 1973: 229). The embodiment of this new trend in historical writing was a history textbook designed for industrial high school students and published by the Education Ministry. Chapter 2 of that book, entitled “The Korean People’s Struggle for Independence” included several sub-sections that were respectively entitled “The Liberation Movements inside and outside of the Peninsula,” “March 1st Movement and Its Meaning,” “The Patriots’ Continuing Struggle for Independence,” “The Activities of the Armed Independence Movement,” “Reinforced Anti-Japanese Movement inside and outside the Peninsula,” and “The Provisional Government and the Restoration Army” across six whole pages. What should be noted is that the provisional government and the Restoration Army were enlisted at the end of these sub-sections. It seems like a result of an obvious attempt to tie everything up, that is, all the anti-Japanese activities and efforts of the provisional government and the Restoration Army. In the textbooks, it was written that the Independence Army, which was allied with the Chinese Army and fighting the Japanese Army in the Manchu area, was overwhelmed by the increasing number of Japanese troops, and later, moved to Chinese territory, and some of them entered the Jangbaek mountain range area to commence partisan activities (Ministry of Education 1968: 176). This kind of theory was not even included in high school history textbooks for general high schools, and marked the beginning of linking even the independence movements to the alleged legitimacy of the Korean provisional government and the ever-increasing refinement of studies regarding the subject.

In other words, roughly since 1968, the efforts to bring complete legitimacy to the historical meaning of the Korean provisional government became even more concentrated within the writings of history textbooks and history education. And efforts to bring a certain structure, based upon the supposed legitimacy of that organization, were also well under way. But what was the reason?

The relationship between South and North Korea, and the advent of the

Park Chung Hee regime should be examined in that regard. Park Chung Hee was reelected to the presidency in 1968 and his party, the Republican Party, secured enough seats in congress to ensure the amendment of law and enable the president to be legally reelected for a third time, which would lay out the basis for a long term maintaining his stay inside the government. But then, as North Korea began to show rapid change, the relationship between the South and North started to become unstable. North Korea was witnessing a shift in its own

set of guiding principles, from the Marx-Leninism to the so-called Subjectivity Doctrine, around 1967 and 1968. Advertisements regarding the House of Kim Il Sung were reinforced, and people against the shift in guiding principles or even being hesitant of them were swiftly purged from government and society. It was not only a process of creating a version of Korean history based upon materialism, but also an attempt to reinterpret historical events based upon new ideologies. Furthermore, North Korea dispatched several armed spies on a regular basis to South Korea in an attempt to support the so-called South Korean Revolutionaries, and in January 1968 even captured a U.S. surveillance vessel, resulting in a significant increase of tension throughout the peninsula. In response to this provocation, the Park Chung Hee regime organized the Local Reserves Infantry in April 1968, declared a National Education Charter in December of the same year, and initiated military drills in school classes for male high school and college students in 1969. President Park Chung Hee had the bill to amend the Constitution, which eliminated the prevention of the president being reelected for a third time, pass Congress through a national vote in October 1969, and established a basis for a lengthened period of rule.

History education based upon accepting the legitimacy of the Korean provisional government was also reinforced. In fact, in 1969 which was in the middle of the Education Curriculum phase 2 that lasted from 1963 and till 1973, the Education Ministry declared the primary objective of middle school education to be encouraging the people to have a more heightened sense of nationality, affection for the country, and conviction to the anti-Communist cause and the ultimate unification of the Korean peninsula (Ministry of Education 1969: 281). There was a new regulation regarding Korean History education issued, a new agenda regarding anti-communism and unification added, and strong words like “strong” or “determined” were added to reflect the newly invested seriousness regarding the matter. Nonetheless, the historical perspective based upon the alleged legitimacy of the Korean provisional government was so complete, considering the references made to the process leading up to the August 15. Of course, in a subsection entitled “The Liberation of the Country” it mentioned that “the liberation of this country was not simply a result of the allied forces’ victory, but a result of nameless, hundreds and thousands of people sacrificing themselves” (Ministry of Culture 1968: 184). And that was what was being mentioned in the National History Manual. Yet the theories regarding the legitimacy of the Korean provisional government in Manchuria were not refined to the level of determining exactly what role it played in the entire history of anti-

Japanese movements, or to what its relationship with the armed independence struggles in the Manchu area was, or even to what other activities in the area there were. Also, no one was really sure how the activities of the socialists should be addressed in a history structure mainly based upon the activities of the Nationalists. Only selectively ignoring or evading were being accepted as solutions. These problems were remedied in Phases 3 and 4 of the education curriculum, as we will examine in chapter 4.

The Era of Approving Textbooks (1973 · 1974 - 2002) and the 15th of August during That Period—“Liberation of the Country” and Forced Ignorance

In order to understand the changes that occurred in the historical writing inside the textbooks for the Governmental authorization period, several aspects should be accounted for. First of all, there was the advent of a totalitarian regime in October 1972 based upon the newly revised constitution, which ensured the prolonged rule of president Park Chung Hee. The regime came with the tagline of “Korean Democracy.” Secondly, one of the general objectives laid out for students’ education was to let them understand the country’s process of development in an independent way, let them have deeper understanding of the legitimacy of Korean history, and let them feel proud of being the descendants of a historically spectacular people (Ministry of Education 1973: 287).¹⁷ Thirdly, the Education Curriculum Phase 3 for middle schools was initiated in 1973, and Phase 3 for high schools was initiated in 1974. The so-called Yushin regime emphasized the importance of “nationality” in education and separated the subject of Korean history from social studies, and made it an independent curriculum. Fourthly, a total of six hour units of Korean history education were allotted to high school students’ education, and two hours per grade were allotted to the 2nd and 3rd grade middle school students’ in order to let them realize the legitimacy of Korean national history as an integral part of junior education (Ministry of Culture 1973). And finally, the publication policy of national history textbooks was changed from approval and sanctioning to governmental authorization.

The national history textbooks authorized by the government, which meant

17. There are five items overall.

they were under the direct control of the government, devoted a substantial part of the contents to emphasizing the legitimacy of the national history of Korea. During the Education Curriculum Phase 3 for high school students, which lasted from 1974 till 1981, the chapter called “contemporary society” mentioned the objectives of education being “letting the students understand the nature of the Republic of Korea which inherited the legitimacy of national history, and also its obligations, and encouraged them to actively join the collective efforts of the Korean people to rebuild and enhance our own country” (Ministry of Education 1974: 440). As a result, the contemporary history part was composed of sub-sections respectively entitled “Legitimacy of the Republic of Korea” and “New Tasks for the National Culture.” In the meantime, during the Education Curriculum Phase 2, the contemporary history part was composed of sub-sections entitled “Development of the Democratic Korea,” “Liberation and Independence of the Country,” and “Development of the Republic of Korea.” Yet, regarding August 15, the tone of writing inside textbooks designed for high school history education remained relatively unchanged after around 1968. The most definite and visible change regarding August 15 in the Korean national history textbooks occurred during the authorization period can be spotted from the national history textbooks designed for middle school students published in 1975. Chapter 14(XIV) of that book was entitled “The Liberation of the Korean people and the Foundation of the Republic of Korea” and the first part of that chapter was entitled “The Liberation of the Korean People and the Division of the Country.” Quoted below is a line from that part, again entitled “The Liberation of the Korean People.”

“This glory of the Korean people was a result of the Korean people’s unwavering and unending struggles against the Japanese oppressors. The Korean people willfully devoted themselves to the efforts aimed at the freedom of the Korean people and the restoration of the country for over 36 years and finally obtained glory and joy. Yet, the liberation of our people was made possible not only because of our own efforts, but was also due to the Japanese surrender forced by the victory of the Allied forces.” (Ministry of Education 1975: 245-246)

Just like the other preceding textbooks, the two major reasons cited for enabling the advent of August 15 were the victory of the Allied forces and the Korean anti-Japanese struggles. But the emphasis was shifted from the former to the lat-

ter, and such shifting was the result of the Yushin government's policy, which heavily iterated the importance of legitimacy being acknowledged in terms of national history and the imperativeness of establishing an independent perspective toward national history, being reflected in the tone of the history textbooks.

This trend of emphasizing the issue of legitimacy in terms of national history can be confirmed from other sources as well, such as the contents of Chapter 5 entitled "The March 1st Movement and the Foundation of the Korean provisional government," Chapter 6 entitled "Struggles for Independence: Inside and outside the Peninsula," and Chapter 7 entitled "Cultural Struggles of the Korean People," which in total occupied 16 and a half pages in order to cover the history of anti-Japanese movements during the Occupation. Also, regarding the anti-Japanese struggles, not only the righteous militia efforts of patriots but also the various activities of the Korean provisional government were mentioned. In the meantime, the Bongo-dong and Battle of Cheongsan-lis fought by the Independence Army, the actions of the Korean Independence Army (Daehan Dongnip Gundan) which participated in these battles, and the activities of the Chamui-bu, Jeongui-bu, and Sinmin-bu organizations were all mentioned to supplement the existing comments referring to the anti-Japanese movements continued in the Manchu region.

Moreover, what should be particularly noted in historical research mentioning the anti-Japanese movements of the Korean provisional government and the overall nationalists is the fact that factual details were not only listed but logically connected in actual references. In authorized textbooks for middle school students, it was clearly said that the Korean provisional government directly led the anti-Japanese movements during the Occupation (Ministry of Education 1975: 230). And the history of this era started to be featured systematically as the anti-Japanese factions of the Manchu era were said to have inherited the proud tradition of the righteous militia groups which resisted the Japanese troops relentlessly before 1910, inside the country, and later continued its armed resistance and finally became integrated into the Restoration Army in 1931 (Ministry of Education 1975: 235). This kind of approach led to the establishment of the role played by the armed resistance factions inside and outside the country during the occupation, and as its tradition was defined to have been succeeded by the Restoration Army, the alleged legitimacy of the Korean provisional government was also secured again. This was the second step taken in theoretically securing the legitimacy of the Korean provisional government.

The original version of the history of anti-Japanese struggles which was

based upon mainly the domestic activities such as the righteous militia struggles and the March 1st Movement, was finally supplemented with references to the activities occurred and continued outside the peninsula, and as a result the theory alleging the legitimacy of the Korean provisional government was also enriched in the process. This was the ultimate culmination of the legitimacy matter maintained by the Yushin government which stated clear that the Korean provisional government was the backbone of the anti-Japanese activities at that time. And on the other side of the line was North Korea, which had been restructuring the history of anti-Japanese movements during the Occupation based upon the actions taken by Kim Il Sung, and had been theorizing such approaches under the title of “The Legitimacy of the Anti-Japanese Armed Resistance” for a very long time.

Then the Yushin government changed its policy to issue history textbooks under authorization of the government and ordered them to be released as type 1 textbooks and transferred all responsibility regarding textbooks to the National Institute of Korean History. And at the same time, during the Education Curriculum Phase 3, the government issued a new national history textbook in 1979 which was a conglomerated version of the existing national history textbook and a book entitled *Difficulties, and Overcoming Them* which was published in 1972 as a version for private readers. This led to a notable increase in pages. The textbooks for middle school students saw an increase in pages from 269 to 306, and textbooks for high school students saw an increase from 232 to 302.¹⁸ There were no changes made to the references regarding the roles played by the U.S. and U.S.S.R. or the role that the Korean provisional government played while leading the anti-Japanese movements. Yet there were two changes that might be considered noteworthy. First, included in the contemporary history part entitled “The Foundation of the Republic of Korea” was a section named “The Ever-Intensifying Independence War” for middle school textbooks, and “The Resistance of the Restoration Army” for high school textbooks, which were again respectively followed by sections entitled “The Liberation of the Korean People and the Division of the Korean Peninsula” (middle school textbooks) and “The Liberation of the Korean People” (high school textbooks) (Ministry of Education 1979b: 288, 1979a: 290). This kind of positioning of sections reflected the intention of the people in charge of the publication to reiterate

18. The supplement and the chronology are not accounted for.

that our own unwavering struggles were what made the liberation of August 15 possible.

Second, critical notes regarding socialist movements during the Occupation appeared in textbooks for the first time. For the time being, the existing version of history regarding the anti-Japanese movements inside the peninsula excluded the parts and roles played by people who had been involved in socialist activities from its own references, and forced the students to collectively forget or even ignore that part of our history. But then, it was noted that, although the socialist philosophy and ideology embraced by people during the Occupation was adopted by the Korean people after the March 1st Movement in their search for a national solution to the people's problems, the factions which embraced such philosophy and ideology were indeed factionalist in nature, and even detrimental to the overall cause of anti-Japanese movements, as they turned out to be fractional, when the cooperation and unity among the Korean people was dearly needed (Ministry of Education 1979a: 279-280). It is quite obvious that the authors intended to reinforce anti-communist education in history classes by emphasizing the anti-nationalist nature of the socialist movements while also attempting to exclude historical references to certain facts or conditions that were considered to be controversial when met the official version of national history. This was all in order to ultimately fortify the alleged legitimacy of the Korean provisional government. This kind of approach remained unchanged even in the national history textbooks that were published in 1996 for the Education Curriculum Phase 6 (Ministry of Education 1982: 142, 1990: 158; Ministry of Education 1996: 162).¹⁹ This was quite a contrast from the North Korean view of history of that time, which was based upon the North Korean historical perspective of subjectivity and depicted only Kim Il Sung and his anti-Japanese resistance.²⁰ As both parts of the Korean peninsula engaged more heavily in their own race over the legitimacy issue, the gaps between those entities in terms of historical perspective were only being widened in the end.

In the meantime, even the contents of the authorized national history textbooks (type 1) published in 1979 did not show any changes in references to the

19. It will be examined in Chapter 5. On returning to the Approval period, this kind of perspective was excluded from the main stream thoughts.

20. In North Korea, *Joseon jeonsa* (Collective History of Joseon) started to be published in 1979, and 10 volumes of the *Hangil mujang tujaengsa* (The History of Armed Resistance against the Japanese) were also published around this time.

roles played by the U.S. and U.S.S.R. But references to the legitimacy issue of the Korean provisional government continued to be refined.

The national history textbook designed for the Education Curriculum Phase 4, mentioning the “Foundation of the Republic of Korea,” only included sub-sections such as “The Ever-Intensifying Independence War” for middle school textbooks and “The Resistance of the Restoration Army” for high school textbooks, in addressing the activities of the Restoration Army. Yet the national history textbooks designed for Phases 5 and 6 of the Education Curriculum not only mentioned the activities of the Restoration Army but also the activities of the Joseon Independence Alliance in Hwabuk area, the Joseon Euiyong-gun corps, and the Jeoseon Foundation Alliance inside the peninsula, which were all socialist organizations, in sections such as “Activities for Foundation Preparations” and “Foundation Preparation Efforts Right before the Restoration” (Ministry of Education 1990: 172; Ministry of Education 1996: 190). The activities of various organizations were described as not only military operations but also as part of general preparations intended for the eventual foundation of a country in order to ultimately showcase the active condition maintained by Koreans who were eager for liberation. This was the ultimate wrapping up of the theory supporting the legitimacy of the Korean provisional government. Rather than resorting to heavily emphasizing the roles of the Allied forces including the U.S. and U.S.S.R., the authors of the textbooks were trying to showcase the continuing resistance of the Koreans, their preparation for founding a country, and the legitimacy of the Korean provisional government. This was the third step in refining the legitimacy theory. And this tone remained unchanged even when the Korean modern and contemporary history textbooks designed for the Education Curriculum Phase 7 were released.

Also, the national history textbook designed for the Education Curriculum Phase 4 emphasized the fact that the Korean provisional government served as the backbone for the entire independence movement by virtually using that line as the title of a sub-section (Ministry of Education 1982: 134). Added to that, in the national history textbook designed for Education Curriculum Phase 5, the authors addressed the subject of anti-Japanese movements inside and outside the peninsula after March 1st in sub-section 2, which was entitled “The Korean Provisional Government and the Independence War” within Chapter 3, “The Independence Movement of the Korean People.” In that section, they referred to it as the “Independence War.” In “Part 2: Domestic Independence War,” subjects like the armed resistance of the partisan groups that continued inside the penin-

sula after the March 1st Movement, the righteous struggles of the patriots, the June 10th Movement, and the anti-Japanese student movement in the Gwangju region were addressed. And in “Part 3: Foreign Independence War Efforts,” the anti-Japanese movements in the Manchu region were mainly described (Ministry of Education 1990: Chapter 3). In the meantime, most of the Independence Army troops located in the Manchu area who were continuing to fight even after the Manchu Incident were described “to have moved to China at the request of the Korean provisional government,” showcasing the fact that there was allegedly an official request from the provisional government (Ministry of Education 1990: 148).²¹

This kind of statement was part of an attempt to reiterate the fact that their move to China was not a result of being defeated or chased by the Gwandong-gun army or the Manchu national guard, but that it was only part of the general operation, which was based upon an independent decision. This was also a supplement to the statement that the Korean provisional government did not give up the method of armed struggle, and that was what made possible the organization of the Restoration Army in the first place. This tone remained unchanged in textbooks designed for Education Curriculum Phase 6 (Ministry of Education 1996: 158), and constituted a step taken in order to refine the legitimacy theory. But there was a definite fault in establishing historical facts as the Independence Army in the Manchu area did not move to China at the request of the Korean provisional government, and only few of the Independence Army troops, such as Lee Cheong Cheon and others, actually relocated themselves to China (Shin Ju Baek 1999: 327-333).

Even after this, the efforts to supplement and enrich the independence war theory continued. For example, in national history textbooks designed for the Education Curriculum Phase 5, it is worth noting that the activities of the Joseon Euiyong-gun corps of the Joseon Independence Alliance is mentioned in the part dealing with the “Foreign Independence War” (Ministry of Education 1990: 149). The nature of this organization also belonged to the partisan group concept that was mentioned in Choi Nam Seon’s book quoted in Chapter 3, but it was only at this time that it was historically acknowledged. In this researcher’s opin-

21. Yet, there is no mention of such a “request” in the national history textbooks for middle schools designed for the same Education Curriculum Phase, and only “some of them” are said to have moved to China (Ministry of Education 1990: 134).

ion, there are indeed some logical problems to address the activities of the Joseon Euiyong-gun corps in a section dealing with the Independence War efforts, but it sure was an attempt to include all the aspects of the anti-Japanese struggles in the references of the history textbooks, and also an attempt to adopt a more open perspective in textbook publications.

Also, the nature of past discussions regarding war efforts for Independence was confirmed and established in the beginning of the 1980s as studies of this history of the independence movement became even more active. And it was only natural that results of such studies and research were integrated into the contents of official national history textbooks. Yet attempting to evaluate the June 10th Movement and the Gwangju Student Movement in the context of such discussions was hardly appropriate. The suggestions regarding the Independence War came from the nationalists' front and were basically based upon the concept of armed resistance, while domestic movements mentioned above were organized and led by members of the socialist front. Moreover, the socialists were engaged in anti-Japanese activities based upon the theory supporting the Joseon Revolution. That very nature seems to have something to do with the fact that both the June 10th Movement and the Gwangju area Anti-Japanese Student Movement were not mentioned in high school textbooks designed for Education Curriculum Phase 6, and were only mentioned in chapter 3 entitled "The Students' Anti-Japanese Movements," right in front of chapter 4 entitled "Anti-Japanese Independence War" (Ministry of Education 1996: 150-152). This was actually a far better way to address both issues.

The last thing that should be noted is the presence of the so-called "People's History" which imposed significant influence upon the design of the authorized national textbooks while the discussions of the Independence War and the legitimacy of the Korean provisional government were being refined. During the early 1980s, scholars and researchers supporting the merit and academic inclination of the People's History continuously criticized rather hothead theories which were designed and determined to validate the legitimacy theory regarding the Korean provisional government. They kept questioning the validity of considering the Korean provisional government as the backbone of the entire anti-Japanese effort, and instead argued that it should be considered as (only) one of the most crucial organizations at the time. They also noted that the socialist movement, which continued inside and outside the country, or the anti-Japanese armed resistance that continued in the Manchu area during the 1930s, should be included in history textbooks. It should be noted, while it is uncertain that it was

a result of hearing out such suggestions, that in the national history textbooks designed for Education Curriculum Phase 6, there is no clear reference to the Korean provisional government being the so-called “backbone” of anti-Japanese efforts.²²

Then, when further bases for the issue regarding the legitimacy of the provisional government were secured, an anti-communist perspective was reinforced



Picture 3.

Source: High School National History Textbook for Industrial High Schools (1968: 184).



Picture 4.

Source: Middle School National History Textbook (1979: 289).



Picture 5.

Source: High School National History Textbook for General High Schools (1982: 289).



Picture 6.

Source: High School National History Textbook for General High Schools, Vol.2 (1996: 190).

22. Yet in the national history for middle schools, it mentioned that the *Dongnip sinmun* (Independence News) was published and inspired several organizations devoted to independence movements in terms of direction (Ministry of Education 1990: 126).

in history classes, and the past discussions regarding the war efforts aimed at independence were re-evaluated. And at the same time, there was a huge shift in the actual interpretation of the concept August 15, and it was reflected in the images (perceived by the public) of the concept as well. August 15 came to be considered from being “the Liberation of the Korean people,” to being “the Restoration of the Korean people.” The following pictures confirm such a shift, in terms of image and meaning.

The above pictures 3, 4 and 5 depict the same scene. There is a clear line on the picture saying “Celebrate Liberation”, yet the tagline describing the scene shown inside the picture was changed from “The Day of Liberation” (1968)²³ to “The Joy of Liberation” (1974, 1979), and then finally, to “The Restoration of the Korean People” (1982).²⁴ In other words, the word which was originally used to address August 15, the “Liberation”, was replaced by “Restoration”. Picture 4 is evidence of that in itself, showing the transfer and the transition, as the title of the picture is “Liberation,” yet lines explaining the contents of the picture were based upon the concept of “Restoration.” Obviously, there is a gap between the title and the lines explaining the picture. This change in terms occurred because the terms used in the textbooks for both middle and high school students designed for Education Curriculum Phase 4 also changed from “The Liberation of the Korean People” to “The Restoration of the Korean People” (Ministry of Education 1981: 299, 443). As a result, in the national history textbook for high school students published in 1982 there was the first mention of the word “Restoration” in a title of a subsection “The Restoration of the Korean People” in Chapter 1 entitled “The Foundation of the Republic of Korea.” Exactly what kind of difference exists between the word “Liberation” and “Restoration” still remains a question, and it is also not clear why the shift in terms occurred in the first place, but it seems it had something to do with the ongoing competition between the South and North. Today, most Koreans consider the term *inmin* (인민) as a word usually associated with the Left-wing, and instead usually use the word *gunghmin* (국민). South Koreans’ perception of the word “liberation” shows a similar case as well as they consider it to be used by the Left-wing and also mainly by North Koreans, and instead prefer to use the word ‘Restoration.’ There is a noteworthy section

23. Byeon Tae Seop used the word “liberation” in explaining this picture (1968: 232), and Yeoksa Gyoyuk Yeongu-hoe also attached a title with a line “The Liberated Streets of Seoul” (1956: 159).

24. It is the same with the picture on p. 223 of the “High School National History for General High Schools” published in 1974 with the explanation “The Joy of Liberation.”

inside a book entitled *The Way to Ensure Freedom*, which was published for high school students in December 1975. In chapter 4 of this book, entitled *The Arbitrariness of the Theories Supporting National Revolution*, such a theory is mentioned as a theory which is basically socialist revolution theory that had been developed since the days of Lenin, and it is said that the national revolution theory of Kim Il Seong and the North Korean communists has an objective to overthrow the Republic of Korea, which is not “liberated” yet in their eyes, and to communize it (Ministry of Education 1976: 161). As we can see here, in this kind of sentimentality, the word “liberation” refers to communization. And the authors of the authorized national textbooks were finally able to find an image, fitting the meaning of “restoration” when they were designing textbooks for Education Curriculum Phase 6, in this Picture 6, which has a placard with a line “Cheering Independence.”

Approval Period, and the Meaning of August 15 in this Period (2003-present): The Concept of “Restoration” Being Rendered Meaningless, and the Collective Memories are being Restored

Education Curriculum Phase 7 was initiated in 2001 for middle schools and in 2002 for high schools. The main objective declared for this new Phase was mentioned as “raising Koreans to have original and creative minds and abilities to actively and independently lead the world in the 21st century, which will witness global unity and information-based societies” (Ministry of Education 2001: 17). Under the guidelines laid out, the national history classes for middle school students in the 3rd grade were to be conducted under the society subject, three hours a week, and total of eight hours were allotted for high school students in their 2nd and 3rd grades. Unlike the preceding phases, the pre-modern era of Korean history was dealt in publications in the form of an authorized national textbook, and regarding the modern and contemporary eras of Korean history the schools were instructed to select a textbook from a total of six types of approved textbooks. As a result, within the textbooks of modern and contemporary textbooks, sections containing statements reflecting intentions different from those that are mentioned in the Education Curriculum Guideline drafted by the National Institute of Korean History can be frequently found.

For example, regarding the legitimacy issue of the Korean provisional government, in the approved textbooks, one of the most competitive issues, such as

anti-Japanese armed resistance in the Manchu area in the 1930s was addressed. The textbook published by Geumseong Publishing Company, which shows a 49.5 % in acceptance rate by schools currently in 2004, mentioned the subject in chapter 4 which was entitled “Armed Independence War in the 1930s,” and also highlighted the Bocheonbo Battle which occurred in 1936 with a special box tag-lined “Historical Place” (Kim Han Jong et al. 2003: 196). Other textbooks also mentioned the anti-Japanese armed resistance of the socialists, although there may be differences in columns devoted to the subject. There are also other examples of subjects that were never mentioned in approved textbooks during the approval period. The Joseon Communist Party that was organized in 1925, which was usually mentioned in a very negative and critical tone from an anti-communist perspective, is mentioned within the context of “social and economical activities and movements of the Korean people” (Ju Jin Oh et al. 2003: 218-219).

But it is highly illogical to insert statements referring to the anti-Japanese armed struggles of the Korean socialists in the Manchu area into a chapter entitled “The Ongoing Armed Independence War.” It may be an unavoidable result as the entire Education Curriculum was based upon the legitimacy theory of the Korean provisional government, but there is a certain level of concern that such an approach to the said objects might lead the students to perceive the era as one that was entirely based upon discussions of the Independence War, or merely an attachment to the legitimacy theory of the provisional government. Mentioning the Joseon Communist Party exhibits the same problem. When the activities of the Joseon Communist Party or the socialists are going to be addressed in a chapter entitled “Social and Economical Activities and Movements of the Korean People,” the activities that they were actually involved in such as strikes or tenancy disputes should be evaluated, instead of issues that are currently being examined such as the New Trunk Society organization or the attempt to establish a nationally unified party. The fact that issues such as the latter are being discussed instead of the former only reassures the fact that the issue of nationalism is being exploited in such formats of discussion. The June 10th movement and the Gwangju area anti-Japanese student movement were all deeply related to the Joseon Communist Party and the socialists but that kind of connection was completely dropped in the contents of the history textbooks. Moreover, Education Curriculum Phase 7 for high schools clearly indicated that such issues should be dealt with in sub-section 1 entitled “Domestic Anti-Japanese National Movements” and in chapter 3 entitled “The Ongoing Armed

Independence War.”

In other words, Education Curriculum Phase 7 is not being implemented as hoped.²⁵ The main problem has originated from the basic approach to evaluate the entire anti-Japanese movement with the legitimacy theory of the Korean provisional government. That kind of approach was what prevented the history of Korean resistance and its relation to the advent of August 15 from being properly evaluated and also generated the potential danger of misleading the public to bear false images of August 15 in their minds. Yet, those six types of textbook devoted to modern and contemporary Korean history mostly mentioned the U.S. and U.S.S.R.’s separate occupation of the Korean peninsula, and they also mentioned that they were occupation forces, and that the 38th parallel (which was originally the perimeter when surrender was accepted) was established by the consent of those two powers. Unlike the national history textbooks published in the approval period, blame should not be put on either side based upon anti-communist sentimentality. Only the facts should be pursued in order to let students understand the external factors that led to the division of the Korean peninsula.

Conclusion

We have examined the changes that occurred in Korean national textbooks in terms of their statements concerning of August 15, and evaluated the relationships between those changes and the roles played by the U.S. & U.S.S.R., and also the legitimacy matter regarding the Korean provisional government. A brief recapitulation of the things mentioned above, and checking the things that should be done in the future is in order. Memories are not accumulated layers being put into custody, but are as a living being that continues to be created and change within its relationship with the present time. One of the important factors that led to August 15, the roles played by the U.S. and U.S.S.R., was not treated fairly in terms of historical research. Instead anti-communist sentimentality led people to view the matter in a specifically designed way.

The other important factor is the legitimacy of the Korean provisional government that continued to be refined, turning itself from a theory supporting the

25. For details, consult Shin Ju Baek (2002).

idea of Koreans being liberated by outside help, to a theory supporting the idea of how Korean independent action resulted in the liberation. In the meantime, ideas that have been in a competitive position with the legitimacy theory of the Korean provisional government were totally ignored and excluded in the name of being anti-nationalist. Yet, there are some changes detected in the fashion of addressing these two major ideas nowadays. This should have had something to do with the fact that socialism went suddenly and totally downhill, the cold war age was dismantled, and the confrontations between South and North Korea have been somewhat alleviated recently. August 15 represents a collective memory shared by all South and North Koreans and all the people who were involved in the Pacific war. Yet it becomes a different type of memory when it comes to the position and condition of the receiver: each and every one of them received and embraced the memory differently. Surely there were certain general ideals. South Koreans perceive it and think of defeat, liberation, and restoration. North Koreans think of victory and liberation. Japanese think of the end of the war and also their defeat. Chinese think of victory and liberation, and Taiwanese people think of the end of the war and restoration. Yet the mirrored versions of the reality of that day significantly differed from person to person, area to area. To cover all those variances and evaluate them is a task left for future efforts.

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