

# Narratives of the Korean War in Chinese High School History Textbooks

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This article surveys the characteristics and changes of China's historical understanding of Korea by examining the descriptions of the Korean War in its high school history textbooks. Twelve textbooks published from 1978 to 2008, which used the former USSR-style of *Lishi jiaoxuedagang* or the American style of *Lishi kechengbiaozhun*, were analyzed. China is a country that uses history education as a main mechanism of its ideological education, which establishes its ideology and justifies the party. Since China has reformed its educational framework in accordance with the demands of the times, an analysis of Chinese history textbooks is a suitable way to comprehend China's understanding of other countries. An analysis of the history of war and, in particular, the Korean War will provide a clear understanding of China's awareness of Korea. Although its official stance regarding the Korean War has not changed much, what has changed is the use of a relatively objective description from its exclusively ideological viewpoint shown in past textbooks. The textbooks also consider the relations between North and South Korea apart from its interpretation of the war solely as a confrontation between China and America.

Keywords: Korean War, Chinese history textbooks, *Lishi jiaoxuedagang*, *Lishi kechengbiaozhun*, *Kangmeiyuanchao baojiaweiguo*, historical recognition

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## 1. Introduction

Textbook descriptions reflect the then political, economic, social, and cultural influences and contain the beliefs and consensus of social constituents, which are transmitted to the next generation through the use of textbooks. In particular,

in the case of history textbooks that deal with recent historical events, and setting the accuracy of the historical facts apart from the analysis, it is important in this context how these historical facts are described and dealt with. Also, the fact that a country's image is formed largely through school education and this image will be maintained without much change is one important reason why history textbooks should be analyzed.

The image of a foreign country depicted in history textbooks is created based on the history of relations between the two countries and is mostly based upon war history, which is an antagonistic relationship. Thus, examining the descriptions of the Korean War in Chinese history textbooks will help us understand how Korea was, is, and will be viewed by China.

Through a large-scale revision of Chinese curriculum that began at the end of the twentieth century, the contents about Korea were largely curtailed due to the reduction in the number of pages in the textbooks. For example, in *Shijie jindai xiandaiishi* (History of the Modern and Contemporary World), the section on the Sino-Japanese War was significantly reduced and the content about the War of a Loyal Army and the *Samil* Independence Movement disappeared (Kim 2007:4). With the new curriculum, the descriptions about Korea in Chinese history textbooks focus on the history of war, especially the Korean War.

China is a country that uses history education as a main mechanism of its ideological education, thus establishing its ideology and justifying the party as well as reflecting its political reality and beliefs in textbooks. China is also a country that is reforming its educational framework to meet the demands of the times. Therefore, China's awareness of other countries can be grasped through their history textbooks.

This paper analyzes why Chinese high school history textbooks focus on the Korean War even with the gradual reduction of contents about Korea in the textbooks as well as surveys the characteristics and changes of China's historical understanding of Korea through the examination of descriptions of the Korean War in the textbooks.

Since the end of the twentieth century, China has been performing a comprehensive revision of its curriculum. History textbooks are moving from *Lishi jiaoxuedagang* (General Principles of History Curriculum), a former-USSR style, to the American-style system of *Lishi kechengbiaozhun* (Standards of History Curriculum). Middle school experimental textbooks, or *Shiyan jiaokeshu*, have been used since 2001 and high school experimental textbooks have been used since 2004 in experimental zones (*Shiyanqu*) throughout the

country. At first, textbooks that followed the former-USSR style and the experimental textbooks that followed the American style were both used.

In the case of middle schools, the experimental textbooks have replaced the former-USSR style textbooks as of September 2007. In the case of high schools, the *Lishi jiaoxuedagang* textbooks and the *Lishi kechengbiaozhun* experimental textbooks have both been used up to now and the latter will be solely used throughout the country beginning September 2009. At present, there are four experimental high school history textbooks that follow *Lishi kechengbiaozhun*. They are published by Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe (People's Education Press), Yuelu shushe (Yuelu Press), Renmin chubanshe (People's Press), and Daxiang chubanshe (Daxiang Press). Among these, the most popular experimental history textbook is the one published by the People's Education Press.

**Table 1** List of Analyzed Textbooks

Year of Publication	Author	Title of the Book
1978	Jiaocai lishibianxiezu (The Textbook Editing & Writing Team)	World History
1983	Shou JiYu	World History for High School
1987		World History for High School
1992		World History for High School (Compulsory) 3 Books
1992		History of the Modern & Contemporary World for High School (Compulsory)
1993		History of Modern & Contemporary China for High School (Compulsory)
1997	Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe lishishi (The History Team of People's Education Press)	History of Modern & Contemporary China for High School for Full-Time Ordinary High Schools (Experimental) 2 Books
1998		History of the Modern & Contemporary World for High School for Full-Time Ordinary High Schools (Experimental) (Limited Elective)
2003		History of Modern & Contemporary China (Compulsory)
2005		History of Modern & Contemporary World (Elective)
2005	Lishi kecheng jiaocai yanjiu kaifa zhongxin (Center of History Curriculum and Materials Research & Development)	History I-III (Compulsory)
2008		History I-VI (Elective) III: War & Peace in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century

This paper analyzes the description of the Korean War contained in high school history textbooks that follow *Lishi jiaoxuedagang* and *Lishi kechengbiaozhun* and were published by the People's Education Press. This paper did not analyze them separately if the contents were the same despite the different history curriculum. This paper also tried to insert a translation that was faithful to the original.

## 2. View of the Chinese Political and Academic Worlds toward the Korean War

Before analyzing the textbooks, it is necessary to know how the Chinese political and academic worlds views the Korean War since history education in China has been used as a mechanism for reflecting and infusing the state's and the party's ideology.

The Chinese academic world generally divides research of the Korean War into two periods: the first period is from 1952 to 1959 and the second is from the end of the 1970s to the present.<sup>1</sup> The period between 1959 and the end of the 1970s was a vacuum period on research of the Korean War in China. Since Peng DeHuai, the Chinese commander-in-chief in the Korean War, fell from power at the Lushan meeting in 1959, research on the Korean War during this period was interpreted only for the political purpose of Mao ZeDong. Beginning in the latter half of the 1960s when the Cultural Revolution began, even basic research became impossible.

During the first period, texts were mainly about the history of war and were produced by military institutes. Examples are: *Kangmei yuanchao zhanzhengde jingyan zongkuo* (Experiences during the War Resisting America and Assisting North Korea), published in October 1956 but not available to the public, and *Kangmeiyuanchao zhanzheng zhengzhi gongzuo jingyan huibian* (Experiencing Several Major Problems with Political Operations in the War Resisting America and Assisting North Korea), which was published in October 1958. As seen in

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1. Ji De Xue, a researcher at the Chinese Military Academy, divides the Korean War as stated in the main text. However, Zhu Jian Rong divides the two periods differently: the first period is from 1952 to the end of the 1980s and the second period is from the end of the 1980s to the present (Zhu 2005:16).

the books' titles, research at that time was tintured with political propaganda, tactics, and strategy (Zhu 2005:18).

During the second period, diversified research on historical data was performed and the scope was enlarged because of China's reform and opening that began at the end of the 1970s and the former USSR's and China's declassification of documents on the Korean War beginning in the middle of the 1990s. Typical publications are: *Peng DeHuai zishu* (Autobiography of Peng DeHuai) published in 1981, *Mao ZeDong junshiwenzuan* (Select Military Writings of Mao ZeDong) published in 1981, *Nie RongZhen huigulu* (Memoirs of Marshal Nie Rongzhen) published in 1984, *Zhongguo renmin zhiyuanjun kangmeiyuanchaozhanshi* (History of the War of the Chinese Volunteers to Resist America and Assist North Korea) annotated and edited by the Military Academy in 1986, *Mao ZeDong yu kangmeiyuanchao* (Mao ZeDong and Resisting America and Assisting North Korea) published in 2000, and *Kangmeiyuanchao zhanzhengshi* (History of the War Resisting America and Assisting North Korea) published in 2000.

Among them, *History of the War of the Chinese Volunteers* contains official Chinese viewpoints.<sup>2</sup> The arguments contained in this book are as follows. First, America was economically expanding after World War II and tried to carry out a policy of invasion and war in order to conquer the world by means of its economic and military power. With such an intention, America intervened militarily in a civil war on the Korean Peninsula. Second, America joined in the civil war on the Korean Peninsula and intentionally distorted the character of the civil war. This caused North Korea's domestic revolutionary war to become the people's liberation war against an imperialist invasion. Third, as a friendly nation of North Korea, China couldn't tolerate America's military invasion of North Korea, threat to Chinese security, and invasion and occupation of Taiwan. Thus China joined in the war to maintain its own security.

Shen Zhi Hua was a famous civilian researcher on the Korean War. In his

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2. Each Chinese democratic party issued a declaration about joining the Korean War on November 4, 1950. On November 6, the party bulletin *Renminribao* (The People's Daily) published its standpoint: "Imperialist America invaded the Korean Peninsula for the purpose of realizing its desire to conquer the world and tried to invade socialist China with the Korean Peninsula as a stepping-stone. China participated in the war to protect all 'the democratic camps' because of America's invasive escalation of the Korean War and the threat to Taiwan and China's northeastern territory" (Renminribao, November 6, 1950).

writings, he began with a new viewpoint about the formation of an alliance between China and the USSR and the origin of the Korean War that hadn't attracted attention in China in the past. He then analyzed the actual results and objective influences of the alliance between China and the USSR under the then international situation. Also, for the first time among Chinese scholars, Yang Kui Song admitted that the Korean War had begun because of a southward invasion by the North Korean People's Army (Feng 2007:59).

Research on the Korean War by the Chinese academic world comes from the second period, and different viewpoints from past ones have appeared. However, most Chinese scholars maintain the standpoint that Mao ZeDong's decision to join in the Korean War was right considering the influences gained by China because of Chinese domestic political and economic elements and participation in the war. Also, in the case of research on the history of war, they haven't moved beyond a description of the process of participation in the war and rarely reveal their own viewpoints (Zhu 2001:244).

### 3. Description of the Korean War in Chinese Textbooks

#### 1) *Quanrizhi Zhongxue Lishi Jiaoxuedagang*

There is no description of the Korean War in *Shejie lishi* (World History, 1983). *Shejie lishi* (World History, 1987) is a revision of the 1983 edition. "Chapter 9: Strengthening of the People's Democratic Capability and the Hegemony of America" was added to the 1987 edition, which meant that content about the Korean War was newly added.

The Korean War is described in "America's Invasion of Asia"(Section 3) as follows:

On June 25, 1950, the Korean War broke out. President Harry S. Truman made an announcement and ordered the invasion of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by dispatching American military forces. At the same time, to hinder the liberation of Taiwan, an important territory that the Chinese people had tried to liberate by force, America invaded the Taiwan Strait with its 7<sup>th</sup> fleet. America also manipulated the United Nations Security Council, passed a resolution on the issue of Korea, mustered an army from fifteen countries, and invaded the north of Korea. In

September 1950, American troops landed at Incheon and furiously invaded northward. The war reached China's northeast border. To resist America, assist North Korea and defend China, the Chinese people dispatched the Chinese People's Volunteer Army, crossed the Yalu River, and joined in the operation along with the North Korean People's Army. Both peoples of China and North Korea repulsed the American invasive army near the 38<sup>th</sup> degree North Latitude. In the summer of 1953, America reluctantly made an armistice agreement. (History Team 1987:285)

The Korean War described in *World History* (1987) appears as the starting point of America's invasion of Asia. The textbook does not explain the background of the Cold War prior to the Korean War. Based on the description, the reader is likely to have the false impression that the American military invaded North Korea first. As the American 7<sup>th</sup> fleet invaded the Taiwan Strait, the United Nations Command, mainly composed of the American military, invaded North Korea and the war was expanded to the northeast border of China; thus, the textbook justifies China's participation in the war. However, according to historical facts, China had already agreed on the following items: a plan for North Korea to invade South Korea, the Chinese army's support of North Korea in the event of an emergency, and beginning in July 1950 the preparation by China for participation in the war. Mao ZeDong had the 4<sup>th</sup> Chinese Field Army, which had been stationed in the south of China, move northward to the Yalu River in preparation for the dispatch of troops. In preparation for joining in the war, 255,000 soldiers from the 4<sup>th</sup> Field Army had already moved to the Yalu River area by the middle of August 1950 (Lee 1999:227-8).

America's invasive expansion toward Asia was frustrated once again. In particular, after the failure with the invasive wars in Korea and Vietnam, American national power became much weaker than at the beginning of the wars. To protect the security and profit of Europe, the center of American strategy, America withdrew part of its army and sent them to Europe. (History Team 1987:286)

China regards both the Korean War and the Vietnam War, which broke out as a result of the Cold War, as America's invasion of Asia after World War II. Then, what were the actual facts? Of course, the Korean War was an undecided war in

which both sides abandoned a military solution by signing an armistice agreement while the Vietnam War was a lost war for America. The Korean War was also a damaging and undecided war for China. First of all, China's unification with Taiwan was postponed indefinitely because of China's participation in the Korean War. Confrontation with America brought about Chinese isolation in the international community for twenty years. In terms of the military, China's participation caused the loss of 426,000 military personnel, among them about 200 commanders above the regiment level. According to official statistics, losses incurred by the Chinese army greatly surpassed that of America. Also, economically speaking, the total Chinese budget in 1951 increased by 60% because of the Korean War and of the total budget, direct expenditure for the war amounted to 32% (Shen 2000:105-6). This amount was a tremendous loss to China whose economy was in shambles because of the prolonged Sino-Japanese War and civil war and whose domestic reform was under way. However, in *World History* (1987), only America's invasion and failure caused by the Korean War were emphasized and Chinese losses were not mentioned at all.

## 2) Quanrizhi Chuji Zhongxue Lishi Jiaoxuedagang

The contents about the Korean War in *Shijie jindai xiandaiishi* (History of the Modern and Contemporary World) that was published in 1992 are almost identical to the 1987 *World History*. Since the contents concerning the Korean War in *Zhongguo jindai xiandaiishi* (History of Modern and Contemporary China, 1993) were described from the viewpoint of Chinese history, they are very concise and the tone of argument became stronger. This has a close connection with the then Chinese situation.

At the time, the Chinese government ordered the strengthening of history education because it believed that Chinese youths' feelings of inferiority to the West were caused by a lack of knowledge about Chinese history after the reform and opening of China.<sup>3</sup> The Chinese Education Committee established *Zhong xiaoxue jiaqiang zhongguo jindai, xiandaiji guoqing jiaoyude zhongti gangyao*

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3. In March 1991, Secretary General Jiang ZeMin ordered Li TieYing and He DongChang, the men in charge of the Chinese Education Committee at different times, "to raise national pride and confidence of the Chinese people by teaching modern and contemporary Chinese history and national administration from the beginning to students from kindergarten through college" (Wang 2000:111).



(General Plan for Strengthening Modern and Contemporary Chinese History Education and the National Administration in Primary and Secondary Schools) and *Zhongxue lishi xueke sixiang zhengzhi jiaoyu gangyao* (General Plan for Ideological and Political Education in the History Curriculum for Secondary Schools) in 1992, and the ideological and political education was strengthened through the use of concrete historical facts (Kim 2001:118).

In *History of Modern and Contemporary China* (1993), the previously used expression of “The Korean War broke out” was replaced by expressions such as “The Korean civil war broke out” and “In the name of the United Nations Command, the invasive war of Korea was escalated.”<sup>4</sup> It also describes that though the Chinese government strongly protested against America’s invasive action, America underestimated China’s capability, crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, and rapidly invaded the border between China and North Korea. The book attributes the responsibility of the escalation of the Korean War and Chinese participation in the war wholly to America.<sup>5</sup> The description of America’s bombing of north-east China appears only in Chinese history textbooks and is a cliché expression when explaining the reason for China’s participation in the Korean War.<sup>6</sup>

Second, “The victory of *Kangmei yuanchao* [War Resisting America and Assisting North Korea] proved that the time when Western invaders could forcibly occupy a country for hundreds of years by placing their guns on the shores would never happen again.” As the fate of North Korea and the safety of China are closely connected, there is the expression “Chunwang ze chihan hupo

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4. This reflected the standpoint of the Chinese academic world which viewed the Korean War as a civil war between North and South Korea and as an international war between China and America. Zhu Jian Rong said, “One of the reasons China consistently fled from responsibility for participation in the Korean War was because China maintained that the Korean War should be viewed as two stages of war: a civil war and an international war. China still thinks the Korean War escalated into an international war because of the declaration of President Harry S. Truman and the participation of the United Nations Command”(Zhu 2005:70-1).

5. In reality, Zhou EnLai warned at the first anniversary of national foundation on September 30, 1950, “We won’t just sit and watch our neighboring country suffer from a barbarous invasion of imperialists,” and informed Mr. Panikkar, Indian ambassador to China, “If American troops occupy North Korea, China will participate in the war.”

6. On September 30, 1950, Zhou EnLai reported, “America had its air force that was dispatched to South Korea invade the territorial skies around Yaoningsheng, and shoot and bomb several times. It also had its navy that was dispatched to invade North Korea bomb Chinese merchant ships” (Renminribao, October 1, 1950). *Renminribao* (November 6, 1950) and writings edited by the Military Academy of China also persisted in stating that America bombed northeast China.

ze dangwei,” which means “Teeth will be chilly without lips and a fire in the outer house will also endanger the main house.” That is, in modern and contemporary Chinese history textbooks published in 1993, America was no longer an object of envy and should be viewed as an imperialist that invaded China by firing its guns upon China.

Third, could China have waged war against American imperialism, the strongest power in the world at that time? The textbook emphasizes that in spite of the imbalance of power, like the struggle between David and Goliath, the Chinese communist party bravely participated in the Korean War and won the war in the long run. Unlike Qing who was weak against foreign powers, the textbook emphasizes the image and justification of the Chinese communist party as a proud and self-confident government and as a strong government that bravely fought for a blood alliance which was in danger, despite unfavorable conditions.

Last, *History of Modern and Contemporary China* (1993) states that “North Korea asked the Chinese government for help by means of the dispatch of an army.” The description of China’s participation in the Korean War in order to assist a foreign country shows China’s consistent standpoint: Ming helped Joseon by dispatching an army at its request during the Japanese invasion of 1592 and Qing also helped Joseon by dispatching an army at the request of Joseon during the Gabo Peasant War in 1894. However, according to historical facts, Ming dispatched its army when Japan invaded Joseon under the pretext of ‘chilly teeth without lips,’ and the Sino-Japanese War was caused by a power struggle between Qing and Japan for hegemony over Joseon. While there is a possibility that China participated in the Korean War to help North Korea, it is more likely that it participated in order to maintain its security and out of fear that the Korean Peninsula would fall under the influence of America (Kim and Cheong 2004).

### 3) Quanrizhi Putong Gaoji Zhongxue Lishi Jiaoxue Dagang

The contents about the Korean War in *Zhongguo jindai xiandaishi* (History of Modern and Contemporary China, 1997) assume a softer tone by using expressions like “America” instead of “American imperialism.” It emphasizes that the existence of North Korea and the safety of China were interdependent. The ‘Practice’ and ‘Data Analysis’ sections emphasize that China had to participate

in the Korean War for the benefit of China and the whole of socialism.<sup>7</sup>

The textbook also contains a picture of the destroyed Chinese city of Andong (Dandong), which had been bombarded by American forces, and another picture of a Chinese volunteer soldier and a North Korean middle-aged woman hugging, crying, and expressing regret at parting. The caption says, “During the period of resisting America and assisting North Korea, the Chinese and North Korean people promoted friendship through a blood alliance,” and explains the ideological blood alliance between China and North Korea. However, this picture is not used in *History of Modern and Contemporary China* (2003). Thus, the ideological blood alliance between China and North Korea has been diluted and has given way to the theory of Chinese pragmatism.

#### 4) Quanrizhi Putong Gaoji Zhongxue Lishijiaoxuedagang

*Shijie jindai xiandaishi* (History of the Modern and Contemporary World), published in 1998, briefly describes the Korean War in Section 3 “American Hegemony” and “The Korean and Vietnam Invasive Wars.” Unlike *History of Modern and Contemporary China* that induced patriotism, *History of the Modern and Contemporary World* describes the Korean War more objectively. “The Invasion of the Taiwan Strait” was expressed more mildly with “An American Intervention into a Chinese Domestic Affair” and the southward invasion of North Korea was described as “America criticizes North Korea as an aggressor nation.” These changes in the tone are mainly derived from China’s continued reform and opening, the friendly relations between China and South Korea, and the established theory in the academic world that North Korea invaded South Korea on purpose. All have been confirmed in the classified records of the former USSR opened since the end of the Cold War. Despite the less aggressive terminology used in *History of the Modern and Contemporary World*, the underlying tone has not changed China’s perception that the Korean civil war escalated into an international war because of America and that America’s threat caused China’s participation in the war.

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7. In a telegram that Mao ZeDong sent to Zhou EnLai on October 13, 1950, Mao stated, “Synthetically speaking, we should and we have to participate in the Korean War. If we participate, it will be profitable and if not, it will be very unprofitable” (Military History Institute 1988).

## 5) Putong Gaozhong Lishi Kecheng Biao zhun

*Lishi 1* (History 1, 2005) and *Lishi-20shijide zhanzhengyu heping* (History of War and Peace in the Twentieth Century, 2008) were edited according to the Standards of History Curriculum (*Lishi kechengbiaozhun*), and the contents and composition were changed in comparison with those edited according to the General Principles of History Curriculum (*Lishi jiaoxuedagang*).

*History 1* (2005) is used in a required sophomore class and describes Chinese history in connection with world history. The contents concerning the Korean War are briefly described: the division of the Korean Peninsula into North and South Korea along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel; the outbreak of the Korean War; the invasion of the United Nations Command composed mainly of American troops; and, the Chinese People's Volunteer Army and the North Korean People's Army expelling the UN Command near the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. *History of War and Peace in the Twentieth Century* (2008) is a textbook used in an elective course. It describes the Korean War in an independent section<sup>8</sup> rather precisely and the contents concerning the war are more or less improved from previous textbooks.

Textbooks edited according to *Lishi kechengbiaozhun* consider the reasons for the Korean War as the division of Korea and their confrontation after the outbreak of World War II as well as America's pursuit of hegemony. Second, they describe the Korean War as a large-scale civil war caused by the confrontation between East and West after World War II, and the Korean War seriously accelerated the division of the Korean Peninsula. North and South Korea, which had been excluded when describing the Korean War, were mentioned first. As to the influences of the Korean War upon China, they describe that China's participation in the war helped it maintain its national security and enhanced its international position by assisting with North Korea's just war. It seems contradictory that while saying that China was forced to participate in the Korean War because of America's threat, they also describe the southward invasion of North Korea as a just war for unification.<sup>9</sup>

Textbooks edited according to *Lishi jiaoxuedagang* describe the Korean War less emotionally and more objectively. However, they also clearly explain the

8. The Korean War is described in "Lesson 1: The Korean War" of Unit 5.

9. The expression *Zhengyi shiye* (A Just Project) appears in *Renminribao* (May 12, 1978) and *Zhongguo renmin zhiyuanjun kangmei yuanchao zhanshi* (1988).

curriculum: “the analysis and solution of problems through the materialistic conception of history, the increase of patriotic feelings and the establishment of national pride and confidence through the succession and development of traditions of the Chinese people” to correct the confusion of national identity (Kwon 2006:36).

To China that passed a humiliating century as leased territory and a colony of the world powers soon after the rule of Qing, the Korean War was an important historical incident that enabled China to recover its pride and confidence. Since China was able to overcome its sense of humiliation that had been felt by the Chinese people for a long time and establish a national identity through the Korean War, its own historical recognition toward the war won't be easily changed (Shen 2000:104).

#### 4. Conclusion

Generally speaking, war sees the world in a relationship between friends and enemies and demands blind belief in the superiority of the group and system where one belongs (Kwon, Kim, Park, Oh, and Ku 2006:206). Then, what are the values and group memory that the Chinese government tries to reflect on its descendants through the description of the Korean War in its history textbooks and what is China's historical recognition toward Korea?

Just as Chinese history textbooks describe the Korean War as a war that accomplished *Baojia weiguo* (Defending our country and safeguarding our families) through *Kangmei yuanchao* (War Resisting America and Assisting North Korea), China also evaluates the Korean War as a historical incident that fortified internally the newly-born people's government and fostered externally a good environment early in its national foundation. In other words, the Korean War is recognized as an important incident in which China fought against America despite its economic and military inferiority, joined in the armistice agreement equally with America, and escaped from national inferiority and regained its confidence. While the Korean War is often seen as a civil war, China saw it as a war against America, one of the two axes of the Cold War. Because of this perception, high school history textbooks exclude content on North and South Korea, and do not deal with China's responsibility for and influences on the Korean War. As shown in the description of the Japanese invasion of Joseon in 1592 and in the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, the description in

Chinese history textbooks toward the Korean War emphasizes China's image as a protector or savior of neighboring countries based on Sinocentrism.

The Chinese view of *Kangmei yuanchao baojia weiguo* (War Resisting America and Assisting North Korea and Defending our Country and Safeguarding our Families), which has been used in history textbooks up to now, won't be easily changed unless what China gained for its participation in the Korean War become useless. However, textbooks have eliminated descriptions which contain ideological emotions; for example, "The Chinese People's Volunteer Army crossed the Yalu River and joined in the war together with the North Korean People's Army" in *World History* (1987) changed to "The Chinese People's Volunteer Army joined in the war and repelled American invaders together with the North Korean People's Army and people" in *History of the Modern and Contemporary China* (2005). These changes were caused by China's reform and opening as well as the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and South Korea. It also means China has freed itself from the recognition that North Korea is a brother country.

Recently, because of the rapid development of the Internet and the increase of human and material exchanges along with globalization, cultural boundaries between nations have become more obscured and the shock of a historical view and a world view occurs together with culture shock. The problem of historical objectivity has become, above all, important in sharply divided historical interests between nations and the period of compelling a unilateral historical view of a nation has faded away. After all, there is hope that historical descriptions will find an acceptable compromise. The change to the Standards of History Curriculum, a guide for describing Chinese history textbooks, reflects such a demand of the times and there is the possibility of improvement in the objective descriptions of the Korean War.

Because of China's way of describing and interpreting history with priority given to its own history, China and South Korea are sharply competing with each other in a kind of history war. However, the Chinese standpoint that history education is regulated by its national policy and works as an ideology toward people rather than in any other East Asian country won't be easily changed. Also, Korean textbooks are the most basic medium in forming a collective identity and consciousness about history in Korean students. Thus, both China and Korea need to make an effort to improve their textbooks. Efforts by governmental, academic, and civilian organizations to improve international understanding from a reciprocal viewpoint rather than a unilateral demand for correction are

necessary. In this respect, the publication of *Miraereul yeoneun yeoksa* (History for the Future) by South Korea, China, and Japan in 2005 was a step in the right direction in overcoming the historical conflicts between China and South Korea.

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