

Whose History? An Analysis of the Korean War in History Textbooks from the United States, South Korea, Japan, and China

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ABSTRACT. This article examines how recent history textbooks from the United States, Japan, China, and South Korea present the Korean War. The comparative analysis focuses on four areas: the causes of the Korean War, American involvement in the war, Chinese involvement in the war, and the results of the war. Analysis of the central story lines reveals that some consistent statements exist about certain events in the Korean War, but inconsistencies and conflicting views

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seem to dominate the history textbooks in these countries. The authors believe that comparing international history textbooks creates a good opportunity for students to see the complexity and controversy of history interpretation. Such a critical comparative approach helps students better understand how people in different countries perceive and interpret historical events. The authors argue that reviewing the similar and conflicting interpretations of the war gives students a unique opportunity to develop their critical-thinking ability and reasoning skills.

Keywords: historical thinking, Korean War, textbook analysis

The world watched on June 27, 2008 as North Korea blew up part of its Yongbyon nuclear plant—the most prominent symbol of its plutonium production—as a gesture demonstrating its commitment to halt its nuclear weapons program. The operation was aimed at

disarming North Korea as discussed in the six-party talks with South Korea, Japan, China, Russia, and the United States. (The six-party talks refer to a series of talks among the six participating governments to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula as a response to North Korea's withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 2003.) In the fall of 2008, North Korea barred U.N. nuclear inspectors from its main nuclear plant and announced plans to restart its nuclear plant. With events still unfolding in North Korea, teaching about the Korean War from different countries' perspectives is a perfect topic to help students grasp current events.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), commonly known as North Korea, is the last Cold War frontier and remained an isolated nation from the rest of the world until 1993, when it stunned the world by declaring that it would withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. North Korea had ratified the treaty in 1985.

In 1994, North Korea and the United States signed a nuclear agreement in Geneva in which North Korea pledged to freeze and eventually dismantled its nuclear weapons program in exchange for international aid to build two power-producing nuclear reactors. In 1999, President Clinton agreed to the first significant easing of economic sanctions against North Korea since the Korean War ended in 1953. Although North Korea suspended its withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, nuclear weapon development in North Korea never stopped. Again, in January 2003, North Korea announced its withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (DPRK Government 2003). In July 2006, North Korea tested its ballistic missiles and two months later tested a nuclear weapon. This series of action shocked the world again and made many view North Korea as a nuclear threat.

The Korean War, which lasted from 1950 to 1953, used to be called the “Forgotten War” in the history of the United States (Blohm 1999; Fleming and Kaufman 1990; Lee 1998; Milliken 2001; Tucker 2000). However, it has gained academic attention in the last decade. The war had a profound impact on the six countries involved. For both North and South Koreans, the war brought catastrophic civilian and military casualties and resulted in the continued division of their country. For the Chinese, the war was the first military operation that the communist government launched after the foundation of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. The Chinese believed that they defended both North Korea and China against imperial aggressors (People’s Education Press 2002). Based on misconceptions born in the Korean War about China’s military power, Americans’ fear of Chinese military intervention increased (Nichols 2000; Tucker 2000). The military conflicts stiffened U.S. attitudes toward the People’s Republic of China. For the former Soviet Union, the war was just another front on which the former Soviet Union and the United States endured a high tension face-off (Lindaman and Ward 2004, 266–67). The Soviet Union

supported North Korea by providing limited assistance in the form of combat advisors, weapons, and military pilots. The war impacted Japan in that it owes much of its economic development to the American military orders during the war and military aid after the war (Stubbs 1999). Technically, the Korean War continues today as only an armistice agreement that halted the fighting in 1953. To maintain the uneasy armistice, some 28,000 U.S. troops are still stationed in South Korea today (U.S. Department of State 2009).

History is typically mandated in schools throughout the world. One of the primary missions of history, perhaps more than any other subject in the school curriculum, is to offer unprecedented opportunities for students to cultivate a sense of national identity, heritage, and common values. Across international settings, history textbooks are the primary source for young people to obtain knowledge about the history of their own country as well as other parts of the world (Foster and Nicholls 2005). Laura Hein and Mark Selden (2000) suggest that school history textbooks are central to the transmission of national values in most societies in that they present an “official” story that highlights narratives that shape contemporary patriotism. Therefore, many countries’ debates over the content and format of history textbooks involve considerable educational and political conflict (Foster and Crawford 2006). In April 2005, reactions to the sanitization of content found in Japanese textbooks concerning Japanese conduct in World War II were strong in Asian countries, with widespread protests erupting inside and outside Japan, particularly in China and South Korea (Zhao and Hoge 2006).

In this pedagogical context, we analyzed different versions of textbooks used in middle schools in different countries to examine the Korean War and how it continues to remain mysterious not only to the countries involved, but also to the rest of the world. We offer a comparative textbook analysis approach to understanding the Korean War based on the textbooks used in public schools

in the United States, South Korea, Japan, and China. As authors, we come from these various countries and have shared our knowledge and understanding about the Korean War and explored how the Korean War is treated in current history textbooks in these countries. We believe that historical reasoning and thinking must be built on an analysis and evaluation of multiple perspectives and multiple sources pertaining to the same historical event (Tucker 2000; Zinn and Macedo 2005, 27).

For this reason, our article aims to explore the Korean War through comparative analysis of history textbooks used in four countries that were involved in the war. More specifically, we intend to explain why Korea was divided into two separate regions, identify the causes leading to the Korean War, and investigate reasons for which the United States and China intervened in the Korean War. We hope this study will encourage students and teachers to integrate a variety of sources and textbooks from other countries into their classes to enhance their historical reasoning and thinking skills pertaining to controversial historical events.

Literature Review

In recent decades, history scholars have been challenging the nature of knowledge presented in history textbooks by asking “Whose knowledge is of the most worth?” (Apple and Christian-Smith 1991, 12–19; Loewen 1995, 266–70). They wonder what kind of historical knowledge teachers should present to young students (Zhao and Hoge 2006). The controversy over the Japanese history textbooks since 1993 is a good example of how varying interpretations of history challenge the way we go about helping the younger generation learn about the truth of the past (Beal, Nozaki, and Yang 2001). Scholars and classroom teachers have used textbook analysis to help students develop historical thinking (DeRose 2007; Gordy, Hogan, and Pritchard 2004). Comparing international textbooks to examine how past events involving the United States were viewed by other nations has

become a desirable approach to help students analyze historical events from different points of views and identify bias in historical accounts (DeRose 2007; Lindaman and Ward 2004, 18; Loewen 1995, 266–67).

A number of studies have examined different countries' textbooks, reviewed textbooks from a bilateral perspective, and analyzed other countries' cultures and historical events to show the influence of textbooks on information that is taught in schools about other cultures. Many researchers around the world have critiqued textbooks for the last thirty years by assessing clarity of writing, the effectiveness of the format or design, and authors' biases or political perspectives in describing historical actors or events. The examination of textbook content and selection processes offers intriguing and illuminating points of contrast that help critics better understand how history is used and portrayed in different national settings. In this global age, international textbook research has become a crucial means of promoting increased cross-cultural and international understanding and also of constructing more tolerant and accurate versions of shared individual and institutional pasts (Altbach 1991). Indeed, much textbook-related research has been carried out by or in collaboration with international organizations (e.g., UNESCO), research institutions, and academic foundations. The US/USSR Textbook Study Project (1979) analyzed the two countries' geography and history textbooks, reported the findings of these reviews, and offered reasonable and proper steps to encourage textbook improvements. The Japan/United States Textbook Study Project sought to improve the content of each country's textbooks (Social Studies Development Center 1981). That project focused especially on the treatment of Japan in American textbooks, the treatment of the United States in Japanese textbooks, and the treatment of the relations between the two countries in each nation's textbooks. Conferences, symposia, lectures, and events focusing on school history textbooks have been organized to encourage open exchange

and dialogue among teachers, curriculum planners, and researchers from different nations to bring attention to the mechanisms that appear to perpetuate stereotyping and bias (Nicholls 2006; Slater 1995). In addition, international textbook studies provide opportunities to reflect critically on a wide range of issues including marketing, censorship, selection processes, political ideologies, national mandates, and international relations (Altbach 1991).

Methodology

Our central research questions are as follows:

1. What are the consistent and conflicting views and statements among various history textbook excerpts about the Korean War?
2. How does the analysis of these views inform educators about teaching about North Korea in the social studies classroom?

Our subquestions are as follows:

1. How did the United States, South Korea, Japan, and China get involved in the Korean War?
2. What roles did each country play in the war?
3. How did the war end and what impact did it have on the nations involved?

Our study is based on a content analysis of middle school history textbooks used in the United States, Japan, South Korea, and China. We decided to analyze only textbooks at the middle school level in accordance with our understanding and knowledge of the curriculum in those countries. The middle school level is the earliest grade level with a relevant standard on the Korean War. Students typically study their own nations and their historical, economic, political, and cultural relationships. In these countries, the curricula stipulate that middle school students learn national history whereas high school students learn world history.

We conducted our textbook analysis in four steps: first, we collected and identified the most commonly used

textbooks in public middle schools in these countries; second, we translated the textbook excerpts about the Korean War and related topics in each textbook into English and then examined how this information was presented in the textbook in terms of its coverage and format; third, we listed and analyzed each of the textbook excerpts based on the research questions; and fourth, using constant comparative analysis research methods (Glazer and Strauss 1967), we examined the recurring themes generated from each of the textbook excerpts and then compared the themes across all the textbooks to identify consistent and inconsistent statements and views about the Korean War.

The differences among the educational systems in the United States, Japan, South Korea, and China made selecting textbooks a challenging task. In the United States and Japan, where private-sector entrepreneurs publish textbooks, we found many history textbooks to study. In the United States, local school districts often make textbook-selection decisions, and we acknowledge that our sampling might not represent all history textbooks used across the United States. For this study, we reviewed textbooks published by the major publishers in the market. The ten textbooks we selected are listed in appendix A. Japan has a national curriculum but allows schools to choose from a list of multiple textbooks. For this study, we examined eight Japanese middle school textbooks. The eight books are listed in appendix B. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology of Japan authorized and approved use of these textbooks in 2005. Students at grade 8 across the country use one of these eight history textbooks, which are all very similar because the Japanese national curriculum prescribes the subject matter and demands that the textbooks deliver the same content. Textbooks in Japan, particularly history textbooks, have been part of continued domestic as well as international controversy since the 1980s, as a result of their treatment of specific historical events. In many respects, Japanese textbooks seem to be more controversial than those of other countries

because final authority to decide content remains with the Ministry of Education (Crawford 2006; Foster and Nicholls 2005). Additionally, there have been and continue to be attempts by politicians and pressure groups to remove, censor, or marginalize accounts to promote a particular view of Japanese national identity (Crawford 2006). Japanese textbooks seem to provide firm statements on national policy and ideology (Ogawa and Field 2006).

In China and South Korea, schools must follow a national curriculum. Chinese schools used to adopt the same textbooks for the entire nation, but in recent years, they have been given more options in selecting textbooks. For this study, we selected two history textbooks published by People Education Press and one textbook by Beijing Normal University Press. Most Chinese schools use these textbooks. The Chinese textbooks reviewed in this study may be found in appendix C. As in China, South Korea's Ministry of Education and Human Resource and Development prescribes a national history curriculum. However, South Korean students all use the same textbook (see appendix D). We analyzed three pages of this textbook for our study.

Findings

Four questions emerged as we studied the textbook excerpts about the Korean War: (1) how do textbooks mention the causes of the Korean War? (2) how do textbooks portray reasons for the U.S. involvement? (3) how do textbooks discuss reasons for the Chinese involvement? and (4) how do textbooks describe how the war ceased in 1953 and who "won" the war? We explored each of these questions based on our analysis of the similarities and differences in historical accounts available in the textbooks selected from the United States, Japan, South Korea, and China.

Causes of the Korean War

The U.S. textbooks provide background information on the Cold War

before they give accounts of the Korean War. The textbooks unanimously agree that the Korean War broke out in 1950 when North Korea, a communist country, invaded South Korea, a noncommunist country. These textbooks point out that communist North Korea was aided by the Soviet Union, which was at odds with the United States in the so-called Cold War. Therefore the United States supported South Korea in the United Nations-led forces in the Korean War.

The eight Japanese textbooks explain that the Korean peninsula was occupied by Japan and that Japan's defeat in World War II in August 1945 had liberated Korea from colonial rule. These textbooks assert that the Cold War era witnessed increasing tension between U.S.-backed South Korea and Soviet Union-backed North Korea. During World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to temporarily divide Korea at the thirty-eighth parallel so that they temporarily occupied the country as a trusteeship, each claiming that they would oversee the removal of Japanese forces from Korea. However, the textbooks do not provide detailed reasons for why Korea was divided into South and North. In addition, details about the Korean War are excluded from these textbooks. The textbooks unanimously agree that in 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea by crossing the thirty-eighth parallel in an effort to unify the whole peninsula. This marked the start of the Korean War.

Korea was freed as a Japanese colony, but it was subsequently occupied by the Soviet Union to the north of the 38th parallel and by the United States to the south. In 1948, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) was established in the north and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) in the south. (Tokyo Shoseki's *New Social Studies: History* 2007, 207)

The textbook published by Beijing Normal University Press in China provides some background information on how Korea was divided and administered by the Soviet Union and the United States after WWII (Beijing Normal University Press 2007). It claims that the Soviet Union-backed North Korea and the U.S.-backed South Korea

took different paths of development, which led to frequent military conflicts between the two along the thirty-eighth parallel. The two Chinese history textbooks describe the Korean War as a civil war between North and South Korea (People's Education Press 2002; People's Education Press 2005). Nothing is mentioned regarding the background of the conflict between North and South Korea. All three textbooks make it clear that the United States invaded North Korea by force and threatened the safety of China (National Institute of Textbook Compilation 2006).

The textbook used in South Korea starts its chapter on the Korean War with very detailed background information about the war. The narrative begins with communist North Korea's military advances before 1949 and the establishment of North Korea as a provisional government. The chapter next provides an account of the North Korean government and its "secret military agreement plan with the Soviet Union to build up its military power" (National Institute of Korean History 2006, 305). While North Korea was preparing for an attack against South Korea, South Korea was undergoing political instability due to insurgences and conflicts between numerous political parties and societies. The South Korean textbook agrees with the U.S. and Japanese textbooks that North Korea attacked South Korea by crossing the thirty-eighth parallel on June 25, 1950, and goes on to say that the South Korean troops had to respond to defend their freedom. The textbook explains this response as a necessary move because of the political crisis South Korea was experiencing and its weak military strength at the time of the attack. Given this context, it is not surprising that the South Korean textbook particularly highlights that "young South Korean voluntary student soldiers bravely fought against the communist soldiers along with the South Korean forces, carrying guns instead of textbooks to protect their freedom and many youths volunteered to join the South Korean Army to protect their mother country" (National Institute of Korean History 2006, 306).

We determined that textbooks in these four countries essentially express two different views when examining causes of the Korean War. The U.S., Japanese, and South Korean textbooks agree that communist North Korea invaded or attacked South Korea. The Chinese textbooks provide a different account—they state that North Korea was invaded by South Korean troops, who were backed by the United States.

Reasons for the United States Involvement

After WWII, communism was deeply feared by the United States and South Korea. With this anticommunist ideology as a context, the U.S. textbooks provide some background information about how the United States practiced an anti-Soviet policy called “containment” to stop the Soviet Union from gaining influence outside its borders. Because Americans worried that the North Korean aggressive military action might be a communist expansion backed by the Soviet Union, the United States decided to support South Korea. When the Korean War broke out, the U.N. forces, which were made up mainly of U.S. troops commanded by General Douglas MacArthur, drove the North Koreans out of the south and back into North Korea. Most of the U.S. textbooks imply that MacArthur’s military prowess and strategy were deciding factors in the early phase of the war.

All eight Japanese textbooks exclude detailed reasons for the U.S. involvement in the war. After Japan’s unconditional surrender to the Allied Powers in August 1945, the United States made Japan a key part of its defensive strategy for East Asia. The United States, however, did not consider South Korea of vital interest, and American forces withdrew from the south in the late 1940s. When the North Korean army attacked the south in 1950, the U.S. military returned. All of the Japanese textbooks note that the United States entered the war with the United Nations’ authorization.

The Cold War grew hot on the Korean Peninsula. In June 1950, North Korea

sought to unite the peninsula by force with the aid of the Soviet Union and advanced southwards, starting the Korean War. The United Nations decided to impose sanctions on North Korea and mobilized an Allied force led by the United States (Kyouiku Shuppan 2007, 185).

Only one Chinese textbook provides background information on why there were two Koreas after WWII, but all three textbooks highlight the United States’ invasion of North Korea. The books are unclear about why the United States invaded North Korea. The chapters that cover the Korean War all note that the U.N. army, which they point out was mainly composed of American soldiers and backed by the United States, crossed the thirty-eighth parallel and approached the borderline between North Korea and China. For example, one book states the following:

In June 1950, the war between North Korea and South Korea broke out. The United States undauntedly invaded North Korea by force. The so-called “United Nations’ Forces” with the U.S. troops as its mainstay crossed the thirty-eighth parallel and charged toward Yalu River at the Chinese border. American military airplanes invaded Chinese territory, bombing and shooting the bordering cities in Northeast China. The U.S. 7th Fleet invaded the Taiwan Straits of China to prevent the Chinese People’s Liberation Army from liberating Taiwan. The invasion of the United States gravely threatened the security of China. (*History of China* 2002, 7)

The South Korean textbook explains the involvement of the United Nations and the United States by stating that the South Korea at the time was politically unstable and its military power was weak. In the wake of the unexpected attack from North Korea, South Korea had to seek aid from others. The South Korean textbook emphasizes that, to respond to the North Korean invasion, the South Korean and U.N. forces launched a counterattack and recaptured the capital city of Seoul on September 28, 1950, after successfully landing on Incheon. In the hope of reuniting both Koreas, the South Korean and U.S. troops advanced into North Korea. They pushed all the way to the Yalu River until they were forced to retreat because of the Chinese intervention.

The explanation of how the United States became involved in the war implies that the weakened South Korea solicited U.S. military assistance when facing North Korean attack. U.S. troops stepped in mainly because they wanted to prevent the expansion of communist countries led by the Soviet Union. Neither the Chinese nor Japanese textbooks offer reasons for American involvement. Textbooks in these countries simply recognize the involvement of the U.N. forces and that the forces mainly consisted of U.S. troops.

Reasons for Chinese Involvement

The U.S. textbooks we reviewed briefly mention Chinese involvement in the Korean War. One account mentions that the U.N. forces, backed by the United States under the command of General MacArthur, sent soldiers to push the invaders out of South Korea. This pushed China into action, and Chinese troops were sent to help the North Koreans. Another version provides a detailed explanation about China’s entry into the conflict.

Communist China saw the movement of UN forces into North Korea as a threat to China’s security. Chinese leaders warned that a further advance would force them to enter the war. Ignoring this warning, the UN forces pushed on toward the Yalu River. On November 25, 1950, hundreds of thousands of Chinese Communist troops attacked in human waves across the Yalu River into North Korea. They drove the UN troops back to South Korea (McDougal Littell 2002, 796.)

Most of the Japanese textbooks agree that China’s People’s Volunteer Army supported the North Korean troops during the war, but they do not elaborate on the reasons for Chinese intervention. Only one textbook discusses the reason why China entered the war:

When the UN forces approached the Chinese border, China sent volunteer soldiers into North Korea (Nihon Bunkyo Shuppan’s *Middle School Social Studies: History Japan’s Path and the World* 2007, 202).

The South Korean textbook explains that the Chinese government assembled an army of volunteer troops and drove

the army down into South Korea. The textbook continues with an account of how South Korea, with the help of regrouped allied forces, recovered the capital city of Seoul after they lost it to the North Korean and Chinese troops. The textbook points out that the combined U.S. and South Korean troops succeeded in pushing the North Korean and Chinese army back up to the thirty-eighth parallel:

Expecting the reunification of both Koreas, the allied forces drove up to the Yalu River. However, they were forced to retreat due to the Chinese intervention. Employing human wave tactics, the Chinese army assembled a number of troops and drove down into South Korea. As a result, South Korea was forced to give up Seoul again. However, the regrouped allied forces recovered the capital city once again and drove the communist forces back up to near the thirty-eighth parallel. In the middle of severe attacks and counterattacks between North and UN-South Korean forces, the UN made a truce with North Korea in July, 1953. (National Institute of Korean History 2006, 305)

The Chinese textbooks use several sentences or even paragraphs to explain the reasons for Chinese involvement in the war. The textbooks make clear that the Chinese army became involved in October 1950 for two reasons. First, the United Nations' allied troops, mainly composed of U.S. soldiers, crossed the thirty-eighth parallel and charged toward Yalu River at the Chinese border despite Chinese government warnings. They Chinese textbooks place special emphasis on how the U.S.-led army threatened China's border and even invaded China's territory, which forced China to take action to assist North Korea and defend China's own security.

American military airplanes invaded the Chinese territory, bombing and shooting the bordering cities in northeast China. The U.S. 7th Fleet invaded the Taiwan Straits of China to prevent the Chinese People's Liberation Army from liberating Taiwan. The invasion of the United States gravely threatened the security of China. On October 25, 1950, China sent an army of volunteers to assist the Koreans who were resisting America and to defend North Korea (People's Education Press 2002, 7).

Second, the North Korean government asked for Chinese military assistance.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea requested the Chinese government to send troops to aid them. To fight against the United States, to respond to North Korea's assistance request as well as defend and protect homeland from invasion, in October 1950, the Chinese People's Volunteer Troops, under the leadership of Peng Dehuai as the commander-in-chief, arrived at the frontlines of North Korea and fought against the U.S. aggressors with people and the army from North Korea. (People's Education Press 2002, 7).

The Chinese textbooks all use the United States' involvement to justify China's participation in the war and regard China's actions as a defensive practice. The side bar in *History of China* (2002) features Chairman Mao, the Chinese leader at the time, arguing that without the intervention of the Chinese army, power supplies in northeast China would have fallen under the control of the United States. When the textbooks mention that the joint Chinese and North Korean army pushed the U.S. aggressors back to south of the thirty-eighth parallel, they do not explain how the thirty-eighth parallel was drawn and why it played an important role in political and military situations.

Through our study, we found that all four nations' textbooks recognize the fact that U.N. forces approached the Chinese border, that this action was considered a security threat by the Chinese government, and that China sent voluntary troops to join the North Korean army as a result. The Chinese textbooks make it clear that China became involved in the war to defend its homeland because U.N. forces not only threatened the security of northeast China, but also invaded Chinese territory. In addition, the North Korean government asked for military aid from the Chinese government, just as South Korea sought help from the United States.

How the War Ceased in 1953 and Who Won the War

There is little talk of valor or glory in the U.S. textbooks (McDougal Littell 2002). The war is described sparsely if at all, and the nature of the combat engagement is relegated to a few quotes

from first-hand accounts. There is only one mention of surrender by either side. Retreat is mentioned in both directions when troops were outnumbered. The aftermath of the war is, however, neglected in about 50 percent of the books reviewed in the United States. One group of U.S. textbooks acknowledges that the war ended in stalemate. General Eisenhower, who was elected president in 1952 and took office in 1953, agreed during truce talks with North Korea and China to a compromise to end the war.

A cease fire ended the fighting in July 1953. The two Koreas were left more or less where they had been in 1950 with a border near the 38th parallel. Communism has been contained in Korea (McDougal Littell 2002, 796).

Another textbook (McDougal Littell 2002) confirms that the national boundaries of the two Koreas had changed very little. But this textbook's tone implies that the United States had shown that the free world had fought against and would continue to fight communist aggression. Therefore, the temporary ending of the Korean War fanned the flames of the "red scare" in the United States in the 1950s.

The Japanese textbooks state that the war continued with regional battles from 1951 until July 1953, when a cease-fire agreement was reached. An alternative word used to describe the result of the Korean War is *armistice*. None of these textbooks declare a winner, but from an economic perspective the war was very good for Japan. In fact, Japan experienced an economic boom, and its post-World War II reconstruction gathered speed during the Korean War.

When the Korean War started in 1950, the United States used its military bases in the Japanese mainland and Okinawa and procured a massive amount of military supplies from Japan. The Japanese economy enjoyed an economic boom from the special demand (the special procurement boom), and economic reconstruction accelerated (Tokyo Shoseki 2007, 208).

Unlike U.S. and Japanese textbooks, the Chinese textbooks hail China's victory in the war to defend China and North Korea from the United States. All the textbooks give a special account of

how the Chinese army fought bravely against the American army in October 1952 at Shangganlin, an important battlefield, where both sides suffered heavy losses in a forty-day bout of cruel fighting. The textbooks describe American casualties without mentioning Chinese casualties. All the Chinese textbooks accredit the signing of the cease fire to the joint efforts and patriotic spirits of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army and the North Korean Army. They declare that China and North Korea won the war against the aggressors. In one book, the entire chapter about the war ends with a paragraph describing the Chinese People's Volunteer Army's return to their homeland in victory.

The Chinese People's Volunteer Troops were known as "most beloved persons" thanks to their selfless patriotism and revolutionary heroism in the war against the United States to aid North Korea. The undaunted fights by the Chinese People's Volunteers and the North Korean army and civilians led to an armistice signed by the United States in July 1953. The Chinese and North Korean people celebrated their victory in their war against aggressors. The Chinese People's Volunteer Army took turns to return to their homelands in victory. (People's Education Press 2002, 9–10).

One of the Chinese textbooks claims that the victory against the United States maintained the peace between Asian countries and the rest of the world, improved the international reputation of the new China, and won a relatively stable and peaceful environment. China is the only country among the four that stresses its victory in the war.

The South Korean textbook depicts the end of the war as culminating in a truce signed by the U.N.-South Korean forces and North Korea in July 1953. The textbook concludes that "the war, caused by North Korea, was a tragedy and a challenge to freedom and peace" (National Institute of Korean History 2006, 305). This is the only textbook among all those we reviewed that discusses the war casualties and damage.

The war brought about countless deaths and property damage. The total number of casualties suffered by South Korea alone amounted to about 1,500,000, caus-

ing a great number of war orphans and displaced families. Both North and South Korea were wasted by the war. Their economic facilities, such as factories, power plants, buildings, bridges, and railroads were severely damaged or destroyed. The war caused not only heavy casualties, but also huge mental damage. Hatred between North and South Korea escalated because of the war. That has resulted in the national tragedy of confrontation rather than peaceful reunification. (National Institute of Korean History 2006, 305)

Discussion

We examined how different textbooks portray the Korean War based on four categories: causes of the war, U.S. involvement, Chinese involvement, and consequences. However, another, significant theme arose during our textbook analysis. The relationship between Japan and the Korean War was particularly interesting. Japan played an important role in the postwar decades with its strong economic recovery. Our analysis shows that Japanese textbooks provide some information of how Japan became an important base for the U.S. military activities during the Korean War. Those textbooks discuss how Japan cooperated with the United States during the war. Throughout the war, the United States used its military bases on Japan's main islands and Okinawa, and U.S. bombers from Japan carried out ceaseless raids on North Korean towns, dams, and other facilities. Japan, however, did not officially choose to provide support in accordance with a decision by its government. As a defeated and occupied country, Japan was unconditionally obliged to obey the orders of the occupation forces. Although most Japanese people have no sense or memory of having participated in the war, today North Korea considers Japan a belligerent country that provided full support to the United States and South Korea. Thus, Japan still has no diplomatic relations with North Korea.

The Korean War accelerated the United States' attempts to restore Japan to a respected international position and make that country a prosperous ally of the United States. The 1951 Treaty of San Francisco ended the war between

Japan and forty-seven of the Allies (most nations allied with the Soviet Union refused to sign) concluded the American Occupation and excused the Japanese from reparations for the war. On the same day the Treaty of San Francisco was signed, Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida signed the U.S.-Japanese Security Treaty, which allowed the United States to station troops in Japan and made the Japanese islands an important facet of America's global containment structure. The growing concern over Japanese security related directly to the war in Korea. In 1950, the United States had the Japanese government establish the National Police Reserve to maintain public order in Japan. This organization was subsequently strengthened, and in 1954 it was transformed into the Japan Self-Defense Forces.

The analysis of textbook treatments of the Korean War in these four countries shows that each nation's textbooks stress the country's particular perspective and largely ignore the horrors of the war. Middle school history textbooks almost universally overlook the casualties and damage the war inflicted on individual civilians and the nations as a whole. The Korean War was a fratricidal tragedy that challenged freedom and peace. The war brought about countless deaths and immense property damage. The total number of casualties suffered by South Korea alone amounted to about 1,500,000, leading to a great number of war orphans and displaced families. Virtually all of the U.S. history textbooks put the U.S. death figure at 50,000 soldiers. Only a few U.S. textbooks mention the casualties of South Korea, and none estimate the death toll of the Chinese soldiers. The Chinese textbooks also do not give the number of Chinese soldiers killed in the Korean War.

The war may have strengthened the relationship between the United States and Japan and the United States and South Korea, but in the long run it worsened the already tense relationships between the United States and China, the United States and the Soviet Union, and China and South Korea. As educators, we believe teachers should

help students understand that there are other ways besides war to resolve conflicts.

History textbooks in most countries tend to present their countries' pasts for nationalist ideologies and patriotic sentiments (Foner 2002). The results of our analysis support Zinn's argument that history is always taught from the perspective of the victor and national history is always taught "to keep the citizenry docile, domesticated, and historically ignorant, even though this ignorance is never innocent" (Zinn and Macedo 2005, 11). We argue that such historical amnesia should not add to national pride and citizenship. We concur with what ex-premier of Germany Helmut Schmidt said: "Our national integrity is not damaged even though we admit our past misbehavior" (Levinson 1982, xi).

Conclusion

History textbooks in most countries remain the most powerful means to provide young people with an understanding of their own history as well as that of the world. It is widely acknowledged that the contents and perspectives presented in history textbooks are not neutral, and as Peter McLaren (1989) argues, "knowledge acquired in school—or anywhere, for that matter—is never neutral or objective but is ordered and structured in particular ways" (169). Because of this, exposing students to multiple historical perspectives is fundamental to good history teaching (Romanowski 1996). Teachers need to teach in such a way as to avoid distorting history by interpreting it solely in light of present-day perspectives (Barton 1994). How history is taught and the subject matter history teachers teach have changed over time. Reflecting a more culturally diverse and global world, current social studies standards and an increased emphasis on multicultural and global education support a curriculum that promotes multiple perspectives (Banks 1997; Merryfield and Kasai 2004; Merryfield and Wilson 2005; National Council for the Social Studies 1994; Sleeter and Grant 1999; Tunnell and Ammon 1996).

It is not enough for teachers simply to present students with multiple perspectives without engaging them in thoughtful evaluation of the perspectives or the information (Bardige 1988; Tunnell and Ammon 1996). Some teachers have developed multiple-perspective lessons that help students understand conflicting accounts of historical events and that ask issues-centered questions to encourage student inquiry (DeRose 2007). However, most primary and secondary school history textbooks present history from a single perspective with few conflicting ideas (Tunnell and Ammon 1996). Many teachers teach history exclusively from the textbook, and corresponding examinations are based on students' knowledge of textbook content (Nicholls 2006). The presentation of the Korean War in the textbooks from various countries can help students better understand how people in different countries perceive and interpret this historical event. Reviewing the similar and conflicting interpretations of the war gives students a unique opportunity to develop their critical-thinking abilities and reasoning skills.

As we found in this study, comparing international history textbooks creates an opportunity for teachers and students to see the complexity and controversy of history interpretation. While history textbooks from different countries come to some agreement on dates or other details about the Korean War, the causes of the war, reasons of the countries' involvement, and consequences of the war are often missing or construed from a single and simplistic perspective. Thus, teachers face a daunting task (Hein and Selden 2000, 203). Students may not be exposed to the controversial nature of history and are less likely to develop historical thinking unless teachers adopt a comparative textbook analysis approach. To start a comparative textbook analysis activity, teachers need to obtain other nations' textbooks or translated versions through reliable Web sites or other valid sources. Translating original textbooks poses a challenge. Collaboration with scholars from other countries is one way to obtain other nations' textbooks. Teachers can also

use Dana Lindaman and Kyle Ward's (2004) book titled *History Lesson: How Textbooks from around the World Portray U.S. History*. This book includes translated excerpts from various countries' textbooks about significant historical events (including the Korean War) in U.S. history.

To enhance students' history learning, especially the learning of complicated historical events such as wars, teachers should give students the opportunity to "do history." When students do history, they learn history better and more in depth. During this learning process, the teacher should act as a facilitator. For example, when teaching about the Korean War, it is important to bring students into contact with pictures and written descriptions from all perspectives and then allowing students to identify and explain the differences among the multiple perspectives. Then the teacher can ask students to present what they have learned to one another.

Adolescence, especially the middle school years, is the time when most youths make the transition from the concrete to formal stage of thought (Inhelder and Piaget 1958). Therefore, these young people should be encouraged to develop multiple historical perspectives, that is, to learn to generalize and discover relationships, to see another's point of view, empathize, and take people's perspectives (Hill 1980; Steinberg 1989). Comparative textbook analysis activities help students understand that an "official" history that highlights particular narratives shapes national historical views. Comparing textbooks shows students that textbooks have strengths and weaknesses and that they can use textbooks as tools for learning about the process of history. For example, teachers can have students compare a Japanese textbook passage on the Korean War with an American textbook passage and ask them which account has the most colorful adjectives, which account uses more facts, what evidence of bias is present in each account, and why is this bias expressed. Teachers should encourage students to share their own perspectives with other classmates, listen to different perspectives from classmates, and

understand various perspectives through presentations and discussion.

It is important to note that during the middle school years, peer influence is strongest, and students are fiercely loyal to their peer groups. Thus teachers must establish the context of meaningful and interactive discussion. Teachers must demonstrate to students that history has no single “right” answer. To do this, teachers can engage students by having them act out mini scenes involving key moments in the Korean War. For example, students can portray two American soldiers capturing a Chinese soldier and taking the prisoner to the stockade. Students should then reverse the identities of the two captors and their captive and replay the scene. Another activity would be to have students build two versions of a three-dimensional war map of a particular battle, with one version representing what the North Koreans saw and knew or thought they knew and the other version representing what the South Koreans saw and knew or thought they knew. Students can compare these maps as they are developed, digging deeply into the historical records to justify the representations. Such exploratory learning activities will give students a unique opportunity to develop their historical thinking skills and reasoning abilities.

We strongly recommend that history teachers adopt the comparative approach of analyzing how international history textbooks treat complex controversial events. We firmly believe that presenting multiple perspectives of the same historical events increases the development of students’ critical thinking, reasoning skills, and global awareness, all of which are goals and key components of any history curriculum.

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**APPENDIX A
U.S. TEXTBOOKS REVIEWED IN THIS STUDY**

Book title	Publisher	Year
<i>World History: The Human Experience</i>	Glencoe/McGraw-Hill	1999
<i>The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21st Century</i>	McDougal Littell	2005
<i>Pathways to the Present: Modern American History</i>	Pearson Prentice Hall	2005
<i>The American Nation</i>	Pearson Prentice Hall	2005
<i>History of Our World</i>	Pearson Prentice Hall	2005
<i>Creating America: A History of the United States</i>	McDougal Littell	2002
<i>History Alive! The United States</i>	Teachers' Curriculum Institute	2002
<i>Creating America: A History of the United States</i>	McDougal Littell	2005
<i>The American Journey</i>	Glencoe/McGraw-Hill	2007
<i>The American Journey Reconstruction to the Present</i>	Glencoe/McGraw-Hill	2005

**APPENDIX B
JAPANESE TEXTBOOKS REVIEWED IN THIS STUDY**

Book title	Publisher	Year
<i>New Social Studies: History</i>	Tokyo Shoseki	2007
<i>Middle School social Studies: history</i>	Osaka Shoseki	2007
<i>Social Studies: History for Middle School Students</i>	Tikoku Shoin	2007
<i>Middle School Social Studies: History Looking Toward the Future</i>	Kyouiku Shuppan	2007
<i>New Social Studies: History: Japanese History and the World</i>	Shimizu Shoin	2007
<i>Our Middle School Social Studies: The Historical Field</i>	Nihon shoseki Shinsha	2007
<i>Middle School Social Studies: History Japan's Path and the World</i>	Nihon Bunkyo Shuppan	2007
<i>The New History Textbook</i>	Fushosha	2006

**APPENDIX C
CHINESE TEXTBOOKS REVIEWED IN THIS STUDY**

Book title	Publisher	Year
<i>Chinese History</i>	People's Education Press.	2002
<i>Chinese History</i>	Beijing Normal University Press	2007
<i>History and Society</i>	People's Education press	2005

**APPENDIX D
SOUTH KOREAN TEXTBOOK REVIEWED IN THIS STUDY**

Book title	Publisher	Year
<i>Korean History</i>	National Institute of Korean History, National Institute of Textbook Compilation Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development	2006