

CHAPTER 12

WORLD HISTORY, NATIONALLY: HOW HAS THE NATIONAL APPROPRIATED THE TRANSNATIONAL IN EAST ASIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY?

Jie-Hyun Lim

The configuration of the national and the global

As a modern academic discipline, national history has been a product of worldwide cultural interactions and transnational discourses. A history of cultural encounters between “East” and “West” reveals the ways that non-Europeans have been obliged to respond to the conceptual categories brought into play by “Western” modernity. Confronting challenges of European modernity, East Asian historians have tried to prove their civilizational potential by finding European elements such as rationalism, science, freedom, equality and industrialism in their own national histories. Any national history lacking “Western” modernity would risk being branded as the history of “history-less people.” Modern historiography in Japan and Korea was partly a struggle for recognition of the national *raison d'être* by proving their national potential for modernist development to skeptical Westerners. This struggle for recognition was more successful when it was written to be intelligible and appealing to Western readers.¹

In order to satisfy their expectations, East and West, Orient and Occident had to be configured and structured in a grammar familiar to European history. Thus it is more appropriate to stress the configuration of national *and* world history rather than the bifurcation of an either/or rivalry. This configuration helps to position national histories sequentially in a linear trajectory of world history. In this historicist *schema*, Western countries occupy the higher positions that are to be followed as models by backward Easterners. Thus, making national histories in East Asia was not conceivable without referring to a world history based on the dichotomy of “normative-universal-developed-modern” Western history and its “deviated-particular-underdeveloped-premodern” Eastern variation.² The configuration of norm and deviation, of East and West and of the national and the global is crucial to understanding the historicist complicity of national history and world history.

However, the accommodation of national history or even promotion of nationalist agendas through world history is hardly unique to East Asia. The thesis of German *Sonderweg* debates originated in the same schematic configuration: the English history of a universal-normal-democratic path is posited as a yardstick against which to measure

the German history of a particular-abnormal-fascist path.³ “Western civilization,” designed as a part of the core curriculum of many American universities, is another good example. The “Western civilization” course was created during the First World War to encourage the national integration of massive numbers of immigrants of diverse nationalities. The history of “Western civilization” presented the United States as the culmination of a civilized “Western” tradition and imprinted the American national identity with a more “Western” than European identity.⁴ This “patriotic world history” highlights and celebrates American political and ideological values, and its parochial understanding of humankind’s history has a century-long tradition.⁵

Similar to Eurocentric world history, Asia-centric world history played a role in consolidating a nationalist rationale in East Asia. Discourses of “Pan-Asianism” and a “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” before the Second World War, and the postwar discourses of an “Asiatic value-system,” “East Asian Community,” “East Asia as a Project” and “East Asia as a Methodology” can be listed in the catalogue of Asiatic regionalism. From the beginning, the discourses of regionalist Asia have been loaded with nationalist repugnance, impulses and aspirations. What is most revealing in the trajectory of regional histories is the discursive complicity between the Eurocentric Orientalism of “Western civilization” and the anti-Western Occidentalism of “Asian civilization” in the promotion of the idea of civilization as a self-regulating entity. This realization reveals the urgent task of problematizing the complicity of national, regional (Oriental) and world (Western) history in abusing history for a nationalist rationale.⁶ This chapter will explore the world history debates in conjunction with the national and regional history in East Asia where world history functioned as a nationalist rationale.⁷

World history as a nationalist rationale: From Enlightenment to Marxism

World history came to Japan in the 1870s with the *Meiji Ishin* (Meiji Regeneration). The Japanese government took the initiative of introducing world history in the name of *Bankokushi*, meaning “the history of all countries of the world.” The project stressed information about current world affairs rather than the study of the histories of others. Its aim was to introduce Western things to Japan in order to speed the Japanese nation’s adaptation to the new conditions and its entry into civilization. Among the various “world history” and “universal history” books, the most popular one initially was *Bankokushi* (1876), a Japanese translation of Samuel G. Goodrich’s *Universal History on the Basis of Geography* (1870). This book was a simple compilation of many histories, covering every region on earth like a travel guidebook. Some of the other *Bankokushi* books carried more explicitly Eurocentric messages than Goodrich’s book. For example, William Swinton’s *Outlines of World History* viewed world history as the histories of the European people (Aryan races), who led the progress of civilization. The Swinton line of *Bankokushi* was called “Civilization History,” and its Eurocentric interpretation of world history became dominant in Japan during the 1880s.⁸

It is intriguing to see that national history textbooks were preceded by world history textbooks. It was at the request of the Paris international exposition bureau that the first national history of Japan, *A Brief History of Japan* (日本史略), appeared in 1878. The final version of the text, *View of National History* (國史眼), was adopted as the official history textbook in 1888 by the newly created history department of Tokyo Imperial University. Thus the first official Japanese national history textbook had Western readers as its primary target. The first book on the history of Japanese art, *Histoire de l'art du Japon*, was also published originally in French upon the request of the Paris international exposition bureau in 1900.⁹ The motivation to write this book was to glorify the Japanese state by highlighting its national heritage and encouraging “our own artistic spirit” to stay abreast with the European standard. The cognitive sequence from the world to the nation was approved also by Fukuzawa Yukichi, who, in championing modernity in Meiji Japan, famously said that “the knowledge of oneself develops in direct proportion to the knowledge of others: the more we know about them (the West), the more we care about our own destiny.”¹⁰

In other words, writing national history was nothing but an “attempt to posit the identity of one’s own ethnicity or nationality in terms of the gap between it and the putative West, that is, to create the history of one’s own nation through the dynamics of attraction to and repulsion from the West.”¹¹ Japanese Enlightenment intellectuals were stuck in a dilemma: the more they learned about European history, the wider the gap grew between Japan and Europe. The more they tried to find a symmetrical equivalent to the history of the West, the more they suffer from a sense of inferiority. When historicism adapted vertical evolutionary time for the horizontal space of an “imaginative geography,” Japan discovered that it lagged behind the unilinear development scheme of world history. In order to escape this dilemma, Japanese modern historiography developed its own Orientalist strategy to highlight Japanese difference from the rest of Asia. Inventing the Orient of their Asian neighbors let the Japanese compensate for anything they feared they lacked. By inventing Japan’s own Orient, Japanese historians forced China and *Chosŏn* to take the place of Japan while Japan joined the West in the imaginative geography of the period.

Thus *toyoshi* (history of the Orient) was established as a Japanese version of Orientalism in a broad scheme of world history. *Toyoshi* aimed at inventing its own Orient of China and *Chosŏn*, while Japanese national history (*kokushi*) tried to capture European historical elements in Japan’s past. By wielding discourses of *toyoshi* and *kokushi* simultaneously, Japanese historians tried to escape from the image of Oriental Japan invented by European Orientalists. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the establishment of *toyoshi* had the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) and Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) as its historical background; the two victories over Great World Powers enhanced Japanese national pride. As a result, the historical research and pedagogy was divided into three departments: national, Oriental and Occidental.¹² This tripartite structure helped to elevate the strategic placement of Japan in world history into the “West” by differentiating Japanese history (*kokushi*) from the *toyoshi* (Oriental History) of China and Korea. That

noble dream of de-Asianizing and Europeanizing Japan could best be realized through the trilateral discursive complicity of national (Japanese), regional (Asian) and world (Western) history. This tripartite structure of national history, regional/Oriental history and world/Occidental history still dominates historical research and education in contemporary Japan and Korea.

World history also thrived in late nineteenth-century Korea, but here it was based on national crisis. The first world history textbook was *The Short History of the World*, published in 1896. In tandem with this, many other works of Western history were published in translation, including *The Outline of English History* (1896), *A Short History of Russia* (1898), *History of American Independence* (1899), *History of the Fall of Poland* (1899), *A History of Modern Egypt* (1905), *History of the Independence of Italy* (1907), *World Colonial History* (1908) and biographies of Napoleon, Otto von Bismarck and Peter the Great. World history was promoted as a means of inspiring patriotism and justifying “civilization and enlightenment” (*munmyöng kaehwa*). In this regard, Korea can be seen as a predecessor to many other countries in creating a “patriotic world history.” The dual historical tasks of modernization and independence urged Korean intellectuals to study world history in the belief that globalism and nationalism would be the path toward “civilization.”

The newly acquired knowledge of world history provoked comparisons between Korea and the Great Powers, between East and West. World history, with its Western accent, signaled the deconstruction of the traditional Sino-centric world order and the repositioning of East Asia in the new international order. Korean Enlightenment intellectuals adopted Japanese Orientalist thinking in order to decenter and provincialize China. For Korean nationalists, appropriating the Western concept of civilization was in the interest of national sovereignty, as it helped them remake China as an Asian province. The repositioning went so far as claims by Korean journalists that even Denmark would soon shame China. Public history was much more active in decentering China than official history.¹³ However, at the same time, world history reinforced a Eurocentric definition of a historically inferior East by replacing the traditional Sino-centrism with Eurocentrism. The configuration of Korea and the West underscored Korea’s potential for following and catching up to the West, but at the cost of presenting Korea as lacking or backward.

The newly emerging Korean historiography compared Korea to Western countries through a temporalization of space in a homogenous and unified time of “history.” The periodization was also based on European historiography and its division of time into the following epochs: ancient → medieval → modern → contemporary. Topics like liberalism, democracy, the bourgeois revolution, the industrial revolution and nationalism were the most popular problematics in world history textbooks, which in turn reinforced the Eurocentric understanding of world history. The sequence of “first world history, then national history” seems to reflect the “first in Europe, then elsewhere” structure of global historicist time that accommodated the Eurocentric diffusionism from Europe to the “Rest.”¹⁴ This explains why Korean national history based on the configuration of East and West gave rise to a consequential Eurocentrism.

The Eurocentric nexus of national and world history has been reinforced in post-1945 historiography in East Asia.

As a result, research subjects focused heavily on the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Western history. The rise of capitalism, the Renaissance and Reformation, the German Peasant's War, the English Revolution and the gentry debates, the American Revolution and slavery, Enlightenment and the French Revolution, agrarian reforms in Prussia and the Industrial Revolution were among the most popular topics for Western history-oriented world historians. Eurocentric world history was promoted to accelerate the historical process of industrialization, political democracy and modern nation-building. Japanese historians relatively free from Cold War imposition could expand their research frontiers to Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa in 1970s, and leftist critical historiography has been relatively strong in Japan. But it is undeniable that an amalgam of Marxism and modernization theory, represented by Ōtsuka Hisao's economic history scheme, has been a main framework to explain the Japanese transition from the feudal to the modern on a world history scale.

Although Marxist historiography has been regarded as a potential alternative world history for its criticism of capitalist modernity, it was hardly free from Eurocentrism. A history of the complex cultural transfers and interactions of Marxist ideas, however, clearly shows that a broad range of movements and ideologies were invoked in the name of Marx. When Marx's *Das Kapital* was translated into Russian, for example, the Russian bourgeoisie was second to none in welcoming it, because they saw in it an argument for the historical necessity of capitalist development in Russia.¹⁵ Indeed, Marxist historiography has never been free from the practice of configuring East and West hierarchically in historical thinking and writing. The Marxist dictum in *Das Kapital* that a "country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future"¹⁶ proclaimed the manifesto of Marxist historicism. If one views Marx as a theorist of modernity, one may easily argue that "Marx's account of modernisation was inextricably a description of Westernisation, and therefore that his view of global history was a general history of the West."¹⁷ Although Marxist historians were searching for an alternative modernity, Marxist historiography in twentieth-century East Asia was still the offspring of the Eurocentric world history.

What distinguished Marxist historiography was its comparative history of capitalist development on a global scale. The famous Marxist controversy over the *Meiji Ishin* of 1868 and subsequent capitalist development between the *Kōza-ha* (lecture's faction) and the *Rono-ha* (labor-peasant faction) is a good indication of this. While the *Kōza-ha* saw the "Meiji Restoration" as the transition to an absolutist state, the *Rono-ha* interpreted it as a bourgeois revolution. Thus *Rono-ha* Marxists insisted that the socialist revolution in Japan was imminent, given the universal crisis of world capitalism in the interwar period. In opposition to the *Rono-ha* group, the *Kōza-ha* Marxists emphasized Japanese backwardness and the peculiarities of military and semifeudal capitalism in Japan as indications that Japanese Marxists should complete the bourgeois democratic revolution as Russian Marxists in the revolution of 1905 had thought. Caught in the Marxist unilinear scheme of the development of socioeconomic formations, both

factions presumed that every country must experience a bourgeois revolution prior to the institution of the worker state. The *Kōza-ha*'s definition of Japanese capitalism closely resembled Lenin's description of the "Prussian path" of capitalist development. But the *Kōza-ha*'s insistence on the contrast between Japan's distorted and crooked capitalist development and English autogenous capitalism, as well as between the Prussian path and American path, was also imprinted by historicist Eurocentrism.¹⁸

Marxist historiography in post-1945 Japan was not that far from the *Kōza-ha* tradition. The dominant discourse in the historical evaluation of Japanese modernity was that Japanese militarism and colonial expansion could be attributed to the pathological factors of an immature civil society, its semifeudal backwardness and authoritarian political culture, both of which are inherent in its "premodern residues." Postwar Japan should be reformed to eliminate premodern irrationality and complete democratic revolution. This diagnosis can be seen as the partial convergence of the SCAP's official view of the "Pacific War" and the *Kōza-ha* Marxist faction's interpretation of Japanese modernity.¹⁹ Democratic liberals participated in this interpretation mainly through the work of Ōtsuka Hisao, who bridged the gap between *Kōza-ha* Marxists and modernization theory. Contrary to ideas of sharp ideological antagonism, Rostow's theory of the stages of historical growth was similar to the Marxian concept of the unilinear history. Developmental historicism explains why world history books in Japan, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, were full of tropes about the necessity of a "follow and catch up" strategy of countries in the periphery.²⁰

Despite its attempts to combine a nationalist agenda with a Marxist understanding of world capitalism, Marxist historiography in colonial Korea was also marked by the Eurocentric vision of world capitalist development in a unilinear scheme. Among the various Marxist arguments, Paik Namwoon represented the most common interpretation. His periodization of Korean history corresponded exactly with the Marxist model of developmental stages: primitive commune → slave economy → Asiatic feudalism → capitalism. In his book, the most influential Marxist history in colonial Korea, Paik vehemently opposed any particularistic interpretation of Korean history and tried to locate Korean history within the universal history of Marxism.²¹ By relying on the unilinear scheme of world capitalist development, Paik invoked a consequential Eurocentrism. But the Eurocentrism inherent in his universalist conception of history was a "weapon of criticism" to defend the theory of endogenous development of capitalism against the idea of the stagnancy of the Asiatic mode of production in Korea. It is intriguing to witness how the Eurocentric unilinear development model ended up defending the autogenous capitalist development of the colonized-Korea against the colonizer-Japan's stagnancy theory. Confronting red Orientalism arguing for the Asiatic mode of production and stagnancy in precolonial Korea, Marxist universal history, and its consequential Eurocentrism, was able to accommodate the nationalist rationale with its stress on the autogenous development of capitalism.

The peculiar amalgam of Marxist historicism and the Rostovian takeoff model of economic growth was influential in postwar Korean historiography, too. It is not surprising that the dominant Marxist historical narrative in Korea is the "sprouts of

capitalism” and “endogenous development of capitalism” thesis.²² Nationalist-Marxist historiography in postcolonial Korea tried very hard to locate the polarization of the rural population and the emergence of “enlarged scale farming”—a historical process that they argued produced an agrarian bourgeoisie and proletariat in the premodern *Chosŏn* period. They then sought a blueprint for utopia in historical phenomena such as the development of commercial production of specialized crops, wholesale commerce, handcraft industries that relied on merchant capital in the putting-out system, mercantilism and modernist thought. Along with looking at emerging capitalist relations of production, this line of historical inquiry goes back to ancient and medieval history to find an enslaved and feudal society. The main currents in Marxist historiography preferred the Marxian universalist scheme to the Asiatic mode of production in order to avoid justifying Japanese colonialism. Whether Marxist or not, the desire for modernity has been a locomotive that has driven the study of—and education in—world/Western history.

In less developed countries, socialism under the slogan of “the creative application of Marxism-Leninism” became a development strategy of rapid industrialization intended to catch up and overtake advanced capitalism at the cost of the working masses. To many East Asian intellectuals suffering from the schizophrenia between Westernization and national identity, socialism came as a two-bird-with-one-stone solution. Socialism was expected to solve the historical dilemma of anti-Western modernization because of its vision of anti-imperialist national liberation and rapid industrialization from above.²³ The popularity of the dependency theory among Korean left historians and social scientists in the late 1970s can be understood in the same vein. It stressed the one-way transfer of capital from the colony to the metropolis and the additional transfer of surplus to the metropolis through the process of unequal exchange between the center and periphery. Dependency theorists based colonial history on the basic premise that at the heart of colonialism lay surplus appropriation from the colony to the metropolis. The hated Japanese colonial rule was seen as the prime cause of contemporary Korean economic backwardness, military dictatorship, an immature civil society, the division into two Koreas and all sorts of premodern residues.

Dependency theory and its aftermath in historical research did not shatter the dichotomy of the normative West and the deviated East, nor of model modernization and deviated modernization. With its sharp criticism of the unequal exchange and unilateral surplus transfer between center and periphery, dependency theory and its historical arguments were more often than not based on an oversimplified opposition between East and West as well as essentialized regional differences represented by the concept of the “Third World.” Thus, it fails to notice historical tensions inherent in any specific unit of either peripheries or centers. It tends to essentialize the homogeneity and heterogeneity of both nation-states and the region. In the final instance, dependency theory and its worldview came to serve world history as a nationalist rationale by justifying the accumulation of capital by the nation-state for rapid industrialization. Once again both modernist and Marxist world history in postwar East Asia were overcome by Western history.

Making Pan-Asian history: Between de-territorialization and re-territorialization

Along with the Japanese Orientalist discourse of *toyoshi* or history of the Orient discussed above, “East Asian” intellectuals intermittently heralded visions of a peaceful, united and racially defined Asia. Inspired by Social Darwinism, Pan-Asianism originated in Japan and quickly spread to China and Korea; it was not reluctant to connect the political ideas of Asian unity with the racial physiology of “yellow peoples.” Ideologically, the category of “yellow race” included all Asian peoples, but practically it was equated with a narrowly conceived East Asia comprising only Korea, China and Japan, which all shared the Confucian culture. Leading Chinese intellectuals such as Liang Qichao and Sun Yatsen promoted peace and unity in a racially defined East in their speeches. Pan-Asianism translated the struggle for national survival into a racial struggle between “white people” and “yellow people.” The ideal of Pan-Asianism as an antithesis to the European imperialist racism was shared by Japanese, Chinese and Korean intellectuals. They supported Pan-Asianism to assure their own national independence and regional security against Western imperialism.

The Pan-Asianist ideal attracted many a Korean intellectuals. Alongside *Ilchinhoe*, who were in collaboration with Japanese colonialism because of the unity of the yellow race, Korean Enlightened intellectuals advocated a unity of Asian people on different grounds. Enlightened Reformists assumed Pan-Asianism as an ideological weapon to guarantee national independence and regional security and peace. To the Korean Enlightenment activists, Pan-Asianism meant an alliance of three individually sovereign nations. The 1905 treaty establishing a Japanese protectorate over Korea was thus read as a betrayal of Pan-Asianism.²⁴ Upon the colonial conquest of Taiwan and annexation of Korea, Pan-Asianism revealed its hidden agenda of Japanese regional hegemony as it was meant to integrate the multinational colonial subjects into the Japanese empire. Later, it proved to be a stepping-stone toward the transnational ideal of the “Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere,” helping to persuade colonial subjects more effectively into a total war system based on “voluntary mobilization.”

Pan-Asianism posed a serious dilemma to Japanese imperial nationalists too. Applied to history, linguistics and anthropology, Pan-Asianism became *Ilseontongjoron* (日鮮同祖論), contending that Koreans and Japanese shared a bloodline. This bloodline discourse served to justify the Japanese integration of the Korean nation into its growing empire. *Ilseontongjoron* argued for ethnic/racial homogeneity between colonizers and colonized, a stark contrast with the racist discourse of European colonialism. The Japanese-Korean same bloodline thesis was asserted as a sort of official historiography by professors such as Kume Kunitake in the national history department at Tokyo Imperial University.²⁵ It is an irony that *Ilseontongjoron* as the first version of transnational history in East Asia was formulated by pioneer historians of the national history of Japan. Transnational history served Japanese nationalism recurrently and in a variety of contexts.

But *Ilseontongjoron* met furious opposition from the combative nationalist wing of Japan which believed in the cultural uniqueness of Japanese *Kokutai* (國體)—a complex

of imperial family and nationality. They thought the family tree of the Japanese emperor should not be traced back to ancient *Chosŏn*. When professor Kume was sacked by Tokyo Imperial University in 1892, the Japanese minister of education explicitly criticized the thesis that Japanese and Koreans shared an ancestry.²⁶ At the turn of the twentieth century, pioneer historians of *toyoshi* such as Kuroita Katsumi and Shiratori Kurakichi began to distance themselves from *Ilseontongjoron*, too. They admitted the affinity of Japanese and Korean languages and ethnicity, but argued that the nationality difference was much greater than any cultural or ethnic affinity. Perhaps the originism immanent in the national history paradigm did not allow these *toyoshi* historians to accept the theory of a common origin of the Japanese and Koreans. It was unthinkable for Japanese Orientalists to equate Japanese with Koreans—in fact, *Ilseontongjoron* undermined the very basis of Japanese Orientalism.

What divided Japanese scholars on *Ilseontongjoron* was the internal tension of the Japanese nationalism between the multiethnic nationalism of imperial integration and the ethnic nationalism of bio-cultural authenticity, which foreshadowed the strain between transnational and national historiographic variants. Yet a common thread binding these two divergent currents is found in the historical discourse about the Japanese commandery, called *Imna*, supposedly established in *Kaya* (on the southern shore of the Korean peninsula) around the fourth century CE. The Japanese interpretation of the inscription on a monument of *Koguryŏ* King Kwanggaet'o led them to conclude that the *Yamato* royal court had led its army across the sea to *Chosŏn* and established a military base on the southern coast of the Korean peninsula.²⁷ This Japanese enclave in ancient Korea provided historical justification not only for *Ilseontongjoron*, but also for Japanese claims to Korean territory and for its Orientalization of Korea.

The Japanese annexation of the Korean peninsula in 1910 revived the theory of a common origin for Japanese and Koreans. Thanks to the contributions of physical anthropologists, *Ilseontongjoron* could now take the form of scientific (or pseudo-scientific) discourse. Across more than 400 articles, Japanese physical anthropologists surveyed the physical characteristics of ancient and contemporary Koreans, collaborating with archaeologists to study the remains of ancient Koreans and with physiologists to study contemporary Korean physiognomy. The theory of common origins of Japanese and Koreans backed up by physical anthropology was easily connected with the ethnological thesis of ancient migration between the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago. The most salient point of this thesis is that authentic Japanese were composed mainly of immigrants from the Korean peninsula.²⁸

The scientific discourse of *Ilseontongjoron* became more influential immediately after the March First Movement for Korean independence in 1919. The thesis of common origins of Japanese and Koreans was used to assert that Korean national self-determination and independence was wrong and that unification of peoples of common origins, a euphemistic expression for justifying Japanese colonial rule, was right. At the same time, there was strong opposition to *Ilseontongjoron* by anthropologists—eugenics-oriented scholars opposed to the assimilation policy and what they saw as miscegenation between inferior Koreans and superior Japanese, and emphasized the

linear development of the Japanese nation from the Stone Age.²⁹ These scholars failed to dominate historical discourse, however, because the Japanese empire had to deploy the *Kokuminka* (nationalization of colonial subjects) policy in order to mobilize colonial subjects to sustain the “total war” system. The *Kokuminka* movement was an extreme form of assimilation designed to transform colonial subjects into “true Japanese,” not only in action, but also in spirit.³⁰ Needless to say, *Ilseontongjoron* provided the ideological backbone of the *Kokuminka* movement.

The historical discourse of the common origins of Koreans and Japanese experienced a nationalist turn in postliberation Korean historiography. Korean nationalist historians rejected the Japanese *Imna* commandery, a historiographical by-product of *Ilseontongjoron*, as an invention of Japanese colonialism. But at the same time they highlighted the entangled history of ancient Korea and Japan in their stress on a unidirectional cultural transfer from ancient Korea to Japan. They argued that the Korean writing system of *idu* and *hyangchal* influenced Japanese *Man'yō-gana* as a system of transcribing Chinese characters. They also alleged that the highly developed fine arts in ancient Korea contributed to Japanese art, which was proved by the superiority of Korean immigrant-made works such as the murals at the Hōryūji temple and the portrait of Shōtoku Taishi.³¹ The thesis of the high culture transfer from Korea to Japan in ancient history fitted nicely with their nationalist argument.

It was Kim Sök-hyung, a famous North Korean Marxist historian, who published the most extreme account of this one-way cultural highway from Korea to Japan, arguing that emigrants from the three Korean kingdoms (Koguryo, Baekche Silla) had settled in Western Japan and were cultural pioneers who contributed to the progress of Japanese history.³² What one finds in his writings is not Marxism but “national communism.”³³ Kim’s argument upset a group of Japanese historians and provoked angry counterarguments. Inoue Mitsusada described in highly emotive terms of “attack” and “defense” a quasi-physical battle between himself and Kim. Indeed, Inoue attributed the heart attack he suffered to the tension caused by this controversy.³⁴ The controversy took material form in arguments about how to interpret the inscription on the monument of King Kwanggaet’o. Paradoxically, although the two sides differed sharply in their reading of the texts, they stood on the same platform of *Ilseontongjoron*. For both, the cultural and anthropological homogeneity of Koreans and Japanese was a given; the only issue was which ethnicity was dominant.

Ironically, the transnational history of Korea and Japan, initiated by the Japanese colonial discourse of the common origins of Japanese and Koreans, became a battleground on which two opponents competed for hegemony over a shared heritage. Indeed, world history tended to be supplanted by Pan-Asianist regional history in colonial Korea and to a lesser extent in imperial Japan, but the grand narrative of Pan-Asianist regional history was oversimplified and one directional. Petty actors, everyday practices, minor events and historical ambiguities all escaped from this grand narrative. The reciprocal relations between colonizers and colonized and between the colonies and the Japanese metropole were simply disregarded in place of an abstract Pan-Asianism. Pan-Asianist regional history could not articulate that the empire (Japan) was made by its imperial projects.

The structure of the history department at Keizo (Seoul) Imperial University, the only university in colonial Korea (opened on May 1, 1926), is a good indication of this problem. In his speech inaugurating the university, Hattori Unokichi, the university's president, emphasized the academy's duty to serve the state. Paralleling the policy of the imperial university, he announced a blueprint for making the Keizo Imperial University a center for Oriental studies. Due to this Orient-centered research strategy, the history department offered only three history majors: national (Japanese) history, *Chosŏn* (Korean) history and Oriental history. Kaneko Kosuke had taught Western history at the university since 1928, but there was no official Western history major in the department. What distinguished Keizo Imperial University from other imperial universities in the Japanese archipelago was that Western history was replaced by Korean history. Of the eighty graduates from the history department between 1929 and 1941, eighteen students majored in Japanese history, thirty-four in Oriental history and twenty-eight in Korean history.³⁵ In fact, Seoul National University (the postliberation successor to Keizo Imperial University) had no professor lecturing on Western history until 1962, long after liberation.

The outbreak of the Second World War in the Pacific hastened the decline of world history in East Asia. As the war against the West broke out, the Japanese national "modernists against modernity" stopped looking to "Western civilization" as a model for Japan's future. Under the strident slogan of "overcoming modernity," the West became an object to be vanquished by Japanese national culture.³⁶ "Asian civilization," as represented by Japan, was thought to deserve much more serious investigation than Western history. World history was diagnosed as having been infected by the Western disease, and Japanese intellectuals who supported "overcoming modernity" lamented the way that Western modernity had distorted the Japanese spirit. The Kyoto school tried to postulate an alternative world history based on a new "Asian" world order through which European dominance of world history could be overcome. This alternative world history would be one that emanated from the Japanese empire. The intellectual project of "overcoming modernity" was seen as the theoretical lever that would lift Asia into the context of world history and make an alternative world history of "overcoming Western history." This Asia-centric new world history was much discussed, but never articulated, structured or written.

De-territorialization or re-territorialization? The joint history textbook and history committee

In the midst of the tumultuous historical debates provoked by the publication of the revisionist Japanese "New History Textbook" (*Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*) in 2001, *Sankei Shinbun*, a conservative Japanese newspaper that fully supported the textbook, published a peculiar series of articles analyzing South Korean history textbooks. While clearly their stance on Japan's colonization of the Korean peninsula differed markedly from the neo-nationalist Japanese account, the tone of the articles was not negative at all; indeed, the

Korean textbooks were praised by *Sankei Shinbun's* Seoul correspondent for their firm basis in ethnocentric national history. In dozens of articles dedicated to the analysis of these textbooks, the *Sankei* correspondent justified the "New History Textbook" by referring repeatedly to ethnocentric Korean history textbooks. In comparing Korean and Japanese history textbooks, he located a shared master narrative, one in which "our nation" is the subject of history. Korean history textbooks thus confirmed the paper's conviction that history textbooks should teach children, regardless of nationality, "national pride" and "love for our own history" (*Sankei Shinbun*, 25/06 and 26/06/2001).

This explains how national histories in East Asia, and perhaps in many other regions, have formed a relationship of what we may term "antagonistic complicity" that operates behind the scenes of open conflict.³⁷ The parallel lines of nation-centered histories have no meeting point at which a reconciliation of historical interpretations can occur, and this prevents the opposing parties from moving "beyond national history" toward a reconceptualization of their shared pasts as entangled history, transnational history, border history, overlapping history and so forth. Instead, nation-centered histories force the general public to choose between "our own national history" and "their own national history." Any serious academic attempt to go "beyond national history" can be and has been denounced as "antipatriotic" or treason. Korean and Japanese national histories have thus been trapped in a mutual siege. What the recent history of "history wars" in East Asia shows is that this antagonistic complicity strengthens the discursive hegemony of national history and enriches the parties who perpetuate the "mutual siege." This is particularly unfortunate, as a close look at the century-long history of competing national histories in this region reveals numerous instances of cultural transfers between ostensible rivals as well as examples of "antagonistic acculturation" in which, for example, the hegemonic discourses of the colonizers have been appropriated by the colonized as the basis for anticolonial resistance and their own nationalist projects.³⁸

Despite all of this, an East Asian history textbook, *History that Opens the Future* (HOF), was jointly produced and published simultaneously in Korea, Japan and China in 2005.³⁹ It was a watershed in textbook cooperation, designed to counteract the war over history in East Asia. In the midst of the turbulent historical controversy ignited by the Japanese *New History Textbook*, HOF achieved a remarkable marketing success. In 2005 alone, roughly 120,000 copies of the Chinese version were sold, along with about 70,000 Japanese copies and nearly 30,000 copies of the Korean version. More than fifty historians, history teachers and citizens of three countries participated in this project, and thirteen related conferences have been held consecutively in China, Japan and Korea since 2002.⁴⁰ The HOF encouraged hopeful thoughts about the future topography of East Asian historiography, and it has been credited with leading historical discourse in East Asia toward regional peace and historical reconciliation. The vast press coverage of that book, in Korea at least, disseminated this optimistic vision, and indeed HOF may deserve credit as the first transnational history book in postwar East Asia. Given the current East Asian "history war," this book is indeed an impressive achievement.

Yet a scrupulous reading of HOF raises questions about its transnational character. In short, it is a transnational history based on the national history paradigm. First of all,

many nationalist historians from the three countries took part in the project. On the Korean committee, nationalist (left) historians constituted the majority. The Japanese committee was composed mainly of the so-called postwar historiography historians who express remorse for Japan's wartime past. In China, the main contributor was the Institute of Modern History of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). Regardless of whether they are nationalists, left-leaning democrats or Marxists, a common positivist thread connects the contributors' different political approaches. They all claim to have sought "historical truth and lessons" through the textbook project, a position of which constructivists would be justifiably very skeptical. Perhaps the positivist stance helped to narrow down the scope of the book because trilateral agreement on the facts was a prerequisite, which explains why the book is rather simplistically focused on Japan's war of aggression and invasion.

Second, as Narita Ryūichi has rightly pointed out, the book never questions the idea that the nation-state is the collective subject. The editorial committee's proud declaration that HOF stands on the viewpoints of women, minorities and the oppressed is partly true. The goal of the HOF to be "free from narrow-minded chauvinism" seems partially accomplished. But one should pay attention to the intentional usage of "chauvinism" instead of "nationalism": the target of HOF was not "nationalism" per se, but perceived "bad nationalism"—that is, narrow-minded chauvinism. The problem the (Korean) editorial committee did not recognize is that even "good nationalism" betrays the principle of standing for minorities. Insofar as the nation-state continues to occupy the subject position of history, a transnational East Asia has no place for national minorities who lack their own nation-states. It should be noted, too, that HOF represents East Asia exclusively as the three countries of South Korea, Japan and China. Taiwan, Vietnam, Mongolia and even North Korea are completely excluded from the HOF project.⁴¹

Third, HOF sacrificed issues of transnationality and translocality for its own national history paradigm. The global context of modernity is missing in the first chapter on the "opening of ports and modernization." HOF arranges China, Japan and Korea's separate responses to the challenge of the Western "Great Powers" along parallel lines. It presupposes each nation-state, then not yet fully formed, as separate agents reacting against the Western impact. There is no description of how the geo-cultural East Asia came into being in the dialectical interplay between East Asia and the transatlantic Great Powers. Without Europe, Asia is not imaginable and vice versa. But the historical positivism immanent to the HOF tends to regard "East Asia" as a positivist rather than as a constructed reality. This means that the HOF has essentially bundled together the histories of three nation-states rather than achieving its stated goal of creating a transnational East Asian history.

Despite all these defects, however, HOF is a significant step in making a new regional history of East Asia. Compared to the final reports of the Chinese-Japanese and the Japanese-Korean Joint History Research Committee released respectively in January and March of 2010, the HOF has many merits. Covering the bilateral relations of China and Japan from ancient to contemporary history in 549 pages, the Chinese-Japanese Joint Committee final report contains a series of essays on the same subjects written

separately by both Japanese and Chinese scholars. The *Asahi Shinbun* described this Sino-Japanese joint history effort as “an unprecedented undertaking,” but despite this reserved optimism, the *Asahi* newspaper could not hide its disappointment with the wide gaps between Chinese and Japanese historians. What is worse than these gaps and disagreements is the committee’s decision to block public access to the part of the report on the history of the postwar era. Allegedly the Chinese side justified the decision on the grounds that the report could hurt the feelings of ordinary Chinese people who suffered under Japan’s aggression during the Second World War. But no one can doubt that it was in fact Chinese concerns about political turbulence, including the Tiananmen massacre, that was behind the decision not to make the report open to public.

In principle, differences in interpreting histories among East Asian historians are not necessarily a problem in itself. Without mentioning constructivism, dissenting voices and different opinions are inherent to historical research, and thus differences are inevitable to some extent. The question is not whether any kind of difference exists, but why historical interpretations diverge in parallel with national borders. Despite its recurrent stress on “objective understanding,” “facing history squarely,” “fact-based research” and its general positivistic stance, the report could not but be politicized by projecting the present nation-state into the past. Despite the Chinese *People’s Daily* using positive metaphors such as “thaw,” “the latest sign of warming ties between Beijing and Tokyo,” “a milestone for the authoritative version of history acceptable to both nations,”⁴² words cannot erase doubts about the nature of the historiographical conflicts. As long as national history is used as a lever to gear up national conflicts and as long as a national lens dominates the perception of the past, no political blueprint comprising East Asia is possible. This in part explains why this joint history research project was initiated not by scholars but by politicians.

The Chinese-Japanese report was followed by the more than 3,000-page report produced by the Japanese-Korean Joint History Research Committee and opened to the public on March 23, 2010.⁴³ While the Chinese-Japanese report is composed of two parts, “ancient” (ancient-medieval-early modern in Japanese terms) and modern/contemporary history, the Japanese-Korean report consists of four parts—ancient, medieval, modern/contemporary and textbooks. The compartmentalization of the report reflects the organizing principle of the Joint Committee, which divides participants into subcommittees based on historical periodization. Each subcommittee under the umbrella of the Japanese-Korean Joint History Research Committee has been relatively autonomous and has kept its own running principles and research agendas. The whole report including the roundtable discussion is open to the public via the Internet, and anyone can download its PDF files in both Korean and Japanese versions.

Greater public access does not necessarily mean the Japanese-Korean Joint History Research Committee’s report is free from tensions. A cursory look at the report reveals the paradigm of national history and its ensuing problems. The joint preface under the names of the chairpersons of the Korean and Japanese delegations expresses their belief that the committee’s effort will be “a stepping stone to make a scholars’ community for common prosperity in the future with mutual trust.” But each chairperson’s individual

preface, which immediately follows the joint preface, contains nuanced complaints about their counterpart, which suggests the difficulty of historical dialogue. Despite the desire to improve the ties between Japan and South Korea, according to the *Asahi*, this joint history project “spiraled into disagreement, criticism and heated exchanges mainly over Japan’s colonial rule of the Korean peninsula.” Bitter disagreements can be found in many places, especially in the minutes of the modern/contemporary history and history textbooks subcommittees. The polemical comments and countercomments in these two panels often led to radical doubts about the project itself, with members in both countries saying bluntly that they found little reason to continue the project. A Japanese participant on the textbook panel said that “this Korean presentation proves the Japanese-Korean joint-history research was to no avail.”

Perhaps the *Asahi Shinbun*’s description that the committee turned into something of a “proxy war” may sound too gloomy and pessimistic. The situation is much less heated, for instance, in the ancient and medieval history subcommittees. Of course, disagreements, discrepancy, discord and even quarrels are found there, but they are still scholarly debates because they remain nonantagonistic. Given the circumstances of ancient history—especially the alleged Japanese *Imna* commandery in the southern part of the Korean peninsula, which has been the site of a century-long nationalist contestation between Korea and Japan—the fact that the disagreements remained nonantagonistic can be considered a breakthrough. This tells us once again that what is in question is not a choice between agreement and disagreement. Total agreement is neither possible nor desirable. The upshot is if the differences and disputes in interpreting the common past are symbiotic or exclusive. Symbiotic dissenting voices give a productive tension to historical research and make historical dialogues dialectical. Exclusive differences in historical interpretation give rise to destructive antagonisms. The prospect of bilateral or multilateral historical dialogues depends on whether disagreements remain antagonistic or are symbiotic contradictions. Antagonistic conflicts about historical interpretations make dialogue at best a political compromise rather than a true discussion of history.

Unfortunately, these two bilateral historical dialogues in East Asia are dotted with arguments that are more antagonistic than symbiotic. The ways that China, Japan and Korea distinguish true and false in historical epistemology reflect their different ways of governing themselves and others. In this game of true and false, the problem of truth represents political problems that culminate in national history. As long as the national history paradigm is allowed to render a verdict on historical truth, no stress on “objective understanding,” “facing history squarely,” “fact-based research” and a positivistic general stance can resolve the antagonistic contradiction. What is required as “a stepping stone to make a scholars’ community for common prosperity in the future with mutual trust” is a change of episteme in historical thinking and reasoning. The goodwill to improve ties through historical reconciliation won’t be realized unless historical disputes, historiographical disagreements and different opinions can be symbiotic and free from egocentric national history paradigms. Historical dialogues in East Asia, represented by two joint national history research committees, should shift from international to transnational dialogues, beyond national history.

Notes

1. See Jie-Hyun Lim, "The Configuration of Orient and Occident in the Global Chain of National Histories: Writing National Histories in Northeast Asia," in Stefan Berger, Linas Eriksonas and Andrew Mycock (eds.), *Narrating the Nation: Representations in History, Media and the Arts* (New York: Berghan Books, 2008) 290–308.
2. It is noteworthy that *The Rise of Great Powers (Daguo jueqi)*, a popular Chinese history documentary on CCTV intended to justify the contemporary modernization project, deals with nine foreign countries in sequence: Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Russia and United States. See Q. Edward Wang, "Rise of Great Powers' = Rise of China?" *Journal of Contemporary China* 19 (March 2010), 273–89.
3. See Jie-Hyun Lim, "A Postcolonial Reading of *Sonderweg*: Marxist Historicism Revisited," *Journal of Modern European History* 12:2 (2014), 280–94.
4. Ross E. Dunn, "Rethinking Civilizations and History in the New Age of Globalization," in *Proceedings of the 34th International Symposium at the National Academy of Sciences*, Korea, October 12, 2007.
5. Jerry Bentley, "Myths, Wagers, and Some Moral Implications of World History," *Journal of World History* 16:1 (2005), 51–82.
6. In this context "world history" has been more than often identified with "Western history" as a hegemonic discourse in East Asia.
7. In this chapter, I will use the terms "global history," "world history" and "transnational history" alternately from context to context. Arguments for "global history" as an alternative term for "world history" are convincing in that "world history" has been (mis-)used as an alibi for national history in East Asian modern historiography. Indeed, naming is important, but a new term does not necessarily guarantee a new perspective. What one witnesses in the history of East Asian historiography is that "world history," "global history," and "transnational history" have frequently been subjected to nationalist appropriation. Although conscious of subtle differences among these terms, I will not insist on their categorical differences in investigating the issue of nationalist appropriation.
8. Shingo Minamizuka, "How to Overcome Euro-Centrism in the Western History in Japan—Some Lessons from 'Bankokushi' in the Meiji Era," *Proceedings of the Conference of Commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Korean Society for Western History* (unpubl., Seoul National University, July 5–6, 2007), 190–91.
9. Hiroshi Takagi, "Nihon bijutsushi no seiritsu/Shiron" (History of the Establishment of Japanese Art History), *Nihonshi Kenkyu* 320 (1989), 74.
10. Kazuhiko Kondo, "The Studies of Western History in Japan and the Understanding of Modernity," *Proceedings of the Conference of Commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Korean Society for Western History* (unpubl., Seoul National University, July 5–6, 2007), 117.
11. Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 50.
12. Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Past into History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
13. Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895–1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 32–36, 56–59, 80.
14. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 7.

15. Albert Resis, "Das Kapital Comes to Russia," *Slavic Review* 29 (June 1970), 219–37.
16. Karl Marx, "Preface to the German Edition," in idem (ed.), *Das Kapital. A Critique of Political Economy* 1:3. (1906).
17. Bryan S. Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism* (London: Routledge, 1994), 140.
18. See Sebastian Conrad, *The Quest for the Lost Nation*, English trans. by Alan Nothnagle (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).
19. J. Victor Koschmann, "Introduction to the English edition," in Y. Yamanouchi, J. V. Koschmann and R. Narita (eds.), *Total War and Modernization* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), xi–xii.
20. Yuji Geto, "Ilbonui segyesa gyogwasō" (Japanese World History Textbook) in Nakamura Satoru (ed.), *Dongasia yōksa gyogwasōnun öttöge suyeoitulka? (How Have East Asian History Texts Been Written?)* (Seoul: Editor, 2006), 166.
21. Kijung Bang, *Hankook gunhyundai sasangsa yöngu* (Seoul: Yöksabipyungsa, 1992).
22. See Carter J. Eckert, *Offspring of Empire: The Koch'Ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876–1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996).
23. Jie-Hyun Lim, "Befreiung oder Modernisierung? Sozialismus als ein Weg der anti-westlichen Modernisierung in unterentwickelten Ländern," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung* 43:2 (2001), 5–23.
24. Schmid, Korea Between Empires 86–100.
25. Mitsui Takashi, "Ilseontongjoron üi hakmuhjök kibane kwanhan siron" (A Study on the Origins and Development of Ilseontongjoron in Modern Japanese Academism before and after Japanese Annexation of Korea), *Hankukmunhwa* 33 (2004), 249–52.
26. *Ibid.*, 253–54.
27. Lee Sung-si, *Mandlojin godai* (The Ancient Invented), Korean trans. by K. H. Park (Seoul: Samin, 2001), 41–45.
28. Pak Sunyoung, "Ilche sikminjuüiwa Chosönüi mome daihan inryuhakjök sisön" (The Anthropological Gaze at the Korean Bodies Under Japanese Colonialism)," *Bikyomunhwa yöngu* 12:2 (2006), 57–92.
29. *Ibid.*, 65, 72, 73 and *passim*.
30. Wan-yao Chou, "The Kōminka Movement in Taiwan and Korea: Comparisons and Interpretations," in Peter Duus et al. (eds.), *The Japanese Wartime Empire 1931–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 41–68.
31. Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 57, 64.
32. Lee *Mandlojin godai*, 47.
33. For the nationalist historiography of the Marxist party in North Korea, see Jie-Hyun Lim, "The Nationalist Message in Socialist Code: On Court Historiography in People's Poland and North Korea," in Sølvi Sogner (ed.), *Making Sense of Global History* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2001), 373–88.
34. Lee *Mandlojin godai*, 51.
35. Gwanghyun Park, "Sikminji Chosönesö dongyangsahakun öttöke hyungsongdoöttna?" (How Was East Asian History Formulated in Colonial Chosön)," in Do Myunhoi and Yoon Haedong (eds.), *Yöksahakui Segi* (Seoul: Humanist, 2009), 217–34.

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36. Harry Hartoonian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).
37. Jie-Hyun Lim, "Chōsen hantō no minzokushugi to kenryoku no gensetsu [Nationalism on the Korean peninsula and the power discourse]," Japanese trans. by Itagaki, Ryuta, *Gendai shisō*, 28 (June, 2000), 126–44; *Chōkdaejōk kongbōmjadūl* [*Antagonistic Accomplices*] (Seoul: Sonamu, 2005).
38. Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
39. *Miraerūl yōmūn Yōksa* (*History Open to Future*) (Seoul: Hangyōrechulpan, 2005).
40. <https://www2.gwu.edu/~memory/issues/textbooks/jointeastasia.html> (accessed November 29, 2017).
41. Narita Ryūichi, "Dongasiasaūi Ganūngsōng (possibility of East Asian history)," *Changjakgwa Bipyōng* 131 (Spring, 2006), 406.
42. <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6850633.html> (accessed July 8, 2017).
43. One can find both Korean and Japanese versions of full report here: <http://www.historyfoundation.or.kr/?sidx=119&stype=1> (accessed November 29, 2017).