

Recommendation

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Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, there have been serious conflicts between Korea and Japan on numerous issues not only over historical appraisal and description of the Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty and Japanese colonial rule over Korea in history textbooks but also over Japanese prime ministers' visits to Yasukuni Shrine, forced labor during the colonial rule and ongoing territorial conflicts. Following the inauguration of the Abe administration, the conflicts between the two countries do not seem to be solved in the political arena. However, it is imperative to settle international conflicts over history for the East Asian region's peace and prosperity at the time when a new regional power structure for the twenty-first century is about to take shape. In this regard, civic groups need to play a leading role in finding ways to a lasting reconciliation between the two countries. In this paper, the writer wishes to call attention again to the France-Germany and Poland-Germany dialogues over an issue of history textbook, which served as a model for civic groups of Korea and Japan to settle the disputes over controversial content in government-approved history textbooks in Japan since the Japanese History Textbook Scandal in 1982. At the same time, the writer will evaluate the importance of the "Joint Statement by Korean and Japanese Intellectuals at the 100th Anniversary of the Annexation" included in this book.

After experiencing the First World War caused partly by extreme nationalism throughout Europe, European pacifists believed that they needed to teach peace to young students by removing negative descriptions about neighboring countries and nations from their textbooks because prejudice in the head of people can lead to a war. The first dialogue between France and Germany did not take place because of the Nazis' rise to power in Germany but the effort to have an international dialogue continued after the Second World War, which led to the establishment of UNESCO that has been spearheading a drive to improve textbooks as one of its core projects and published *A Handbook for the Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials as Aids to International Understanding* in 1949. This handbook presented 6 principles for the analysis and improvement of textbook and teaching materials such as „accuracy, fairness, worth, comprehensiveness and balance, world-mindedness, and international cooperation“. (Accuracy meant above all that „there should be no factual distortion“. Fairness meant

not least that “unpleasant facts and undesirable conduct should not be ignored, but they should be placed in perspective, and controversial issues should be presented objectively. If the scholars of two or more countries cannot agree on the facts or interpretation of important events in their relationships with each other, fair statements of the different points of view should be presented.”)

The dialogue between France and Germany over the issue of history textbook was based on the aforementioned principles and culminated in a joint recommendation for an improvement of national history textbooks in 1951. Since then historians and history teachers of the two countries conducted joint research projects on major issues and periods important to both of the countries, narrowing down differences in each other’s appraisal of historical events. The same model was successfully adapted by Poland and Germany after the Warsaw Pact in 1970. The dialogue between Poland and Germany began in 1972 and produced a joint recommendation in 1976. Since then the two nations’ textbook committees held annual international conferences in order to enhance mutual understanding of each other’s history.

Greatly impressed and stimulated by the bilateral dialogues on national history books in Europe – and especially by the dialogue between Poland and Germany, civic groups in East Asia initiated regional dialogues over the issue and received a great deal of attention by carrying out joint research projects and publishing books in 2000 and after. Textbook dialogues were an enlightening learning process for the participants. Though not totally having shaken off their nation-state perspective of history, they could revise a large proportion of it. Here I would like to emphasize what is usually overlooked by Korean participants in reporting about their experiences in the East Asian textbook dialogues. They unconsciously learned and gradually internalized many things from Japanese participants in terms of historical studies, transnational perspective and history pedagogy. Japanese historians and history educators accepted and internalized developments in European historical studies and history pedagogy earlier than in China and Korea. Social history and comparative history were integrated into historical studies, and promotion of historical consciousness came to be more highlighted than knowledge transfer in history pedagogy. Following this trend, they tried to develop textbooks into self-teaching materials. While Korean participants have long believed that “the” historical truth exists, Japanese scholars have learned about the constructive character of historical writing and emphasized multiperspectivity. This gradual and calm learning process of Japanese companions may be considered to facilitate constructive bilateral dialogues on textbooks. However, I would like to point out that Japanese historians and history educators lack consistency and courage to improve their textbooks in compliance with what they think. They often are trapped by relativism that can lead to “everything goes.”

The outcomes of textbook dialogues cannot be reflected in formal textbooks without official support from a concerned government. The Japanese-Korean auxiliary textbook project, carried out by the small group of progressive or Korea-friendly Japanese scholars and teachers, was not accepted by the Japanese public or academia. To make a greater impact on the Japanese civil society, it is necessary to expand the scope of such dialogues to reach even central and conservative Japanese historians. When a consensus and trust between Japan and Korea has developed, it will be worth trying a European style of textbook dialogues. If it is hard to gain the governmental support, it is necessary to convince average Japanese historians and history educators to support dialogues, which will in turn help to get support from the Japanese civil society – a process that will take much patience and time.

We have realized through the dialogues that it is not possible to bring about a lasting reconciliation with Japan by simply accusing Japan of the atrocities that it committed in the past and unilaterally demanding the country to correct its perception of history. In other words, we also need to correct our way of writing our history books that have been so nation-centered. The dialogues over history textbooks in Europe clearly show how joint efforts in the field of historical studies and education can lead to a lasting reconciliation between neighboring countries. It is now widely agreed in Europe that history is constructed. Therefore, it is important to adapt the multi-perspective method that teaches history from another standpoint of interpretation and helps students gain their own view of their national history, instead of forcing them to learn historical facts by rote. In this regard, a history text book has experienced changes with the focus shifting from text to supplementary data (including historical materials), which can be summarized as a transformation from “Textbuch” to “Arbeitsbuch” that allows a more flexible approach to historical issues that may create serious controversies with neighboring countries.

At the same time, studies and discussions about the global history also make a great contribution towards overcoming nationalism in the study of history. “Interaction between different regions of the world, and issues that can be properly understood only in the global context,” became more important not only in historical research but also in the history textbooks. Current phenomena – industrialization, dominance of industrial capitalism, environmental problems, rise and fall of races during the globalization process, colonialism and imperialism, deportation and the diaspora, homogenization/differentiation among cultures, change in perception of time and space, changes in transportation and communication, and the emergence of the information society – can no longer be explained in the nation-state framework.

Koreans like to compare Japan with Germany, praising the latter’s thorough contrition for its wartime past after the Second World War. However,

Germany did not show regret about its past militarism and aggression right after the war. The public remorse for the Nazi regime began to gain currency only during the 1960's and 1970's. We should take into account the different development of power dynamics in the East Asian region after the war in order to trace the factors that made Japan and Germany take different attitude toward their painful past. When we try to use German atonement for its past to embarrass Japan and demand more apologies and compensations from Japan, it would not help to build a more productive relationship between Korea and Japan. In this regard, we need to be more patient, view the matter from a long-term perspective and appreciate piecemeal changes in the process.

The book to be published is significant in that prominent scholars of Korea and Japan discuss critical matters regarding the Japan's annexation of Korea over 100 years ago. The book will also lay foundation for evaluation of the fundamental characteristics of Japan's colonial rule over Korea. The effort to overcome controversies between Korea and Japan over sensitive historical issues has been focused on producing a common auxiliary textbook so far and thus resulted in a lack of joint research and dialogue between scholars of the two nations. However, the writer is sure that the book will serve as a platform for a unique international scholarly endeavor to study the historical relations between Japan and Korea as well as joint researches on the history of East Asia as a whole. Before Poland and Germany started the dialogue over their national history textbooks, priests of the two countries admitted their mistakes in the past and this event ultimately opened up the way to the dialogue that started in 1970. The "Joint Statement by Korean and Japanese Intellectuals at the 100th Anniversary of the Annexation" included in this book is more significant than the agreement of the priests of Poland and Germany as it represents a mutual and more specific recognition of leading intellectuals of Korea and Japan about historical wrongs in the past. Finally, the writer hopes that next generations of the two nations will attain prosperity within the framework of a peaceful regional community based on international understanding and reconciliation between the two countries through agreed perception of critical historical issues.

Recommendation

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This book “**One Hundred Years after Japan’s Forced Annexation of Korea: History and Tasks**” published by Akashi Shoten was originally planned to be published in Korean, Japanese and English. The Korean and Japanese versions were published in 2013, but various circumstances have prevented its English version from being published until now. I strongly hope those in English speaking countries read this book which will come very surprising with unbelievable stories.

Why should this book be published in three different languages? The decision came from the experience that its so-called sister book “International Joint Study: a Review on Japanese Annexation of Korea and Modern Era from the Perspective of History and International Law” of 800 pages was published in Japanese on December 20, 2008 and in Korean on March 30, 2009. This book was the culmination of diverse international studies with theoretical depth, which had nine rounds of seminars starting at Hawaii University, the United States, in January 2001 and concluding at Seoul National University, Korea, in August 2007. Regarding participants, North Korean scholar participated in the first seminar and presented his paper. After September 11 terrorist attacks, he stopped attending but his paper were read for him in English (at the third seminar). The first to ninth seminars enjoyed a large participation of European, US, Japanese and South Korean scholars. Apart from seminars held in Korea, Japanese participants included professor at Korea University in Japan. There were differences in opinion between some Japanese scholars who argued for legitimacy of Japanese annexation of Korea and others who argued for its illegitimacy, which prevented the dissertations of some Japanese scholars from being submitted to the editor at the time of publication. As a result, the sister book consisting of 26 papers and two explanations on publication mostly discussed illegitimacy of Japanese annexation of Korea. In addition, the book was too difficult and specialized to be translated into English and its volume was too large to secure sales channels. Because of all these reasons, its English version was not published, but after the publication in Korea and Japan, the need to publish in English sprang to mind.

Since I participated in the seminars from the first round and edited “International Joint Study: a Review on Japanese Annexation of Korea and Modern Era from the Perspective of History and International Law” along with

Mr. Yi Tae-jin, a Korean scholar, and the Japanese version of **“One Hundred Years after Japan’s Forced Annexation of Korea: History and Tasks,”** I am truly pleased to see the publication of the book in English. Having said that, I am obligated to discuss why English translation is necessary.

Based on my experience of being at all those seminars, a discussion of the annexation among Korean and Japanese scholars only would put such discourse in a closed room. For example, the Japanese government still considers its annexation of Korea legitimate and takes little issue with its illegitimacy. Therefore, it is appropriate to expand the debate by allowing the attendance of third party participants because in a closed room, the argument of a stronger nation tends to carry greater truth and weight even academically.

Men of intelligence say the rift between Korea and Japan is indispensable to peace and stability in East Asia. Such rift, however, will not be overcome with spontaneous ideas or speaking out one’s feelings. Here, the academics have a role to play. We should academically dig deep into the chasm between Korea and Japan to find out what created such rift and how to overcome it. There have been little academic work so far except for the two books we published based on joint international studies with the perspective of international law and history. Any work beyond the depth of our study would be an unparalleled achievement. Such work will be of good use not only for Korea and Japan but East Asia and the world.

The third party participation here means as extensive as to imply the world itself. The United States Declaration of the Independence reads: “The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.” The 13 states let the world judge the legitimacy of their argument, which is very important. What comes to my mind is the word of late Professor Paek Choong-hyun of Seoul National University (international law) who fell ill while leading those nine international seminars. He said, “It doesn’t matter we have different conclusions because that means a mere difference in the interpretation of texts. I want to know where different opinions appeared and find out such texts.” His statement is the truth in academic arena, and facts are that simple.

Japan annexed Korea in the 19th and 20th centuries when imperialism was rampant around the world. The West was engrossed in a competition to expand colonies in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. During the Meiji Period, Japan learned from the unequal treaty forced by the imperial West and imposed it on neighboring Korea and China. Such imperialistic competition came to an end with the defeats of Italy, Germany and Japan in the Second World War. As a result, Japan’s colonial rule in Korea ended. As

China under Chiang Kaishek joined hands with the Allied Forces, it was involved in the formation of the world order after the end of the Second World War, but it was not the case with Korea.

A discussion of Japanese annexation of Korea is associated with the history of the world's colonial rules and liberation. Korea shares the commonality with other nations that were under colonial rule around the world. If this can be said, it is meaningful to present the study on Japanese annexation of Korea translated in English to those countries experienced colonial rule and the world. This work will raise an alarm in history that such colonial rule should never repeat again. Thereby, an issue will be raised for Japan regarding how to face the history of colonialism and liberation.

Now I will roughly describe the contents of the book. The book is comprised of the dissertations of 20 scholars. Part I "The Process of Forced Annexation of Korea by Japan" shall discuss the most grave and difficult challenges between Korea and Japan. Part II "East Asian Colonialism and Japan" shall discuss the responsibility and realities of colonialism. Part III "Illegality of the Annexation from the Perspective of International Law" shall discuss illegitimacy of annexation from international law based on the theory of justice. Part IV "The Historic Perception and Remaining Tasks" shall touch upon the prospects of Korea and Japan based on previous discussions. In Part V "The Joint Statement of Korean and Japanese Scholars and the List of 1,000 Signatures of Scholars on the Occasion of 100 Year of Japanese Annexation of Korea," the focus will be on the argument on the invalidity of the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty of 1910 based on historic justice.