

# **Competing Memories of Japanese Colonization and Resistance: A Study of Korean, Chinese, and Japanese Textbooks**

**Sin Ju-Back**

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This paper attempts to develop an understanding of the ways in which Korean, Chinese, and Japanese middle school textbooks depict colonial rule and resistance in the period of Japanese expansion in Northeast Asia. The first section discusses the three nations' distinct perspectives on the period of Japanese invasion. The second section examines the memory of resistance, namely the March First Movement, or Samil Movement, and the May Fourth Movement, which are taught as major turning points in the independence movement in Korea and China, respectively. Japan's policy of securing wartime armament, discussed at length in Korean and Chinese textbooks, is examined in the third section. In addition to material mobilization, the forced nature of human resource mobilization is also covered extensively. Manchuria is discussed in the fourth section because of it being the historical intersection of Korea, China, and Japan. The final section details the importance of August 15, 1945.

Keywords: history education, history textbook, history curriculum, memory, history war

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## **Introduction**

Despite their globalization efforts, South Korea, China and Japan have engaged in a serious historical debate, a so-called history war, since the turn of the century. Although Japan instigated the conflict by denying its past wrongdoings, South Korea and China are not wholly blameless. For the time being, there seems to be

little hope for resolving this controversy in Northeast Asia; the three countries have never participated in a genuine dialogue about their shared history.

The starting point as well as the endpoint of such a dialogue lies in a discussion about textbooks. The writing of textbooks, unlike issues that reflect severe differences of opinion or territorial disputes, does not involve topics that incur a huge political burden and allows discussions to begin from resolvable issues. Therefore, when discussing textbooks, it is possible for the countries involved to find certain points of agreement in an atmosphere of mutual consideration. Moreover, all the historical issues currently under debate in Northeast Asia are part of history textbooks. In order to initiate a dialogue about textbooks, the three countries must first compare their differing concepts of one another.

This study aims to expose these differences by evaluating how their textbooks portray Japan's invasion and the resistance against Japanese colonial rule by China and Korea. However, to evaluate the entire history of colonization and resistance is beyond the scope of this paper, so I will attempt to study the historical consciousness of China, Japan and South Korea by focusing on a few themes. The first section will analyze the distinct viewpoints adopted by previously published textbooks. Then the second section will examine the March 1<sup>st</sup> Independence Movement, the Korean Provisional Government, and the May 4<sup>th</sup> Independence Movement which Korean and Chinese textbooks have underscored. The third section on colonial rule will focus on comfort women and the Nanjing Massacre of 1937, issues most clearly revealing of Japanese aggression and domination. The fourth section will evaluate the historical narratives about Manchuria - a point of intersection for all three nations and North Korea. This comparative analysis will reveal a characteristic cross section of the present understanding of modern history. Finally, the fifth section will examine how various East Asian countries have described Japan's defeat and their liberation. By comparing the national differences with regard to August 15<sup>th</sup>, I will ascertain that the problem of historical memory directly concerns contemporary politics as well. However, since a comparative analysis of textbooks fails to highlight the distinct national differences, the final section - unlike the preceding ones - will examine more closely the socially formed memories of August 15<sup>th</sup>.

In this paper, I will study mostly middle school history textbooks, and when appropriate, those from high schools. In general, when students reach age 15 or 16, they develop a consciousness of the past to which they do not have any first-hand experience of. Through an understanding of historical analogies and parallels, they also begin to form a systematic notion of "the other" at this stage. The

history textbooks being examined are currently used in the three countries. By tracing the dissemination of particular historical notions to students, this paper will also investigate the impact of shifts in history curriculum.

There are few studies that compare Korean, Japanese, and China history textbooks. Among the studies of modern Northeast Asian history, to my knowledge, this paper is the only one which analyzes war, peace, and postwar responsibility in the region. By examining textbooks from Taiwan and North Korea as well, I have concluded that there are significant differences among the five Northeast Asian countries and peoples in their historical interpretation. Moreover, I discovered that all the textbooks fail to account sufficiently for postwar responsibility and to convey lessons of peace (Sin 2002a; Sin 2002b). In my concluding remarks, I will briefly discuss how we can accurately judge the points of difference and reduce discrepancies.

## History Education on the Japanese Invasion of Korea and China

First I will review each country's middle school history curriculum and textbook publication system. Korean middle school students are taught with the government-authorized national history textbooks and the first and second volumes (of three volumes) of social history textbooks approved by the government. Their Chinese counterparts have four volumes of Chinese history and two volumes of world history published by the government-controlled People's Education Press in Beijing. As a result of recent educational reforms, however, this has changed slightly with some schools picking textbooks issued by four colleges of education. *Chinese History* (中國歷史) was produced by the General Instruction to History Education and *World History* (世界歷史) was issued by the History Education Standard. In Japan, there are three components to social studies education: history, geography, and ethics. Among these, history textbooks are printed by eight publishing companies.

Now, let me evaluate how these middle school history textbooks from the three countries describe the Japanese invasion, its rule, and protests against it. In the case of Korea, Japanese colonial rule from 1910 to 1945 accounts for one-fifth of the textbook. Of course, starting from 1876 when Korea opened its doors to outsiders to the end of Japan's colonial rule, it would be more than one-fifth. Meanwhile, the Japanese invasion and movements against it take up one quarter of Chinese history textbooks since their history from World War I to 1945 is

about anti-imperialism and the anti-Japanese movements.

It is natural that Korea and China, countries that each suffered greatly under Japan's colonization, describe their experiences in detail, which is why the portions of their textbooks dedicated to this issue are relatively large. In contrast, Japan's history textbooks on the issue of the country's invasion of other nations and colonization use less than one-tenth of the space dedicated to the issue in China and Korea's textbooks. And what is even more surprising, some middle schools in Japan do not even teach history after World War I. Although its history of invasion and colonial rule is a very important part of Japan's modern history, there are many cases in which schools do not take this part seriously.

This shows Japanese textbooks' lack of critical thinking on the issue and their denial of responsibility for colonization and war. Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has instructed schools to focus on how the country responded to international affairs when teaching history to students through its "Government Guidance to Teaching." The Ministry's insistence that schools teach Japan's active responses to international politics in modern history is reasonable in some ways, but it also justifies its invasions of neighboring countries, blaming them on international circumstances rather than viewing them as cases of going too far. A case in point is the lack of description in Japanese history textbooks of its preemptive strikes in the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, and the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. The textbooks offer no criticism of Japan's invasion on the pretext of certain facts.

In contrast, Korea and China contain a significant amount of text dedicated to Japanese colonial rule and their protests against it in their textbooks, analyzing its impact and considering it a significant element in each of their modern histories. Korea divides its modern history into two periods: before and after 1910 when Korea became a Japanese colony. In particular, Korean history textbooks discuss the period after 1910 based on the logic that it could restore and maintain its identity in the process of independence movements despite its inability to develop into an independent modern country due to colonization. For China, its current textbooks categorize the country's modern history into two periods on the basis of the 1911 Chinese Revolution (辛亥革命). Textbooks presently used by Chinese schools describe modern history as the history of the New Democracy Revolution (新民主主義革命) as well as the wars against Japan. In short, the history textbooks of the two countries state one period of modern history as the history of Japan's invasion and anti-colonial movements. Korea's textbooks put more effort into explaining the nation's independence

movements and China's textbooks emphasize its war history with Japan; that is, each country's textbooks contain more writings on movements to free their countries from Japanese rule.

That is why the history textbooks of China and Korea are often said to describe Japan's invasion and their anti-Japanese movements based on the theory of colonial deprivation: Japan used the colony to feed its own people, not the people of the colony. Recently some historians have refrained from using the dichotomy between invasion and protest when discussing modern history. However, the guides to history textbooks in general continue to use this dichotomy to ensure that teachers deliver the "correct" message to students.

Korea: Although our nation was deprived of sovereignty due to Japanese invasion and suffered very much under colonial rule, textbooks have to identify our national activists' struggle for independence and for restoring our sovereignty both at home and abroad. Therefore, students can learn the spirit of independence and patriotism (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development 1997b: 608).

China: China's modern history is a degrading period during which the country gradually turned into a half-colonized and half-feudal society; but at the same time, during this period, Chinese people, in the name of national independence and social progress, protested against colonialism and feudalism to establish the New Democracy under the leadership of the People's Communist Party (Beijing Renmin Jiaoyu Chubanshe 2000: 5).

However, Japanese textbooks take a different approach. In fact, they offer several points of view: some admit to Japanese aggression and its impact on Korea, while others deny that any cruel acts were committed, emphasizing instead Japan's contributions to colonized Korea. The latter case is often referred to as colonial glorification. The former approach is called the theory of colonial modernization, under which Japan admits to the suffering of Koreans under colonial rule, but is quick to point out its success in modernizing Korea and its people. In fact, it is hard to tell these two theories apart in Japanese history textbooks. The same holds true for Japan's description of its rule over Manchuria, which is more often than not vaguer than its description of its colonization of Korea. Interestingly, Chinese history textbooks explain Japan's rule over Manchuria from the perspective of the theory of colonial deprivation.

*Atarashii rekisi kyoukasyo* (新しい歴史教科書), written by rightist historians and published in 2006 by Fushosa, and *Saisinn Nihonshi: kyouzyu siryō* (最新日本史), a reference book for high school teachers published in 2003 by Meisesha, expressly represent colonial glorification. For instance, *Saisinn Nihonshi: kyouzyu siryō* includes some content that compares Western countries' colonial rule with Japan's colonial rule. The comparison goes as follows: unlike Western countries' colonization, the Japanese government and the Joseon Government-General (朝鮮總督府) acquired a great amount of national debt when the Korean government filed for bankruptcy. Right after Japan annexed Korea in 1910, it did not collect personal income tax, and finally in 1920 it started to levy a corporate income tax while being supported by subsidies from the Japanese government. Furthermore, the Government-General went out of its way to nurture construction, agriculture, forestry, and fishery businesses. Also the Government-General led the way for modern education with the percentage of children attending elementary school reaching seventy percent by 1946 (Meisesha 2003: 591-2). Colonial glorification never mentions that Japan reaped benefits from its colonial rule over Joseon; rather, it only emphasizes what was achieved with the support of Japan, ignoring its suppression and exploitation of the colony. Moreover, it does not pay attention to the suffering of Koreans who were forced to endure gross human rights violations.

The theory of colonial modernization (植民地美化論) recognizes the problem of colonial glorification to some degree, and it also allows us to see some history that the theory of colony deprivation does not provide. For example, it points to cases in which Koreans achieved astonishing feats even while being exploited under colonial rule. Japan fails to mention in its textbooks that the country developed its colonies to obtain extra benefits out of capitalistic necessity and that its colonial rule also affected Japan's development. It fails to take into account the negative effect it has had on the development of Korean society since 1945 (Ootu 2004: 320). After all, the theory of colonial deprivation (植民地近代化論) is a description that completely ignores the basic fact that Joseon was a colony of Japanese imperialism.

## Memory of Resistance

History textbooks in Korea and China give more weight to their resistance against Japanese aggression and rule. They deal with the March 1<sup>st</sup>

Independence Movement in Korea, the May 4<sup>th</sup> Independence Movement in China, and subsequent movements led by the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea outside the peninsula and by the Chinese Communist Party, respectively.

Korean textbooks, for example, explain that the March 1<sup>st</sup> Independence Movement not only confirmed the Korean people's goal to be free from Japan but also provided a starting point for many who were engaged in a variety of resistance movements, thereby leading to the establishment of the Provisional Government in September 1919. The textbooks evaluate the movement as a turning point in the anti-Japanese movement. Chinese textbooks define the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement as a national independence movement against imperialism and feudalism and as a starting point for the Revolutionary Democracy. As is the case with the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement in Korea, China also makes it clear in their textbooks that the May 4<sup>th</sup> Independence Movement was a turning point in its modern history.

Unlike their national history textbooks, Korean and Chinese world history textbooks stop short of delivering details of the two representative movements and fail to highlight how these movements played out in their respective modern histories. For example, the Korean textbook emphasizes “a series of national independence movements that took place in other countries such as India and China which had been stimulated by the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement,” underlining the impact of its movements on China's May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development 2002: 268). In the case of China, its world history textbook for high schools relates that the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement in Korea was supported and hailed by the Chinese people (Beijing Renmin Jiaoyu Chubanshe 2004: 12). This is where a self-centered writing of history prevails. For instance, I presented a different opinion from my Chinese counterparts in terms of the two movements described in chapter two of *History that Opens a New Future*. In the end and after much debate, we agreed not to use the word effect and to describe “that Chinese intellectuals and students appealed to the Chinese people to resist Japan upon hearing about the movements taking place in Korea (Korea-China-Japan Common History Publication Committee 2005: 99).”

But when it comes to middle school world history textbooks, China fails to mention the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement; but in Korea's middle school social studies textbooks, the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement in China is addressed. In the 1990s, Chinese world history textbooks only noted the national independence protests that took place in India and Turkey and only discussed the Versailles-Washington system,

a new world order after World War I. Even though some high school world history textbooks had subsections entitled “Joseon’s March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement” in their chapter on national independence movements in Asia and Africa, these subsections were often excluded from school examinations and were not taken very seriously; at times they were even set aside as individual study sections.

Japanese world history textbooks include a chapter on “National Movements in Asia” which explains the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement and the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement along with the self-government movement in India. There is some difference in how much space is given to these movements in each of the eight textbooks, but the general trend of description is very similar. Korea and China place greater significance on these movements in their respective national histories, and Japan sees its own significance in relation to the movements as follows.

**China’s movements against imperialism** ..... With this movement, Sun Wen changed the existing party into the Nationalist Party and expanded his efforts for independence and unification in cooperation with the Communist Party, which was formed in 1912.

**Korea’s movements for independence** ..... The Joseon Government-General suppressed these movements with force. But it loosened its grip on the peninsula which led people to demand for the modernization of Joseon. The movements continued (Tokyo Soseki 2006: 174-5).<sup>1</sup>

Although this Japanese textbook mentions that the movements continued, it fails to specify which movements. Rather, the struggle for independence is described as an independence war in Korea and a war against Japan in China, respectively. In stark contrast, Japan describes in detail the anti-Japanese movements during the wars that waged in the Asia Pacific region following Japanese aggression into Manchuria in 1931. This intentional omission of the efforts by the Chinese and Koreans against the war could lead Japanese students to believe that the people of Korea and China did nothing to create their *own* histories.

The important thing to note here is that the two movements mentioned above were not described in Japanese national history and world history books after Japan’s surrender. Most history textbooks for middle and high schools did not mention the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement until the 1960s. For example, among the

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1. I cited this textbook because it is a bestseller which is used by the majority of schools (51.2% as of 2006).



twelve textbooks published in 1962, only three mentioned the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement (Hahm 1967: 39). Some of the textbooks approved by the government in 1965 noted for the first time the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement. In fact, the textbook distortions on the cause of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement in China had that country raising its voice in protest at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 (Tokyo Soseki 1966: 273). Limitations on the contents of textbooks had to do with the strict screening system of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, whose aggressive guidelines buried historical facts about colonial aggression. Another problem was the persistent historical attitude of textbook authors who thoroughly denied any responsibility for Japanese colonial rule and aggression.

In the 1970s, the way to describe the two movements changed slightly for the following three reasons. First, a new political environment set in. The 1965 treaty signed by Korea and Japan, the diplomatic relations established between China and Japan in 1972, and the U.S.-Japan joint declaration forced Japan to take its modern history of aggression and colonization more seriously. Second, the approach to history by academic circles changed. For example, 1968 marked the 100th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration which allowed academia to review Japanese modern history and also spurred ethnic Korean researchers living in Japan to disclose the forced mobilization committed by the authorities. Third, Mr. Ienaga Saburo (家永三郎), a prominent historian, won a lawsuit against the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology calling for a halt to the Ministry's school textbook authorization system (杉本判決). This victory ultimately stopped the ministry from abusing its power in the textbook authorization process (Sin 2005a: 210-1).

In 1982, the issue of historical distortions by Japan was raised for the first time in the world. To solve this situation, the Japanese government came up with a clause regarding its neighboring countries (近隣諸國條項) as part of its school textbook authorization criteria. Since then, the tone of description on the two independence movements has remained the same.

There have been significant changes made in Korean and Chinese textbooks about resistance. In the case of Korea, the high school textbook *Korean Modern History* (韓國近現代史, 2003) began to include information about anti-Japanese movements led by socialists which had previously been excluded. This was possible due to the successful outcome of the socialist movements by academia and a change in the political environment. To be more specific, the Cold War ended and the tension between the two Koreas eased, leaving less room to judge histo-

ry based solely on anti-communism. In particular, this change was seen in North Korea's description of the late Kim Il Sung and his leadership's armed resistance in Manchuria during the 1930s.

In the 1990s, China shifted its description on modern history after the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement from the domestic revolutionary war to resistance against Japanese imperialism. Since 2000, it has campaigned to show the greatness of the Chinese nation as a united multi-ethnic state. Accordingly, history textbooks recount wars against Japanese imperialism and Japanese colonial rule rather than the struggle against class. They also detail a unified history of the Chinese nation rather than the separate histories of fifty-five ethnic nations (Sin 2006: 8). The reason behind this lies in the Chinese government's political intention to prevent a possible social division in the process of introducing the market economy and to keep the momentum of reform and openness.

## Memory of Colonial Rule

The period beginning with the 1931 Japanese invasion of Manchuria has produced the most strikingly different accounts about Japanese aggression and colonization. When Japan invaded mainland China in 1937, Japan and its colonial territories entered a violent wartime phase, a period in which many current issues are rooted. The most critical issue at the time was the mobilization of material and human resources.

Describing the period as one of material and financial exploitation, Korean and Chinese textbooks discuss the material mobilization at length. However, Japanese textbooks have continued to neglect this subject. Their failure to address how the Japanese invasion and colonization paralyzed the everyday lives of Koreans and Chinese stands as a testament to the lack of atonement by Japan.

With regard to the mobilization of human resources, Korean and Chinese textbooks devote much space to explaining the draft, conscription and sex slavery, highlighting the forced and exploitative nature of Japanese rule. Herein lays the historical origin of Korea's and China's anti-Japanese sentiments. Japanese textbooks now also acknowledge Japan's compulsory labor mobilization and touch upon the draft, conscription, and the policy of enforcing the adoption of Japanese names by all colonial subjects (創氏改名).

The recent tone of Japanese history textbooks has been shaped by gradual changes resulting from continued pressure from the international community

and the ruling in Mr. Ienaga's lawsuit. In fact, until 1982, Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology conducted official inspections of textbooks in the interest of denying the forced nature of wartime mobilization. In the 1960s, Japanese textbooks were even forbidden from implying the notion of aggression (Sin 2005a: 214). In the past, Chinese and Korean textbooks have also omitted some information regarding Japan's policy of labor mobilization. That is, although they have long described the material deprivation and draft enforced by Japanese colonial rule in their textbooks, they both skirted around the issues of conscription and sex slavery.

The conscription system was enforced in Joseon and Taiwan in 1944 and 1945, which Korean textbooks now fully detail, along with a special army voluntary scheme for Koreans in 1938 (陸軍特別志願兵制) and another scheme for the mobilization of students in 1943 (學兵制). Unfortunately, since China does not consider the history of Taiwan under colonial rule, they omit this period from their textbooks.

China also does not cover the sex slave issue because it had fewer women who were sex slaves than Korea and Taiwan. Korea first mentioned the sex slave issue in its middle and high school history textbooks starting in 1996 and 1994, respectively. But the problem is how those textbooks brought up the issue. For example, one textbook described how the women were forced to leave their homes as group laborers to work in military factories (女子勤勞挺身隊) but were later taken as comfort women (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development 1997a: 151). The issue here was that there was no clear distinction made between group laborers and sex slaves. It was only in the mid-1990s that Korea was forced to clearly note the sex slave issue in its history textbooks as it had finally come to the attention of the international community.

Since the June 10<sup>th</sup> democratic movement in 1987, military authorities were banned from engaging in politics and the nation was turned over to officials elected by the people. This movement aroused societal interest in pursuing individual rights and creative diversity. The world was also witnessing the end of the Cold War. Such circumstances enabled individuals to raise their voices and call on the Japanese government to reflect on and take responsibility for their past wrongdoings. Scholars, researchers, and civic groups actively raised the sex slave issue which had been ignored and denied by right-wing politicians in Japan. Notably, after public testimony in August 1991 by Hak-Soon Kim (金學順), a Korean sex slave for the Japanese military during their rule over Korea, things changed dramatically. Her speech prompted Korean civic groups, includ-

ing the Korea Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, to continue to raise the issue in the international arena. The Japanese government publicly admitted in August 1993 that its previous government was directly and indirectly involved in having mobilized sex slaves and having operated comfort stations (Sin 2005c: 6).

Some of the 1994 Japanese high school history textbooks mention the existence of sex slaves, and seven Japanese middle school history textbooks from 1998 mention the sex slave issue. At that time, the number of Japanese textbooks which mentioned this issue was much greater than that of Korea. This showed that Japanese textbooks were based on fact. In contrast, Korean high school world history textbooks and middle school social history textbooks never mentioned the issue (Chung 2001: 378).

Japan's newly reflective attitude on its past wrongdoings was in stark contrast to Korea's response to the sex slave issue. In the male-dominated Korean society, it was not uncommon to regard the sex slaves not as victims, but as responsible for what happened to them. This view gradually changed and was reflected in a 2002 middle school textbook and a 2003 high school textbook. These two textbooks increased the content dedicated to the sex slave issue, making a clear distinction between women laborers forced to work in military factories (女子勤勞挺身隊) and sex slaves. However, while most textbooks approached sex slavery as a national issue, they stopped short of examining the issue in terms of women's rights or human rights. As a result of this omission, students could unconsciously come to accept such atrocities as inevitable under the extenuating circumstances of war.

Recently, Japan's approach to the issue has moved back with a significant number of textbooks being published these days that fail to even mention the issue. In 2006, only Nihonshosekishinsha (日本書籍新社) and Teikokushoin (帝國書院) of the eight textbook publishing companies briefly discuss the issue. This happened only because of extreme pressure from rightist civic groups, including the Group of Writing New History Textbooks. As such, the mood in Japan has dramatically shifted back to denying its past wrongdoings.

In addition, Fusosha's history textbook, written by rightist civic groups, insists there was no such policy for making Koreans into slaves of the Japanese Emperor. But this point was later corrected after the textbook faced harsh criticism both at home and abroad in 2005. Still Fusosha continued to pressure teachers to deny the forced labor issue while at the same time pretending to accept criticism from outside. For instance, it stated there were 600,000 to

700,000 laborers forced to work in Japan, ignoring the fact that about two million Koreans were already living in Japan. And in order to skirt around the truth, it also noted that there was a need to investigate who was forced to work in other countries besides Japan (Fushosa 2006b: 335).

Japan's way of minimizing or denying its crimes against humanity can be seen in its explanations about civilian massacres. A case in point is the Nanjing Massacre of 1937. Let's take a look at how the bestselling, progressive, and rightist middle school history textbooks deal with the massacre.

*Tokyo Soseki* (東京書籍): "...the war expanded from the northern part to the southern part allowing the Japanese military to ultimately occupy Nanjing, the capital, at the end of 1937. In the process, the military killed a large number of Chinese including women and children. This incident drew international criticism but was not known to the public."

*Nihonsho Sekishinsha* (日本書籍新社): "At the end of the year, the Japanese military conquered the capital of Nanjing killing 200,000 POWs and civilians, committing violent acts and plundering the area, inviting global condemnation. There are various opinions on the number killed."

*Fusosha* (扶桑社): "The Japanese military believed Chiang Kai Shek (蔣介石) would give in if it took Nanjing, the capital of the Kuomintang government. It occupied the capital in December. At the time, many Chinese soldiers were casualties of the incident. Moreover, questions were raised as to the facts of the incident, including the number killed. Many different views on this question from many different sources have been raised continuously (Fushosa 2006a: 199).

The first two publishing companies directly refer to Japan's civilian killings in Nanjing and strengthen their critical tone by noting the international condemnation of the massacre. Meanwhile, the rightist publishing company Fusosha puts this atrocity in a footnote, downplaying its historical importance. It also uses the term "casualties" instead of "killings" to obscure Japan's cruel acts. Furthermore, it notes that there is a continuing debate over the number of those killed, leading students to question whether the incident even took place. Clearly its intention was to conceal the fact that the military killed Nanjing civilians and Chinese soldiers who had surrendered. This intention is raised again in its teacher's guide, as shown below.

The war in Nanjing was very fierce leaving a total number of 100,000 soldiers from Japan and China dead. Meanwhile 200,000 civilians survived. Most of them were reported to have evacuated to shelters (‘安全區’), avoiding big loss. After the occupation, the military protected Nanjing civilians (Fushosa 2006b: 313-4).

Rightist history textbooks not only deny the civilian massacre but also change the role of the Japanese military into one of protector. Contrary to their claim that there were many casualties in the course of the brutal warfare, only 20,000 out of the 150,000 Chinese soldiers were actually killed in combat. In fact, 80,000 Chinese soldiers (兵士, 軍夫, 雜兵) who had relinquished their arms were massacred by the Japanese army after the fighting officially ceased (Kasahara 2006: 21). The teacher’s manuals for right-wing history textbooks, however, explain that 100,000 Chinese soldiers died in fierce combat and urge the instructors to teach their students that all the casualties were from combat. This directive can be seen as an attempt to conceal and deny the historical events surrounding the massacre of Chinese soldiers who had given up fighting.

This sharp contrast among Japanese history textbooks was attributable to the overall evaluation of the war in Nanjing. The textbooks of Tokyo Soseki and Nihonsho Sekishinsha view this massacre within the context of the Pacific War. That is why they describe the Manchurian invasion and the Chinese-Japanese war under the title of ‘Japan’s Invasion of China’ and explain ‘the Pacific War’ under ‘WWII’. In contrast, the Fusosha history textbook just lists the Manchurian invasion, the Chinese-Japanese war, and states the Pacific War (大東亞戰爭) within WWII. There are two historical views here: one reflects on Japan’s past wrongdoings and the other defines the Pacific War as a war to liberate Asia from Western powers. The Nanjing Massacre is in between these two conflicting views.

Unlike the conflicting historical views in Japan, Chinese textbooks are uniform. The middle school textbook clearly details the massacre under the title “Nanjing Massacre,” explaining that 300,000 were killed by the Japanese military. It also includes some very graphic pictures of the massacre. However, the book fails to present the grounds for the official statistics of the dead. Consequently, Japanese rightists have continued to doubt the credibility of the statistics, insisting that the number quoted is impossible because Nanjing only had a population of about 250,000. Some rightists even deny the massacre itself. Today, historians who have long studied the massacre have concluded that about

200,000 were victimized up until March of 1938 (Kasahara 2006: 21).

In Korea, only Jihaksa (志學社), a publisher producing textbooks for both middle and high schools, offers pictures and explanations on the massacre (Jihaksa 2002: 114). Curiously, most history textbooks used in Korea that speak of Nazi atrocities against Jews are full of content and references. This may be because Korean world history textbooks are mostly European-centered, and the modern history of East Asia therein is focused on Japan's aggression and movements against it. Nevertheless, since the history of East Asia contains a series of wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we need to inform students about these wars that waged in countries surrounding the Korean Peninsula from the perspective of peace and human rights.

### **Memory of Manchuria: Same Region, Different Emphases**

While Korea was under Japanese rule, the only place where invasion and resistance co-existed was Manchuria, the historical intersection of Korea, China, and Japan. Whereas the preceding section illuminated the three countries' conflicting accounts, this section aims to evaluate the spatial significance of Manchuria in each country's historical consciousness by examining how the aggression and conflict in the same region are portrayed.

From the Korean perspective, Manchuria, especially Baekdu Mountain (白頭山), is the birthplace of the Korean race and thus is a source of primordial nationalism. The Manchurian region finds its way into every discussion of ancient Korean history, and it is the period in Korean history which accounts for the greatest number of private researchers. Therefore, it is not surprising that in 2003, and again in 2006, Korea as a whole was extremely sensitive to the government-funded Chinese research project on ancient societies in northern China.

Manchuria was viewed as a place of livelihood, albeit not as one of hope, for immigrants. During the 1910s and 1920s, migration to the region mostly stemmed from the dislike of Japanese rule. The only people who arrived in Manchuria with hopeful expectations were the national independence movement activists who set up their base of resistance there. Following Korean liberation, Manchuria only entered the Korean collective memory as Gando (間島), land to be recovered. Only after the Second Curriculum was partially revised in 1968 did Manchuria, which had been largely forgotten, begin to emerge as a region of historical conflict.<sup>2</sup> Even then, the region was only remembered for the

Battle of Chungsanli. However, after the Third Curriculum was instituted in 1978, textbooks began to describe the nationalist movement of the 1920s, and specific discussions of the struggle against Japan were introduced by the Fifth Curriculum.<sup>3</sup> Manchuria, as a region of conflict, came to occupy a greater place in the national collective memory.

There are three notable points about the expanding Korean memory of Manchuria: First, Korean textbooks have failed to provide a useful historical account of the Manchurian puppet government; they devote only a sentence to explaining the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the joint struggle with the Chinese against Japanese colonization. Second, they also describe Manchuria as a destination for those who could not bear the hardships of Japanese rule. However, history textbooks only go so far as to situate the region — as a critical battleground of the war of independence — in the history of anti-Japanese struggle. Given these two characteristics, Manchuria could be considered an imagined space in the Korean consciousness. Third, even accounts of Manchuria as a region of struggle are bound by ideological limits. Notwithstanding the recent changes observed under the Seventh Curriculum, the curriculum's basic principles dictate that education curriculum remain unchanged; therefore, one can deduce that the fundamental position of the Korean government has also remained the same.<sup>4</sup>

The tendency to highlight only the struggles of particular factions stems from North Korea's and South Korea's contesting claims to historical legitimacy. Although the national memory of Manchuria has developed thanks to the growing research on the Korean independence movement, the division of the Korean Peninsula continues to prescribe unassailable limits on South Korea's consciousness. The same is true of North Korea whose textbooks only devote attention to the anti-Japanese struggles of socialists like Kim Il Sung. That is, for North Koreans, Manchuria is only significant as 'a place where [their] leader overcame the tribulations of anti-colonialist struggle'. Through selective memory, the two Koreas have made comparable efforts to exclude each other's perspective; thus, their seemingly different historical accounts reveal essentially the same limited

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2. For the most notable example of textbooks from this period, see Sin Seok-Ho, *National History for Humanities High Schools* (Seoul: Kwang Myung, 1968).

3. See Ministry of Culture and Education 1974 and Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development 1990 for specific examples.

4. For a detailed analysis, see Sin Ju-Back's "Manchuria and the Post-Liberation Memory" in *Manchurian Studies* 2.



historical consciousness.<sup>5</sup>

China has also participated in the efforts to posit Manchuria as a region of its nationalist struggle against Japan. In the fourth volume of the 1956 edition of *Middle School Textbooks Chinese History* (初級中學課本 中國歷史), the armed conflict against Japan is described as a part of the Second Domestic Revolutionary War. The textbook includes a timeline of the Kwantung Army's (關東軍) invasion of Manchuria and devotes a page to the armed struggle against Japan until the early 1930s under the subheading of "Campaign of the Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Unit and Militia." Most of the descriptions serve to highlight the efforts of an armed force whose politics and ideology differed from those of the Communist Party. Moreover, the section on the Sino-Japanese War of 1937 discusses the struggles of the anti-Japanese northeastern Chinese allied force (東北抗日聯軍) (Beijing Renmin Jiaoyu Chubanshe 1956: 44-5, 58-9).

In the 2002 edition, Unit Four: The Chinese People's War against Japan is divided into three chapters. In Chapter 14, the armed struggle against Japan in Manchuria following the September 18<sup>th</sup> 1931 incident is described under the heading "Commencement of a Regional War against Japan (Beijing Renmin Jiaoyu Chubanshe 2002: 70)." Previously, though situated in the Second Domestic Revolutionary War, it had been described largely from the perspective of the rise of the New Democratic Revolution (新民主主義革命). However, it has recently been acknowledged as part of the anti-Japanese movement in mainland China; in other words, as a stage of the national war against Japan.

These new trends have to do with significant changes in the basic tenets of Chinese history textbook writing. The tendency to situate the Manchurian conflict in the larger context of the war against Japan, rather than domestic revolutionary context, stems from a deliberate shift in focus: the Chinese government has moved away from emphasizing the ideological dimension to highlighting the nationalist dimension which focuses on 'the Chinese people' (中華民族). Celebrating the feats of the Chinese people, the textbooks avoid mentioning various other nationals, especially Koreans, who contributed to the armed struggle against Japan in Manchuria. While the new textbooks place special emphasis on Japanese aggression and Unit 731's cruelty, thereby indirectly illuminating the Chinese victimhood, they neglect to describe the lives of Chinese people under

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5. For more on the ideological conflict between North and South Korea and its impact on each other's historical consciousness, see Sin Ju-Back's "Historical Education and Textbooks as Evidence of Supremacy" in *The Two Faces of National Division*.

the Manchukuo governance.

For the purpose of arousing patriotism, Chinese history textbooks promote a socialist history education which favors a classicist and revolutionary understanding of the war against Japan. These educational goals originated from the political motives to counteract the decline of socialism, to alleviate domestic tensions in the transition to a free market economy, and to provide a historical account for the necessity of solidarity. Thus, special emphasis has been given to narrating the history of the war as a history of “unifying national history” which emphasizes national unity instead of the history of domestic revolutionary war which underscores the class struggle (Sin 2005a: chap. 3).

Chinese history textbooks omit collaboration with Koreans from its history of the anti-Japanese struggle. Moreover, although the Manchurian conflicts against Japan provide key historical evidence for South Korea’s theory of the legitimacy of the Provisional Government as well as North Korea’s theory of the legitimacy of the socialist armed struggle against Japan, they exist merely in the margins of Chinese history. Chinese history textbooks focus mostly on the war against Japan directed by the Chinese Communist Party’s Central Committee in mainland China or the major battles of the revolutionary war, a tendency which I identify as a centralist perspective of history (中央中心史觀).

While Korean and Chinese textbooks continually renew their memories of the Manchurian conflict against Japan, their Japanese counterpart neglects any mention of it. Rather than being dismissed as characteristic of the invading nation, this omission deserves a closer look. Japanese textbooks approach the Manchurian incident as the first step in the invasion of China. However, because invasion was considered a part of the continental advance, it used to be discussed only as the Manchurian Incident. In most cases, the chapter and paragraph headings thus also referred to it as “Advance into the Continent.”

Following the inspection of 1975, the terminology changed as the textbooks began to acknowledge that the Kwantung Army’s invasion of Manchuria had, in fact, been supported by both the Japanese people and the Japanese government which had only protested the invasion initially. The shift in the 1975 edition of history textbooks can also be detected in the subheading which changed from Sino-Japanese incident (日華事變) to Sino-Japanese War (Tokyo Soseki 1975: 282). Given that previous editions had placed all the accountability for the Manchurian Incident on the Japanese military, these changes can be considered significant. I propose that the diplomatic relations established between China and Japan in 1972 were largely responsible for the new historical accounts. The

1975 edition was submitted for approval in 1973, a year after Japan established diplomatic ties with China, and then approved in 1974. Having established diplomatic relations, Japan could no longer deny incontestable historical facts. However, the term *advance*, which refutes the fact of invasion, has not disappeared altogether, since the shift in the language did not originate from a deepening national atonement for colonial invasion and colonization but from changes in foreign relations.

Inevitably, Japan suffered from another bitter controversy in 1982 over the authorization of the new edition of textbooks due to governmental interference. The criticism from the international community in reaction to the new textbooks brought about a turning point for the Japanese people's historical consciousness of the Manchurian invasion: Japan volunteered to add a neighboring country clause (近隣諸國條項) to its textbook evaluation guidelines, thereby promising to heed the recommendations of its neighbors. Around this time, under the explicit heading of Invasion of China, newly introduced into the table of contents, Japanese textbooks began to provide accounts of the Manchurian Incident and the Sino-Japanese War.

The changes in the portrayal of the Manchurian Invasion are clearly discernible in the textbooks of the 1990s, which emphasize the accountability of the military and the nationalist leadership (Tokyo Soseki 1990: 276). In particular, unlike the previous editions which simply noted the Japanese government's initial opposition to the Manchurian Incident, the newer textbooks acknowledge the government's support for the invasion of Manchuria. Although Japanese textbooks still do not address the resistance by Korean and Chinese nationals or the lives of Japanese residents in Manchuria, they do exhibit a growing tendency to provide an accurate historical account.

Notable opposition to the recent educational approaches aimed at greater self-reflection has come from the Fusosha textbooks. Published by Japanese rightists, the Fusosha history textbook acknowledges that the Lougou Bridge (蘆溝橋) incident, plotted by the Kwantung Army, sparked the Manchurian Incident. However, the teacher's guide emphasizes investigating the Kwantung Army's motives behind devising such a plot. Along with the boycott against the Japanese, the anti-Japanese communist movement, linked with Russia's southward expansionist policy, is cited as a national threat that motivated the Kwantung Army. In an attempt to evade responsibility for the war, this educational approach argues that not only did Koreans, along with the Japanese, support the Japanese invasion of Manchuria but also that the Manchukuo govern-

ment, set up by the Kwantung Army in March 1932, “accomplished rapid economic progress” in the region (Fushosa 2006b: 308-10). According to this account, which negates the Korean armed resistance against Japan in Manchuria, the Japanese invasion and colonization of Manchuria is justified using colonization glorification.

### **Memory of August 15<sup>th</sup>**

August 15, 1945 was the day the Japanese Emperor announced he would accept the Potsdam Declaration. It is also the day when Japan lost the war and when East Asia began to design its future. And yet, as expected, Korea, China and Japan have different memories of that day.

Indeed, that day is remembered differently depending on the country or region. For example, parts of Manchuria and Hahmgyong Province in North Korea were already free from Japanese rule due to Russia’s advance into these areas on August 9, 1945. So, given that fact, Koreans and Chinese who resided there do not have the same feelings about August 15<sup>th</sup> as others living in different regions. Okinawans also attach little importance to that day because the United States had already landed on the island for a fierce battle on June 23 when the Japanese commander-in-chief of the island committed suicide. Thus, Okinawans established June 23<sup>rd</sup> as their own holiday to honor their war dead.

It is clear that August 15<sup>th</sup> carries different significance depending on the country. Since 1951, China has used September 3<sup>rd</sup> to commemorate its victory over Japan. But with the history distortion issue raised in 1982, however, the country gave more weight to August 15<sup>th</sup> until the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance expired in 1980. Textbooks which have been published since 1987 record August 15<sup>th</sup> as the day of victory over Japan. As such, China currently celebrates both anniversaries, and accordingly, each anti-Japanese war memorial prepares ceremonies for both as well. The memory shaped by private experiences thus constitutes a greater sphere of influence on public consciousness than the ideological account formed by the government.

Nevertheless, a closer examination of general Chinese history reveals that greater emphasis is given to October 1, 1949, the founding date of the People’s Republic of China. Unlike Japan and Korea, China does not hold an official ceremony on August 15<sup>th</sup>. To China, August 15<sup>th</sup> merely signifies one of the turning points in its history of Revolutionary Democracy. Unlike August 15<sup>th</sup> or

September 3<sup>rd</sup>, only October 1st is a national holiday. Chinese contemporary history, according to their textbooks, begins not on August 15, 1945 but on October 1, 1949. Accordingly, the first volume of *Eight-year Middle School Textbooks Chinese History* (中國歷史) covers to October 1, 1949; the second volume, considered the contemporary history volume, covers since October 1, 1949.

Taiwan celebrates October 25<sup>th</sup> as Independence Day even though the Taiwanese Government-General ended its control on August 15, 1945. This is because October 25<sup>th</sup> is the day when the Kuomintang military took Taiwan. Until 1988 when Mr. China Chingkuo became president, October 25<sup>th</sup> was considered Independence Day, but the ruling party scaled down the ceremony and even removed the date from its list of national holidays. In addition, some Taiwanese longing for independence from China are renaming it as a day to commemorate the end of the war, thereby distancing themselves from China and highlighting the division of the two countries.<sup>6</sup>

It is only the two Koreas and Japan which give great national significance to August 15<sup>th</sup>. In Korea, August 15<sup>th</sup> was once commemorated as Liberation Day;<sup>7</sup> in fact, it was called that until 1948 when the third ceremony to honor liberation was held to finally establish the Korean government. However, while designating four major days of remembrance in October 1949, the government decided to rename August 15<sup>th</sup> Independence Day. North Korea changed the name to National Liberation Day, when it decided to make the change has not been confirmed. All in all, both Koreas turned their very personal memories of August 15<sup>th</sup> into official ones, but with very different tones for each.

This difference took hold after the Korean War broke out in 1950, a time when the North and the South excluded the other's memory of August 15<sup>th</sup>, attaching only their own historical legitimacy to the national holiday. Just as the two Koreas have struggled against each other to assert their respective ideological identities, so too have they excluded the legitimacy of each other's memories, an approach that persists to this day. For instance, at some point, it was widely accepted in Korea that independence (光復) was a more appropriate term than liberation (解放) and that those who used the latter term belonged to the left. Since the decline of communism and the alleviation of the ideological strife

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6. For the Taiwanese memory of August 15<sup>th</sup>, refer to Zhu De Ran's article in *Memory of August 15 and the New Chapter of East Asia*.

7. For the memory of the Koreans, refer to Sin Ju-Back's article in *Memory of August 15 and the New Chapter of East Asia*.

between North and South Korea, the two terms have been used interchangeably.<sup>8</sup>

Nonetheless, South Korean textbooks use independence as the official term, while North Korean ones use liberation; with regard to August 15<sup>th</sup>, the former highlights Korean independence from Japanese rule, whereas the latter views the occasion as the victory of the national liberation struggle under Kim Il Sung's leadership (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development 2006a and 2006b).

Japan also changed the national holiday to remember the end of the war.<sup>9</sup> During the period ruled by General Headquarters, September 2<sup>nd</sup> was deemed a holiday to remember the defeat. But in April of 1952 when the San Francisco Peace Treaty took effect, the country started to acknowledge August 15<sup>th</sup> as a day to commemorate the end of the war; and beginning in 1955, media efforts helped to establish the day as Memorial Day. In the 1960s, the day set well with Japanese citizens who were experiencing rapid economic growth. This means that their mind-set about the war changed from surrender equals defeat to the end of the war equals peace,<sup>10</sup> a viewpoint also guiding the writing of current middle school and high school history textbooks.

Since 1963, Japan has held a war memorial service on August 15<sup>th</sup>. For Japan, it is a day to commemorate peace and mourn not just its own war dead

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8. For more details, see Sin Ju-Back, "Liberation, Independence," Historical Criticism Committee, ed., *Correct Historical Terminology* (Seoul: History Criticism, 2006).

9. For the changing Japanese conceptions of August 15<sup>th</sup>, see Matsuda Toshihiko's article published in *Memory of August 15 and the New Chapter of East Asia*.

10. Sato Takumi, *Hatigatu zyuugoniti no sinnka* (Myth of August 15), Tokyo: Chikuma Shinsho, 2005, pp. 111-8, pp. 229-31. However, Sato's account of Korea and China are problematic in a number of ways. Since I cannot offer a full review of the argument here, I will touch upon a few points instead. First of all, from the perspective of autonomous reaction, he fails to recognize that August 15<sup>th</sup> has been celebrated as Liberation Day in the private sphere since 1946. Although North Korea and South Korea refer to it as National Liberation Memorial Day and Independence Day respectively, they have both always commemorated August 15<sup>th</sup>. Furthermore, considering the socio-historical context for the changing concepts of liberation and independence, his argument seems oversimplistic. The same criticism can be made of his reflections on China. He overlooks the changes with regard to August 15<sup>th</sup> in the 1987 edition of Chinese history textbooks. Concerning the shift from September 3<sup>rd</sup> to August 15<sup>th</sup>, emphasis should be put not on antagonism against Japan but on China's transition into a free market economy. However, Sato fails to address the latter cause in any way. The next issue concerns the use of textbooks. His analysis of the memory of August 15<sup>th</sup> does not examine textbooks used in 2004 and 2005. Although Korean textbooks also underwent significant changes under the Seventh Curriculum, he does not refer to the new editions. Given the ongoing nature of the debate between Korea, China and Japan, the failure to investigate the recent changes is a grave omission.

but the war dead of its invaders as well. The memorial service held in Okinawa on June 23<sup>rd</sup> has the same approach. So we can see that Japan's Memorial Day is neither a day when the country was defeated by the Allied Powers nor a day when the country reflects on its past.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I have compared the memories of Korea, China and Japan on Japanese colonization, civil resistance to colonial rule, and finally liberation. Without recapitulating all the points covered above, I can conclude that this paper has confirmed the growing discrepancies between national memories, even though the three nations share the same educational goal of preparing their citizens for internationalization (globalization). Unfortunately, their efforts toward internationalization are founded on national pride, without the necessary recognition and consideration of historical and cultural relativity. Moreover, they have been deeply influenced by the contemporary political reality.

Evaluating the approaches used in the history textbooks of these three countries is a relatively new phenomenon. Despite its newness, however, I think my evaluations in this paper have successfully shown that the collective memory revealed in the textbooks has consistently shifted. That is, although memories of the past are recorded in historical textbooks, future generations do not simply replay them. Indeed, depending on the situation and the values of the times, these memories get played out differently.

Especially in terms of Japan's colonial rule and the citizens' struggle for independence and liberation, the history textbooks of the three countries show more sophisticated academic research and study. The books also demonstrate how they are influenced by changes in the political environment. As a result, all three countries and their peoples have different recollections of the same historical events.

This of course has led to conflicts both within the three countries and without. Japan's attempt to explore the EEZ (排他的 經濟水域) of Dokdo Island in May of 2006 brought with it a sliver of fear that the two countries could end up in an armed clash. Currently in East Asia the conflicts to correct the different memories of the three countries have escalated to the point that they are affecting diplomacy and domestic and international politics. More than ever, 'the politicization of history' has become a regular occurrence.

Our challenge is to overcome this problem, which can be resolved only if broadminded and forward-thinking individuals engage in a genuine dialogue about historical issues. Their discussion should focus on the history of East Asia through history textbooks. Now is the time to consider form and substance together. To narrow and even eliminate the differences, we have to prepare thoroughly. The first step is to formulate and authenticate an East Asian identity; alternatively, to write a history of East Asia is another step in the right direction.

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**Sin Ju-Back** is a research professor at Seoul National University.