

# **Media Discourses on the Other: Japanese History Textbook Controversies in Korea**

Dong-Hoo Lee  
*University of Incheon, Korea*  
*donghoo@incheon.ac.kr*

One of roles of the mass media has been to record, interpret, and reinterpret important moments in national history, thus helping to form what has been called people's "collective memories." When history is viewed as a struggle to retain memory, the popular text that carries and recollects the past of a nation-state is not merely mass-delivering factual information about the past; it is reconstructing the concurrent meanings of the past and determining the direction of historical perception. The media of communication condition the form and content of memory and provide a place for historical discourses that compete with that memory.

For people in Korea, which was under Japanese colonial rule between 1910 and 1945, their thirty-six year experience of the Japanese as colonialists has been an unsettled diplomatic issue. This painful experience has also consciously and unconsciously affected the Korean media's construction of images of Japan. While Japan assumes that the Korea-Japan pact of 1965 has resolved the issue of legal indemnity, many Koreans believe that Japan's reflection on the past has not been sincere enough to eradicate their internalized feeling of being victims of Japanese imperialism. The official apologies made by Japanese leaders have been viewed as formal statements that were not followed by any efforts to liquidate the colonial past. The periodic statements made by leading Japanese politicians that gloss over the colonial past and Japanese textbooks that represent a past that is detached from Koreans' experiences have aroused anti-Japanese feeling to the present day. The content of the 2002 Japanese middle-school textbook was unveiled in Korea in mid-2000, restarting the battle between Korea and Japan over what part

of the past to remember and what to forget.

The Korean media have mediated this battle over memory and have constructed and reconstructed the image of Japan; they have reported the advent of Japanese history textbooks that disregard the collective memories of the colonized in their record of the colonial past and have been a window through which people recognize Japan's revision of history. They have made the Japanese history textbook controversy a national and international issue. This paper examines the characteristics of the Korean media's discourses that have delivered Japan's different framework for perceiving the past. This examination analyzes the discourse of both the major newspapers and civic groups' Internet sites about the Japanese history textbook controversy. By looking at their discourses, this paper tries to discuss how the two different media discourses have shaped Japanese "otherness" in the current social context.

### **Media, Memory, and Discourses on the Other**

#### ***Mediating the Past***

Halbwachs (1981), who first introduced the concept of "collective memory" in 1925, argues that collective memory plays the important role of constructing and maintaining a group's identity. Collective memory is not the simple retrieval of information about the past, but the recalling and reconstruction of the past within the context of the present. It is an active and constructive process shaped by present social needs and prevailing viewpoints (Schwartz, 1982) and a "process of linking" which continues to revise and redescribe the past (Bal, 1999). Hirsh and Wiedmer (1999) provide an example of this process of linking, which selects a specific memory and revives its present meaning, by studying images of the Holocaust. Collective memory, through which a society recollects its past, fosters cultural identity and makes the perception of the past important. This process involves complex political interests and cultural politics in the

meaning-making. Edy (1999) writes that collective memory is “home to critical aspects of political culture, community tradition, and social identity. It informs our understanding of past events and present relationships, and it contributes to our expectations about the future” (71). Collective memory can be thought of as a discourse resulting from various acts of communication with the past.

Discourse is not simply spoken words; it is a social practice that creates social meanings. Discourse placed within a historical context that establishes and enacts relations of power also produces social values and norms. Although it is affected by the ideology of a society, discourse is not totally maneuvered by it (Mills, 1997). It reflects the diverse power relations that are hierarchically inscribed within the discursive composition. Thus discourse may serve to perpetuate or reproduce the dominant ideology of a society; it may also unsettle the status quo. As a discourse about the past, collective memory varies with its social context and reflects the power relations of the day. It is usually confined to or dominated by the official historical discourses of a society. Rather than being a memory about the past naturally shared by every member of a society, collective memory is a communication process that makes sense out of the present contexts. Moreover, it is shaped by media environments, which condition the symbolic form and distribution of collective memory.

The media provide a place for the battle of memory and, at the same, condition narrative closure that confines historical events in narrative forms. Sturken (1997) writes that “the desire for narrative closure thus forces upon historical events the limits of narrative form and enables forgetting” (8). Memory’s materiality is important, for it helps offset the fluctuations that characterize remembering. The media are involved in the process of recalling our past, and thus in what we remember and how we remember it.

An oral community, which has no written basis upon which to record the past, has to depend on people's memories in order to remember. Ong (1982) argues that this condition shapes the form and content of the community's knowledge. Rosenston (1988, 1995) asserts that modern historical narratives have come from a linear and narrowed-down historical perspective resulting from the convention of recording history in the form of written text. As he points out, even written history cannot avoid the linguistic conventions of the history-writing genre; he believes that visual media can narrate the layered experiences of the past and construct a history that is located between abstract thought and concrete historical instance. The mediation of memory can affect its narrative form and content, as well as the means of access to it.

The symbolic messages of the mass media are unilaterally disseminated by capital-intensive institutions; there are clear distinctions between the message sender and the receiver. On the other hand, the Internet provides an open communication space where anyone can make his or her own public channels; as a result, the traditional relationship between the author and the audience is softened. Those who have been alienated from making formal historical discourse can present their personal memories to the public and engage in various meta-discourses on the discourse of the official historical memory.

History textbooks or the mass media in a society tend to construct a collective memory that centers on the nation-state. The history book controversies are about the battle of memory within Japan and, at the same time, about the battle between Japan and Korea over historical memory. Self-centered history reveals exclusivity and "closed-ness" through emphasizing the memory of one nation and placing it above other nations' memories. On the other hand, characteristics of the Internet such as multi-dimensional modes of communication, hypertextuality, multi-media, capability of storage, interactivity, and flexibility of authorship can expand our capacity for

remembering and set up flexible and diverse links to the past. The Internet provides another place for the battle of memory. It can restore the memory excluded in the process of linkage, revitalize people's reflections on history and historical perspectives, and dissipate absolute authority in telling the story of the past.

Anderson (1983) writes that the printing press has played an important role in creating the concept of a nation. With the development of the printing press, there have emerged those who are able to read and write with their national language, and those who can imagine themselves as the members of a national community sharing a common ground. Anderson does not focus on the media environment that has been the context of constructing this "imaginary community," but he suggests that the mass acceptance of the printing press has contributed to the development of the nation-state consciousness. The national newspapers have played the role of gatekeeper within the nation-state boundaries and consciously and unconsciously contribute to the nation-state consciousness.

This paper questions how far the Internet discourses on the past can be differentiated from the exclusive, nation-centered order of the discourses found in national newspapers, and how it can be a forum for people's subjective memories and diverse perspectives on the nation's official memory. The findings reveal some aspects of the medium's ability to recollect the past.

### *Popular Images of Japan in the 1990s*

Popular discourses on Japan or the Japanese in Korea reveal how prevalent and persistent the painful collective memory of Japanese colonial rule is. The wartime Japanese have been stereotyped as an evil which reappears in the representation of Japanese businessman and the nationalist statements of Japanese political leaders, the "distorted" history textbook, the inadequate apology and compensation for the Korean wartime "comfort" women, sexual slavery,

the unequal legal status of those of Korean ancestry in Japan, the territorial conflict over Dok Island, and so on, all of which continuously remind the Korean people of the departed spirit of Japanese militarism year after year.

As Sartre (1965) writes, we need the other to perceive our whole structure of being (189-190); modern Korea has viewed Japan as an important “other” through which to infer its own socio-cultural identity. Koreans feel self-confidence in attributing ancient civilization to Japan and are eager to learn lessons from the Japanese economy. In Bhabha’s (1994) words, Korea derides and denies the other country, Japan, while difference makes her desire the other. Several books in the early 1990s<sup>1</sup> that criticized or derided Japan’s shamelessness, immorality, collectivism, divided mind, and so on, have greatly appealed to the public. This kind of anti-Japanese discourse can easily be found in the public. On the other hand, as the cultural exchange between Korea and Japan began to grow in the mid-1990s, the books and TV programs that attempt to give an insight into this “distant but close” neighboring country<sup>2</sup> have gained much popular attention.

Popular discourses on Japan or the Japanese have tended to be divided into two opposing camps. They rarely overcome the dichotomy between “repulsion and fascination” and “detestation and adoration.” Their images of Japan have tended to be stereotyped and homogeneous. Moreover, the popular discourses in Korea have attempted to describe these images in relation to “our” nation’s autonomy and identity. D. Jung (2000) argues that Korea’s extreme discourses on Japan are related to a nationalism fostered by the government in the 1960s and 1970s that spurred fast economic growth and modernization. Park (2000) maintains that the

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<sup>1</sup> For example *Roses of Sharon Blossomed* (1993), *There Is No Japan* (1992), *Virus Imjinweran* (1990), *War between Korea-Japan* (1992), and *A Day of Dragon* (1994).

<sup>2</sup> For example *I Enjoy Japanese Culture* (1998), *There Comes J-J* (1998), *New Distant Country, Neighboring Country* (2000).

prejudices and misunderstanding of journalists have distorted the Japanese image and that this distortion means the distortion of Koreans themselves, which continues to replicate their own sense of victimhood and inferiority.

When one of the Japanese history textbooks that delineates Japan as a benefactor rather than an exploiter makes a head-on collision with Korean collective memory, the mass media have supported anti-Japanese sentiment. At the same time, the “otherness” of Japan has started to disintegrate. There have been three fluctuations in Japanese history textbooks (Shin, 2001). The first occurred from 1955 to 1956, when Japanese right-wingers succeeded in reinforcing the system of authorizing textbooks that controlled perspectives on history and concealed the wartime atrocities. Professor Ienaga and other civic activists in Japan instituted a lawsuit to oppose this attempt. Little was known about the first fluctuation in Korea. In 1982, Japanese history textbooks under the system of governmental authorization changed various expressions relating to the colonial past. For example, the term “invasion” to refer to Japan’s entry into Korea and other Asian countries was changed to “advance,” “exploitation” was changed to “transfer,” “Korean independence movement” was changed to “rioting” and “demonstration,” and so on. It became an international issue that created enormous anti-Japanese sentiment in Korea and yet was temporarily dismissed when Japan agreed to observe an international article that promised to give consideration to neighboring countries in Japanese modern history. Despite this article, there were continuous attempts by right-wing leaders to reinstate the imperialist Japanese pride. Finally, in 2000, *The New History Textbook* authored by a group of right-wingers, the Society for History Textbook Reform, applied for authorization, stirring up another international storm. Japanese history textbook controversies have kept reminding Koreans that Japan has been untroubled by feelings of remorse about its colonial past.

### *Media Discourses on the Japanese Textbook*

To examine the image of Japan as constructed by media discourses, especially in regard to the Japanese textbook controversy, one needs to ask what issues have been emphasized, how these issues have been discussed, and what ideological order has shaped the discussion. Discursive analysis is an attempt to disclose the relationship among discourses, each of which is presented by a different subject. Kang and Park (1997) write that the purpose of discursive analysis is to examine the modes of systematically excluding or selecting specific interests. Within the media discourses on the history textbook controversy, there can be different subjects with different interests: the voices of each nation's government, journalists themselves, civic groups, individuals, and so on. These may have different agendas and would be given different priorities.

To examine discursive practices relating to the Japanese history textbook controversy, this paper used the KINDS (Korea Integrated News Database System, [www.kinds.or.kr](http://www.kinds.or.kr)) database and searched for titles of news reports, special reports, columns, and interviews of three popular Korean newspapers, the Dong-A Ilbo, the Chosun Ilbo, and the Joong-Ang Ilbo, containing keywords relating to Japanese history textbooks or Japan's historical distortion from 01/01/1990 to 12/31/2001. The focus was on reports and contributions from August 2000 to December 2001, whose total number was 552. (See <Table 1>.) Korean newspapers have continuously reported Japan's controversial historical consciousness. In 1995 and 1996, they were concerned about the Japanese leaders' statements that legitimated the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910 and eulogized the Pacific War. (See <Table 2>.) The number of news reports surged in 2001, especially in April 2001, when the Japanese government authorized the controversial history textbooks.

Table 1

*Number of News Items Relating to Japanese History Textbooks*

Time	00.8	00.9	00.10	00.11	00.12	01.1	01.2	01.3	01.4	01.5	01.6	01.7	01.8	01.9	01.10	01.11	01.12
# of items	7	7	13	14	4	3	31	48	114	80	26	106	61	14	24	3	7

Table 2

*Number of News Items Relating to Japan's Historical "Distortion"*

Time	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
# of items	10	5	9	7	7	58	29	16	13	9	39	518

The following discusses how the media have located and reflected upon each voice with its own agenda within the narrative of its defining issue, and what social meanings have been attached to Japan, constructing or reconstructing its image.

### **Characteristics of Newspaper Discourses**

#### ***Revival of the Aggressor's Ghost: Emerging Japanese History Textbook Controversy***

It was in July 2000 that Korean newspapers began to report the contents of the 2002 Japanese middle-school textbooks applying for the Japanese Education Ministry's authorization. They sketched the distorted or omitted accounts of the past in those textbooks. They focused especially on a textbook written by the Society for History Textbook Reform (SHTR) called *The New History Textbook*, which denied or intentionally ignored imperialist Japan's atrocities in Asia in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and justified the war as an "unavoidable war caused by American policy against Japan." SHTR is said to describe Korea as a "possible threatening weapon posed to Japan" to justify Japan's coercive annexation of Korea and to highlight the superiority and originality of its civilization. Major newspapers defined this interpretation of history as arbitrary and stressed that it incorporated the ultra-nationalist historical view.

Japanese newspapers such as the Asahi Shimbun and the Tokyo Shimbun, as well as civic groups such as Children and Textbooks Japan Networks 21 (CTJN21), acted as sources informing the Korean newspapers of history textbooks that whitewashed Japan's aggression during its colonial past. The Korean newspapers were greatly dependent on these information sources, but did not pay much attention to their pacifist perspectives and activities. While the Japanese civic groups made the point that the advent of such history textbooks derived from political pressure from the Japanese government and the Japanese Education Ministry, the Korean newspapers reconstructed this information to reveal Japan's 'national plot' to threaten Korea's self-respect, and emphasized that Japan's 'national interest' was behind the historical distortion. Korean newspapers focused on the broader context of Japan's turning to the right after the Cold War era (*The Dong-A Ilbo*, *The Chosun Ilbo*, *The Joong-Ang Ilbo*, September 14, 2000), and argued that such historical distortion would not conceal the real substance of Japan's wartime deeds. The Korean government, which had promised to accept the Japanese government's contrition as real after the Korea-Japan joint partnership declaration for the 21<sup>st</sup> century in 1998, did not take a strong position in the history textbook dispute; it needed Japan's political and economic cooperation, especially in pursuing reconciliation with North Korea. The Korean newspapers criticized the Korean government's "lukewarm" and "superficial" response (*The Dong-A Ilbo*, September 15, 2000; *The Chosun Ilbo*, September 20, 2000; *The Joong-Ang Ilbo*, September 21 and 24, 2000). In their reporting on the textbook controversy, Japan was vilified; the textbook was introduced as a sign of a revival of Japan's aggressive militarism.

Furthermore, the Korean newspapers began to associate the Japanese history textbook dispute with other scandals. For example, the scandal about the Japanese archaeologist who fabricated the relic from the Paleolithic period in early November 2000 was brought to the front

page, allegedly confirming Japan's "deep-seated tendency of distorting history" (*The Dong-A Ilbo*, November 7, 2000; *The Joong-Ang Ilbo*, November 8, 2000). This scandal was said to reveal Japan's systematic intention to emphasize a historical view centering on the Emperor of Japan, rather than on the individual's unethical academic activity.

At the end of January, when *The New History Textbook* appeared to have a high possibility of getting authorization, the Korean newspapers assigned more space to the characteristics of the textbook and the steps being taken to prevent its authorization. The extreme historical view of the right-wingers that obscured the wartime wrongdoing and Japan's invasion of its Asian neighbors as a liberation from Western colonizers, ignored the forcible sexual enslavement of 200,000 Asian women, mostly Koreans, in Japanese military brothels during the war. This was said to reflect how resurgent Japanese right-wingers disdained their neighboring countries, including Korea. The Japanese right-wingers' outspoken contempt for Korea awakened Koreans' latent anti-Japanese sentiment.

When the Japanese government declared that it would not meddle politically in the process of authorization for diplomatic reasons, the Korean newspapers re-asserted Japan's deceptive attitude, pointing out that it had reiterated its apology publicly, but at the same it had allowed the history textbooks to eulogize its colonial past. They further reported that the Japanese newspapers considered Korea's and other nations' protests against the textbooks interference in Japan's domestic affairs and as unlawful actions threatening freedom of expression. Japan appeared once again to be a distant "other" that refused any reasonable dialogue.

### ***Reproduction and Dissociation of "the Other" Image: From Authorization To Countermeasures***

On April 3 2001, eight history textbooks, including *The New History Textbook*, were authorized by the Japanese Education Ministry. The Japanese government explained that it had followed the

Japanese constitution by securing the freedom of ideas and that it had strictly screened the textbooks with full consideration of the international issues involved. The Korean media believed that the Japanese textbooks minimized the records of aggression in Asia and slighted Korea and other Asian countries with respect to national pride. The historical textbook dispute involved two issues: one was the discourse on the Korean government's pursuit of Japan's revision of the history textbooks, and the other was the discourse on campaigning against the schools' adoption of *The New History Textbook*.

After the Japanese government's authorization of the textbooks, the Korean government, which had been criticized for not taking tough, substantial action, continued to disappoint the Korean newspapers. This criticism occurred even though the Korean government had briefly summoned its ambassador home from Japan, demanded that Japan rewrite 35 passages in the eight books (including 25 parts in *The New History Textbook*), and made plans to freeze military and educational exchanges with Japan and suspend market openings. However, this did not satisfy the Korean newspapers' tougher nationalist sentiment. Moreover, there was little hope of communicating with the Japanese government, which had stuck to the principle of not interfering.

While the Japanese government has reiterated that it will not seek further revision because the textbook screening was conducted under strict and fair standards, the Korean newspapers continuously report the Japanese right-wingers' sensational statements. These have included: "The history of 'comfort women' was no more than a history of 'toilet'" or "the press that has criticized the historical distortion is a patient of crazy cow disease," "Korean and Chinese scholars have less scholastic ability," and "there is only sentiment, no freedom of expression." Even the newly elected Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, said that when he faced

difficulty, he imagined the kamikaze fighters. He added to his support of the “no revisions” policy, which seemingly attempted to protect the freedom of expression and actually allowed the right-wing historical textbook, a plan to visit the Yasukuni Shrine, which symbolizes Japanese military aggression before and during World War II. The series of right-wing words were added to the Korean reservoir of selected memories that help bolster a long-term resentment of Japan. In addition, the Japanese government’s “betrayal” of the friendly relationship, promised since 1998, was contrasted with the Korean government’s “naïve” response. While Korean newspapers did not give much coverage to the Korean government’s tough measures, they paid more attention to the campaign against the adoption of *The New History Textbook* in Japanese schools.

The campaigns of various Japanese civic groups got more media attention as the August 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for the school’s adoption of history textbooks came closer. When the Japanese government rejected the Korean government’s demand for revision, there was much fear about its adoption. The Korean newspapers reported the SHTR and other right-wing campaigns were setting a target adoption rate of 10 percent. They gleefully reported that the number of Japanese schools that were refusing to adopt the textbook was growing; more media attention was given to the Japanese with a conscience. The Korean newspapers put more emphasis on the different historical views of the Japanese, and came to distinguish between the right-wing elements, such as the Japanese government, the Liberal Democratic Party, and papers such as the Sankei Shinbun, and the civic groups and liberal newspapers such as Asahi Shinbun. When the rate of adoption of the controversial textbook turned out to be very low, the Korean press applauded a dramatic triumph on the part of the citizens of Japan with a conscience and their “grassroots” movement. This transformed the public perception of Japan in Korea; it suggested that people holding the right-wing historical viewpoint were not in the majority in Japan; coalitions between

Korea and Japan could be forged from the grassroots.

*Back to the Beginning? : After the “Triumph”*

After the “triumph,” there was less discourse on the Japanese history textbooks. And yet, Koizumi’s visit to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine in August 2001 was often cited as symbolic evidence of Japan’s right-wing nature, which made people quickly forget the triumph and brought back the image of Japan defiling its neighboring country. It further chilled diplomatic relations between Korea and Japan. Then, Koizumi’s visit to Korea after the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attack on the U.S. awkwardly sutured their relationship. His re-statement of contrition and apology for the colonial past was little noticed in Korea. His visit to Korea was viewed as an attempt not to be reconciled after the history textbook dispute and other diplomatic controversies, but to get tacit approval for using military force as a means of settling international disputes, which has been much feared by many Koreans. The Japanese government appeared to be interested in re-armament rather than its responsibility for its past, which has often been compared to that of Germany. Koizumi and the Korean government that allowed his visit were much criticized. The controversy over history temporarily came to a halt.

On the issue of the Japanese history textbook, the major Korean newspapers took much the same line. The Korean newspapers’ discourses on the textbook controversy have continued to use simplistic arguments, referring to good and evil or victim and victimizer. Yet they have brought two subjects to the surface that cannot be fit into the conventional dichotomy in the description of Japan: one is the Japanese civic groups or conscientious citizens that led a successful campaign and the other is the Korean government, which has oscillated between realistic diplomatic policy and unsettled battles over history.

### *Civic Movements, the Internet, and the Japanese Other*

As Korean denunciation of the Japanese history textbook became stronger, the mass media occasionally discussed people's use of the Internet as a method of protest. Hundreds of protest messages were posted on Internet bulletin boards (*The Joong-Ang Ilbo*, March 31 & April 16, 2000) and Korean and Japanese netizens waged a war of words over the history textbooks (*The Joong-Ang Ilbo*, April 13, 2000). On March 31 and August 15 2000, Korean netizens staged a "virtual sit-in" or online demonstration to protest against the Japanese history textbooks. They planned to paralyze the Internet systems of six Japanese websites that had advocated the right-wing history textbooks by inviting as many participants as possible to simultaneously log on at a specified time and press the reload button repeatedly.

While the mass media paid attention to the sensational use of the Internet in the history textbook dispute, civic groups used it to aid their movement. The "National Campaign Headquarters to Deter Japan's History Textbook Distortion," which was launched in March 14, 2001, and was reorganized as the "Movement for Japan-Korea Textbook Rectification (MJKT)" in April 23, 2001, led the civic movement for the revision of Japanese textbooks and for the prevention of the use of *The New History Textbook* in Korea.

This movement is led by the coalition of 59 civic groups, which include civic groups working for wartime victims such as the "comfort women" and forcibly drafted workers under Japan's colonial rule, scholarly groups, and other civic groups. These organizations have come together to protest against the Japanese history textbooks, to strengthen the coalition with "conscientious" international civic groups, to clarify the principle of liquidating the Korea-Japan conflict over the past, to examine the descriptions in Korean history textbook of Japanese colonialism in Korea, and to publicize the Japanese history textbook controversy. They have

taken the typical anti-Japan stance and yet have voluntarily pursued the campaign of resolving the Japanese history textbook controversy from the grassroots and through a coalition with other countries' conscientious citizens, and have attempted to reconsider the domestic history textbook's description of the colonial period. Unlike the press or the government, they try to suggest various ways of protesting, to search for a shared historical viewpoint between the countries, and to reflect the country's own history education. The Movement for Japan-Korea Textbook has used the Internet to provide a space for communicating with people.

The civic activists used to use printed text or documentary for their campaigns, which had a limited circulation. With the Internet, they would push their campaign across the boundaries of time and space and thus appeal to a larger audience. Many have paid attention to the democratic characteristics of its universal associability, openness, connectivity, informative nature, interactivity, inexpensive management costs, and so on.

The homepage hosted by the most representative civic movement against the Japanese history textbook, the Movement for Japan-Korea Textbook ([www.freechal.com/histextbook](http://www.freechal.com/histextbook)), consists of multiple links connected to various sub-pages; it contains an introduction, public statements, materials for press conferences, the content of Japanese history textbooks, official announcements, databases, activity logs, and a calendar. The introductory page contains links to nationalist statements made by right-wing Japanese politicians, a signature collecting campaign, and the slogan "There's no future for people who have lost the past." The updates of the front page ceased in mid 2000. Other announcements, bulletin boards, and the database have been kept updated.

This site campaigns against the Japanese history textbooks and also, provides a lot of information relating to the history textbook controversy. While the press excels at popular

criticism and gives out limited information, the site enables people to access rich information and at the same time take concrete action. The accumulated information can be randomly accessed or found with a search engine. The framework that contextualizes the database and announcements is very clear. It tries to stop the retrogressive revision of history textbooks in Japan, strongly opposes Japan's imperial historical view and its gloss over its colonial past. For this campaign, it has brought together a large range of methods, such as demonstration, press release, symposia, official announcements, fundraising, and advertisements in Japanese newspapers. The site continues to reproduce the dichotomy over conflicts between Korea and Japan that was typical over the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which calls attention to the need for a proper apology and compensation for the victims of colonialism.

However, it also produces a discourse that there should be a transnational coalition and mutual perception to recollect the shared history. It seeks "a historical perception that can be shared by Asians, opposing the aggressive war on colonies, and contributing to world peace," rather than merely standing by national pride. And thus, in this discourse, both the Korean government, which has put the issue of Japan's ultra-nationalist historical view behind the concurrent diplomatic collaboration, and the Japanese government, which has maintained its principle of non interference that lets the right-wingers speak their minds, are the target of criticism and persuasion. The vision in this discourse is not greatly different from that of the press, and yet the ways of presenting and resolving the issue are different. While the Korean press considers Japan's conscientious groups and individuals as the others who have supported Korea's accusations against Japanese history textbooks, the site considers them "us," in the same camp.

On the other hand, in the site's bulletin board, which is not strictly controlled by the host,

there is much emotional rage against Japan and the Japanese. It has been filled with anti-Japanese sentiments and if someone posts a message defending the Japanese side, there is a fierce "flaming" questioning the poster's nationality and personality. There is little attempt to have a democratic discussion of the different opinions. This excessive emotionalism contradicts the systematic, reasonable opposition to the textbook.

While the Korean press has temporarily paused or closed its narrative on the history textbook controversy after the success of Japanese citizens' campaign against the adoption of the history textbooks, the Movement for Japan-Korea Textbook site continues its protest. It has a much more focused voice than the press and carries on the grassroots battle for the nation's memory. Although a historical view centered on the Korean nation has not come to the fore, there coexists a discourse of resistant nationalism and one of trans-national reconstruction of the past. Thus, the Japanese image is not homogeneous.

### **Concluding Remarks**

*The New History Textbook* (2001) states in its introduction, "Stop thinking that history is permanently fixed. Look at history with a free, unfettered eye, and examine various viewpoints to find the truth." It cites a postmodern historical perspective to advocate its own historical narrative, and yet presents a history textbook centered on building national pride, rather than unbiased historical description. The Society for History Textbook Reform's liberal historical view has disclosed Japan's domestic problems and at the same time has invited a discursive war on recollecting the shared experiences within Asia during the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The newspaper discourse has introduced the history textbook issue in Korea, led national sentiment against Japan, and temporarily wrapped up the history textbook controversy. The Korean newspapers criticized the overbearing attitude of the Japanese government and right-wingers

who attempted to distort history, and highlighted the conscientious Japanese using objective journalism. In their discourse, the dispute has taken place within the nationalist design that identifies the conflict between nations or peoples.

On the other hand, the civic groups persistently called for practical and discursive resistance against the controversial history textbook, and propagated their activities through the Internet site. The website questions Japan's ultra-nationalist historical viewpoint, actively seeks a movement against it, provides information supporting its campaign, and finally, publicizes its civic efforts. It discloses the deep-rooted opposition to imperialist Japan, and yet invites allies from among the Japanese grassroots. The Internet becomes a channel for advertising and directing resistance against the ultra-nationalist historical view that disregards a painful past, and at the same provides a channel for inviting or allying the movement with the Japanese grassroots. While Anderson says that the printing press has played an important role in creating the concept of a nation, an imaginary community, it could be argued that the Internet bears testimony to the possibility of a "transnational imaginary community."

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- The Joong-Ang Ilbo
- [www.freechal.com/histextbook](http://www.freechal.com/histextbook)
- [www.kinds.or.kr](http://www.kinds.or.kr)