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**A JAPANESE  
HISTORIOGRAPHY  
OF RECONCILIATION  
EFFORTS WITH  
ITS EAST ASIAN  
NEIGHBORS:**

**Before and After the History  
Textbook Dispute in 2001**

**T**he historical memory issue in East Asia is one of the major factors that will endanger the future of East Asia. Reconciliation between Japan and its neighbors has not been achieved in this regard even 70 years since the end of Japanese aggression against China and Korea. Yet, there have been efforts of historical reconciliation among historians on both sides

since the 1980s. This paper will introduce a brief historiography of Japanese efforts towards historical reconciliation with its neighboring peoples for the sake of future generations.

## **THE CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL SITUATION OF THE HISTORICAL MEMORY ISSUE IN EAST ASIA**

Today, the Japanese are in a difficult situation regarding their historical memory pertaining to their neighbors. The Koreans and the Chinese continue to denounce Japan for its aggression and colonial rule during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After WWII, the Japanese regretted the wars, resolved not to engage in any wars, resumed diplomatic relations with South Korea with de facto compensation in 1965, concluded peace treaties with China in 1978 and began a historical dialogue about its evil past with their neighbors. Yet, the neighbors' anger was not appeased until now. More precisely, the anger has gone away as new generations have emerged and the older people have passed away. Yet historical memory still dominates the scene; whether it be the national sense of humiliation in Korea, or the politically cultivated memory of the government in China.

Intellectuals in Japan and its neighboring states have made great efforts from the early 21<sup>st</sup> century onwards to address this grave issue. They have attempted to engage in historical dialogues for reconciliation by focusing on Japan's history textbooks in order to have the Japanese teach the memory of their invasions to their younger generations. They almost succeeded in this goal as far as Japanese textbooks are concerned. Yet, public suspicion among these neighbors has still not been dispelled. In addition, the Japanese public lost its interest in the historical memory issue after the rise of territorial disputes with China and South Korea in 2012. Immediate hatred against these neighbors prevents Japanese ordinary people from thinking about its dark past during the first half of the twentieth century. Today, Japanese historical reconciliation efforts with its neighbors seem almost stalled.

The year 2015 was one of the most dangerous years in contemporary East Asia. Japan might have fallen into a pitfall of world criticism if the Japanese prime minister, notorious for his conservative beliefs, had openly denied the fact of Japan's problematic past. Owing to the tremendous efforts of government officials and associated intellectuals, this nightmare was somehow avoided. Also, the South Korean and Japanese governments agreed to settle the comfort women issue by establishing a Korean organization to rehabilitate and compensate them at the end of the year. Although it is uncertain if this agreement will be kept or

not after the South Korean president's downfall, there may be some hope for a better future based on the fact that negotiators on both sides could somehow reach the agreement.

On the other hand, there emerged another trend that will support the improvement of international relations. In recent years, many Chinese and South Koreans have been visiting Japan for sightseeing purposes, enjoying its landscape and foods, buying various elegant goods and finding the Japanese people friendly. Through direct observation, not a few neighbors have changed their views of Japan. This new state of affairs might offer clues for the improvement of mutual relations and, subsequently also a reconciliation regarding historical memory.

In order to realize this possibility, the Japanese side must not give up its efforts. It is absolutely necessary for Japan to remember the evils in its past during the first half of the twentieth century. Only if Japan maintains its efforts will it be able to enjoy a better future with its neighbors.

In this context, I would like to introduce Japan's efforts for historical reconciliation with its neighbors before and after 2001. It was in 2001 when the big international disputes about a Japanese history textbook brought the historical memory issue to the attention of the East Asian public. I myself was one of the scholars who began to be engaged in this issue in 2001. Yet, the efforts for historical reconciliation in Japan had already begun about twenty years earlier and therefore it is worthwhile to recollect these pioneering works if we are to keep up our will and courage to continue the efforts for reconciliation in the distant future.

## **JAPANESE EFFORTS FOR HISTORICAL RECONCILIATION WITH ITS NEIGHBORS BY THE 'STUDY GROUP FOR COMPARATIVE HISTORY AND COMPARATIVE HISTORY EDUCATION'**

In December 1982, eighteen high school history teachers and university historians jointly organized a small study group for comparative history and comparative history education. This was the beginning of their epoch-making project although they themselves did not know what was to come.<sup>1</sup> (This group will henceforth be referred to as the 'Comparative History Group' in this text.)

1 比較史・比較歴史教育研究会編『「自国史と世界史」をめぐる国際対話——比較史・比較歴史教育研究会30年の軌跡』ブイツーソリューション (Study Group for Comparative History and History Education (ed.). *International Dialogue on 'National History and World History': Recollections of Thirty Years of a Study Group for Comparative History and History Education*. Nagoya: V2-solution), 2015.

In retrospect, this was one of the creative developments of the famous Saburo Ienaga's lawsuits concerning a history textbook that had begun in 1965 and was still ongoing at the time.<sup>2</sup> Surprisingly, their memoirs do not mention the Ienaga lawsuits. Yet, we can observe that both Ienaga and the 'Comparative History Group' were deeply interested in the improvement of Japanese history education at the high school level. Both wished to check the nationalist tendency in Japanese history education to avoid future wars. Furthermore, both efforts brought university professors and high school teachers together in which the latter took a leading role.

Yet, the 'Comparative History Group' advanced history education in a different way from the Ienaga group. Their major concern was not limited to Japanese history. Inspired by Senroku Uehara, a former professor of history at Hitotsubashi University, they focused on how to place Japanese history within the whole course of world history. This led them to open a historical dialogue beyond borders with Japan's neighboring peoples: the Chinese, South Koreans, North Koreans, Vietnamese and Taiwanese – something which was unprecedented in East Asia until then.

Yet, it was an initiative from the United States that originated this study group.<sup>3</sup> In 1978, the American Historical Association proposed that the Japanese committee of the ICHS (International Congress of Historical Sciences) organize a periodical joint project for historical studies between the US and Japan. In 1980, during the 15<sup>th</sup> ICHS in Bucharest, both sides agreed to open their first conference in Japan. The theme was 'studies of European History in Japan and the United States.' Professor Masao Nishikawa, a specialist of the Second Socialist International at the University of Tokyo, proposed that they include history education as the third session of the proposed conference. His intent was to 'create a world committee of history education in order to encourage creating history textbooks that will contribute towards the nurturing of mutual understanding and friendship between nations through international cooperation' as the project between West Germany and Poland had suggested. He also stressed the role of history researchers and educators in the private sector in order to 'overcome

2 Saburo Ienaga was a famous historian of Japanese intellectual history. He raised a lawsuit to resist the Ministry of Education that had ordered to revise his drafts of history textbooks for high schools. For brief accounts and related materials, see 三谷博編『歴史教科書問題』日本図書センター(Mitani, Hiroshi (ed.). *Essays on History Textbook Issue*. Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Center, 2007. For Japanese institution of history textbook, see, Yang, Daqing, Liu, Jie, Mitani, Hiroshi, Gordon, Andrew (eds.). *Toward a History beyond Borders: Contentious Issues in Sino-Japanese Relations*. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012.

3 伊集院立「比較史・比較歴史教育研究会『自国史と世界史』成立の頃」(Ijuin, Ritsu. "Recollections on the Publication of 'National History and World History'. In: 比較史・比較歴史教育研究会編『「自国史と世界史」をめぐる国際対話』(Study Group for Comparative History and History Education (ed.). *International Dialogue on 'National History and World History'*), pp. 91–104.

the misuse of historical memories by governments which enhances the peoples' hatred originating from invasions and wars (in this century).<sup>4</sup> Together with his friends he organized the 'Comparative History Group' to prepare for the third section of the coming conference. Goro Yoshida at Hiro-o High School was nominated as the group's secretary-general.

During the Japan-US conference held in March 1983, the Japanese participants realized the necessity of overcoming not only Euro-centrism but also their own ethnocentrism. They continued to hold a series of workshops for comparative studies of history education and history textbooks and became fascinated by the theme of how to conceptualize and educate national histories in the context of world history. They also began searching for a way to have direct communication with history educators in neighboring countries. This was one of the echoes of the first international controversy on Japanese history textbooks that had occurred in the preceding year.

The 'Comparative History Group' was encouraged to inaugurate international dialogue with neighboring countries when they invited a Vietnamese historian who happened to visit Japan. Then, they sought after a Chinese historian who would be interested in their project and succeeded in inviting the vice president of the Chinese Society of History Education. Later, they also managed to add South Korean educators to their group. After enthusiastic preparations, they succeeded in holding the first 'symposium on History Education in East Asia: National Histories and World History,' at the University of Tokyo, Komaba, in August 1984. They paid all the fees for the three Chinese and two South Korean participants out of their own pockets with the help of some contributions from their friends.

Later, they held three more workshops every five years until 1999. For the second workshop in 1989, they invited three participants from China, two from South Korea and one from North Korea. For the third workshop in 1994, they invited three participants from China, two from South Korea, one from Taiwan and one from Vietnam. In the last workshop in 1999, they invited two participants from China, three from South Korea, one from Taiwan and one from Vietnam.

These symposia were one of the first series of multi-lateral dialogues on history education in East Asia. At first, they were not well focused, nor did they succeed in realizing fruitful communication among the participants from different countries. The first symposium dealt with 'National histories and world history' and simply juxtaposed various essays on history education about Asia and

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4 Ibid, p. 92.

Europe.<sup>5</sup> The second symposium in 1989 set three themes in addition to the first one: ‘The goals of history education and textbooks’; ‘The formation of the image of world history in relation to history education’; and ‘East Asia in modern history – focusing on WWII.’<sup>6</sup> The third symposium in 1994 focused on two topics: ‘American history from the viewpoints of East Asia,’ and the ‘First Sino-Japanese War as the turning point of East Asian history’,<sup>7</sup> and the last symposium in 1999 focused on only one theme: ‘Imperialism.’<sup>8</sup>

As the themes were being clarified, communication among the participants became deeper, enabling them to reflect upon their own views and find new horizons of thought. One of the organizers, Misako NIMURA, recollected: ‘In the first symposium, we were so excited by the mere fact that we could welcome the participants from China and South Korea. In the second symposium, we congratulated each other that we had succeeded in inviting a scholar from North Korea by overcoming the difficulty in obtaining a Japanese visa for him and having participants from China just after the Tienanmen Incident. We were so excited by the fact that we had succeeded in non-governmental exchanges beyond borders on the theme of history education. It was not until the third symposium in 1994 that we started enjoying full-fledged presentations and fruitful discussions.’<sup>9</sup>

I happened to be one of the audience members at the third symposium held on my own campus. My impression was not so exciting because the Chinese participants appeared to me to be merely repeating the official historical interpretations of their government. Yet, it was at this symposium that the Japanese and Korean participants entered a deeper dialogue with each other, and participants from Taiwan and Vietnam dared to present the complex situation they had experienced during the foreign aggression and colonialism. The Taiwanese pointed out that they had experienced modernization and progress under Japanese

5 比較史・比較歴史教育研究会編『共同討議 日本・中国・韓国——自国史と世界史』ホルプ出版 (Study Group for Comparative History and History Education (ed.). *International Debate among Japan, China, Korea: National Histories and World History*. Tokyo: Holp Shuppan), 1985. For full papers, see 比較史・比較歴史教育研究会編『自国史と世界史——歴史教育の国際化を求めて』未来社 (Study Group for Comparative History and History Education (ed.). *National Histories and World History: In Search for the Internationalization of History Education*. Tokyo: Mirai-sha), 1985.

6 比較史・比較歴史教育研究会編『アジアの「近代」と歴史教育——続・自国史と世界史』(Study Group for Comparative History and History Education (ed.). *'Modernity' in Asia and History Education: National Histories and World History, continued*. Tokyo: Mirai-sha), 1991.

7 比較史・比較歴史教育研究会編『黒船と日清戦争 歴史認識をめぐる対話』(Study Group for Comparative History and History Education (ed.). *Perry's Black Ships and the First Sino-Japanese War: Dialogue on History Cognition*. Tokyo: Mirai-sha), 1996.

8 比較史・比較歴史教育研究会編『帝国主義の時代と現在——東アジアの対話』(Study Group for Comparative History and History Education (ed.). *The Age of Imperialism and the Present: Dialogue in East Asia*. Tokyo: Mirai-sha), 2002.

9 Ibid, p. 340.

colonial rule, which evoked discussion with the South Korean scholars who held the opposite view. The Vietnamese presentation reminded us of the fact that they had suffered from colonialism not only at the hand of Westerners, but also from their East Asian neighbors, China and Japan.

As the discussion became deeper, some guidelines emerged for further dialogue amongst the Japanese participants. Professor Masao Nishikawa summed them up as follows.<sup>10</sup> (1) We, the participants, should not devote our attention only to the individual word and expression in history textbooks. Rather: (2) It is important to present different historical interpretations by various nations on the same platform for discussion and thus deepen the understanding of history on the other side. (3) We should not pursue the goal of single Common History Textbooks of East Asia. (4) Non-Governmental historical dialogue is crucial. No government should interfere with history education. (5) These principles are represented by the slogan: 'National histories in the context of world history.'

These principles are almost similar to my own opinion which was independently formed a few years later in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. I regret that I never had the opportunity to learn from the experience of Professor Masao Nishikawa during his lifetime.

The 'study Group for Comparative History and Comparative History Education' dissolved in 2014 as its members aged or passed away. Yet, their efforts have been passed on to posterity in various ways. Some members contributed to editing the famous common teaching materials among Japan, China and South Korea in 2005 and in 2012. These were not common textbooks, yet, it was epoch making that historians and educators from three countries could publish an East Asian modern history, overcoming the difficulty in holding discussions in three different languages as well as bridging the varied disciplines. In this context, we have to pay sincere homage to the pioneering works accomplished by the 'Comparative History Group' from the early 1980s.

## HISTORICAL DIALOGUE AND COOPERATIVE RESEARCH SINCE 2001: FROM MY EXPERIENCES

I must confess, I was little concerned with the memory of Japanese aggressions towards its neighboring peoples before I met Professor Chung Jae-Jung from Seoul in the early 1990s. Although I had studied modern Japanese history,

10 西川政雄著、伊集院立・小沢弘明・日暮美奈子編『歴史の醍醐味』日本経済評論社 (Nishikawa, Masao (auth), Ijuin, R., Ozawa, H., Higurashi, M. (eds.). *Pleasure of Doing History*. Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyoronsha), 2010, p. 300.

my research had been concentrated on the late Tokugawa period during which there was a minimum of relationships between Korea and Japan. However, when I talked to Professor Chung after a meeting on history textbooks in Tokyo, he pointed out that “A part of our history was the history of a foreign country.” Hearing his words, I realized how miserable I would be if a part of Japanese history were the history of a foreign country. From that day, I began to consider the meaning of Japanese colonial rule of Korea and the legacy of Japanese aggression in general.

In 1996, I was nominated as one of the scholars entrusted with carrying out a large academic project: The Forum for Japan-Korea Cooperative Studies.<sup>11</sup> The Forum involved seven research groups, including two groups of historians. I belonged to a group led by Professor Hiroshi Watanabe (University of Tokyo) and Park Chung-sok (Eha Women’s University). I engaged in this international research for two terms (six years in total) and found that there were many historians of insight and originality in South Korea. It was a very exciting experience for me to have colleagues in Korea with whom I could exchange knowledge and enjoy discussions on various topics. I consider the project to be epoch making because about 100 scholars per term became acquainted with each other, found respectable colleagues and built a basis for future cooperation. This was a novel event in East Asian history. It was also a precious opportunity to meet Japanese historians who specialized in Korean history. The average Japanese historians who study Japan have little concern for Korean history and know little of their colleagues studying Korean history. I found it very interesting and important to learn Korean history through intimate academic discussions and began to nurture friendships with not only Korean scholars but also Japanese scholars.

Then, in 2001, I was invited to a cooperative study group between Japan and China consisting of younger historians from both countries. The leader was Professor Liu Jie at Waseda University who had originally come from Beijing. He maintained that it was very important to investigate the history of Sino-Japanese relations on an empirical basis, so that younger generations in both countries could overcome the vicious cycle of exaggerated bad memories. He even asserted that we should abandon the word ‘Japan-China friendship’ in order to place the Japanese on the same level as the Chinese. This slogan had implied that the Japanese always had to make concessions to Chinese demands whenever any troubles in Sino-Japanese relations had emerged. His intention was to establish true friendship between the Chinese and Japanese younger generations who were born after the collapse of the Japanese empire. He observed that the

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11 The accomplishments were published both in Japan and South Korea in 21 volumes. The publisher in Japan was Keio University Press.



Chinese younger generations' image of the past tended to become exaggerated and emotional because they'd had no real experience of Japanese aggression, while the Japanese side remembered little of Japan's evil past. He wanted to guide both peoples to become more objective in order to overcome the vicious cycle that continued to haunt Sino-Japanese relationships.

We had many research meetings and eventually published books both in Japanese and Chinese in 2006.<sup>12</sup> The English version appeared in 2012, published by the Harvard Asia Center thanks to the eager support of Professors Daqing YANG, George Washington University, and Andrew Gordon, Harvard University. As the English title "Toward a History beyond Borders: Contentious Issues in Sino-Japanese Relations" suggests, we looked at various issues in modern history that the two nations tend to dispute with each other and tried to explain them using concrete materials. The chapters not only offer shared ground for future research and discussions but also demonstrate the differences among authors, even among those of the same nationality.

Just after I joined this Sino-Japanese project, I was invited to another non-governmental international research group: "The Forum for the History of East Asia through Critical Perspective for the Sake of Future Solidarity." This group consisted of Korean and Japanese scholars who were strongly critical of the national histories in their own countries. To my eyes, this group was led by Korean Japanese who had suffered from two national histories in which they could find no place as citizens. The elder leaders were professor Lee Sungsi at Waseda University, Miyajima Hiroshi at Sungkyungwan University and Lim Jie-Hyun at Hanyang University (now at Sogang University). This group classified the participants not by nationality, but by their place of departure: people from Korea (including Japanese scholars) and people from Japan (including Korean visiting scholars and graduate students). Because the members shared an attitude that transcended borders, the group accomplished much although they held diverse understandings of history. The publication of the book "Reconsidering Korean and Japanese History from the Viewpoint of 'Colonial Modernity'" in 2004 marked a watershed in historiography for Japanese historians.<sup>13</sup> Although I was

12 劉傑・三谷博・楊大慶編『国境を越える歴史認識——日中対話の試み』東京大学出版会 (Liu, Jie, Mitani, Hiroshi, Yang, Daqing (eds.). *Contending Issues in Sino-Japanese Relations: Toward a History Beyond Borders*. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press), 2006. It is noteworthy that a Chinese version was published simultaneously by Social Sciences Academic Press, Beijing. This was the first book that enabled Chinese people to read historical interpretations by Japanese and overseas Chinese academics that were different from the Chinese official understanding. For English version, see footnote 2.

13 宮島博史・李成市・尹海東・林志弦編『植民地近代の視座——朝鮮と日本』岩波書店 (Miyajima, Hiroshi, Lee, Sung-si, Yun, Hae-Dong, Lim, Jie-Hyun (eds.). *Reconsidering Korean and Japanese History from the Viewpoint of Colonial Modernity*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten), 2004.

only a minor participant in this group, I learnt much from my colleagues there and became convinced that historical dialogue beyond borders was possible and fruitful only when the participants took a viewpoint that was critical of their own country.

When I faced the textbook controversy in 2001, what I worried about most was the fact that ordinary Japanese people were indifferent to and ignorant of the modern history of East Asia. They knew little about Japanese aggression in the region during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Also, they even knew very little about the laudable efforts and achievements of their ancestors such as the introduction of the constitutional monarchy, the discoveries in the medical sciences on the global level, etc.

After the controversy in 2001, there emerged various international movements to publish common history textbooks and teaching materials that would remind the Japanese of the facts of their ancestors' aggression and oppression toward neighboring peoples. Still, I thought them insufficient for adults and that it was more important to supply them with detailed, readable histories.

Considering this necessity and prompted by the international crisis in the spring of 2005, I organized a team to edit a modern East Asian regional history that mainly targeted Japanese adults. I succeeded in publishing the first volume in 2009, which dealt with the period from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In cooperation with my colleagues at the University of Tokyo, the late Professor Yoriyama Namiki and Tatsuhiko Tsukiashi, I gathered the works of Japanese historians specializing in Japanese, Korean and Chinese history and edited their drafts when I stayed at Harvard in 2007 and 2008.<sup>14</sup>

Our volume has 27 chapters that consisted of four types; the first is the history of international relations in East Asia, the second is brief sketches of neighboring societies, the third describes the activities of surrounding countries like Russia, Britain and the United States, and the fourth is an interpretive overview of the East Asian region. During the preparatory workshops, we not only discovered the latest understanding of the historians who specialized in the other fields, but also realized the differences among us; the Chinese specialists, for example, sometimes expressed a Sino-centric view that I, as a specialist of 19<sup>th</sup> century Japan, could not agree with.

It may be noteworthy that we added a few comments to each chapter. This was to show the readers the possibility of different interpretations of history. Because the differences in some historical events continue to provoke international

14 三谷博・並木頼寿・月脚達彦『大人のための近現代史——19世紀編』(Mitani, Hiroshi, Namiki, Yoriyama, Tsukiashi, Tatsuhiko (eds.). *A Modern History for East Asian People: 19<sup>th</sup> century*. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press), 2009.

conflicts in East Asia, we thought we had better not give a single, solid, monolithic interpretation but rather guide the readers to think about the possibilities of different understandings. Thus, we invited historians not only from Japan, but also from foreign countries as commentators. We hoped that this way of understanding would nurture a more tolerant attitude towards history among the readers.

We also wished to publish this book in different languages. The purpose was not to extend a Japan-centric interpretation of East Asian history. On the contrary, we eagerly wished for neighboring peoples to publish other regional histories of East Asia. Our wish was partially fulfilled when the Korean translation was published in 2011. I hear that a new concern for East Asian history arose during the same years in South Korea, although it is not certain if this book contributed to the movement or not. Whatever the case may be, the various interpretations of regional histories may not ever fully converge. However, by carefully reading contrasting regional histories, we can begin to see why neighboring people understand history in different ways. This meta-level insight must offer us a deeper understanding of others and will widen the area of shared memory.

## WHAT SHOULD WE DO FOR THE FUTURE?

As I have noted, historical dialogue between Japan and its neighbors has almost stalled today. Historical dialogues have reached a deadlock not only on the governmental, but also on the non-governmental level. The parties involved continue to maintain their national views of modern history, focused on Japanese aggression against its neighbors during the first half of the twentieth century. To be precise, professional historians have already begun understanding the other party's view. However, their discoveries and experiences have not yet been fully accepted by their governments and the public. So far, people for the most part perceive only the differences and confrontations in modern East Asian history.<sup>15</sup>

What then can we professionals do for future reconciliation? One thing is to hand the recent experiences of our generation down to the younger generations with a widened scope of historical topics covering the times when the Japanese had better relations with their neighbors. In 2013 I organized an international seminar for young historians in East Asia. I asked friends in Japan, South Korea

15 For the political situation today, see the following paper. 三谷博「歴史認識問題——東アジアの平和と秩序の阻害要因にどう対処するか」(Mitani, Hiroshi. History Cognition Issue: How Shall We Address the Issue That Continues to Derogate the Peace and Order in East Asia?). In: 金香男編「アジア共同体への信頼醸成に何が必要か」ミネルヴァ書房 (Kim, Hyang Nam (ed.). *What is Necessary for the Confidence Building Measures in East Asia?*. Tokyo: Minerva Shobo), 2016, pp. 21–44.

and China to gather young historians to engage in close discussion beyond their nationalities and specialties. We invited six historians from each country in which half of them specialized in pre-modern history. Also, we somehow got subsidies to use simultaneous translators among three languages to enable the participants who specialized in their national histories to have discussions with each other without linguistic difficulties. From the second seminar onwards, we set three themes each year such as 'Environmental history,' 'Confucianism and society,' 'Acceptance of Western knowledge,' 'Memories of the first Sino-Japanese war,' 'Family and women,' etc. We will publish its major contributions in a book titled "Cooperative Historical Studies of East Asia" in 2018. It contains diversified, ambitious papers from environmental history of ancient China to gender history of colonized Korea.

After having seminars at Waseda University in Tokyo, Fudan University in Shanghai, and Seoul National University, this series of seminars stopped. Yet, another organization, the Atsumi Foundation, has started a similar project entitled 'dialogue among National Histories' in 2016. We expect this project will continue for the next five years at least.

On the other hand, I am planning to create a database of basic historical materials of modern East Asia. Although East Asian historians have been eager to present their interpretations to create a common history, they have neglected to share the historical materials these interpretations are based on. If we are to understand the other side's view, it is necessary to share historical materials so that we can read different peoples' voices directly. Fortunately, some Japanese high school teachers are eager enough to create such a database for their own teaching purposes. Also, there are younger historians who are willing to translate materials in East Asia. By combining these people, we will be able to create an on-line database accessible not only to the Japanese, but also to foreigners. I will be very happy if this project will bring about another form of cooperation beyond borders in East Asia.

At the end of the first term of these symposia between Slovenia and Japan, Slovenian scholars advised me to draft a history curriculum for the next generation in Q and A form. Fortunately, the Ministry of Education and Science adopted the proposal of a 'basic history' put forward by the Science Council of Japan as an 'integrated history' that will place Japanese history within the context of world history in the next curriculum for high school history. The Ministry issued the School Course Guidelines pertaining to history in 2017. Unfortunately, the Guidelines do not require a detailed education of Japan's modern international relations with its neighboring countries. We have to publish good textbooks that will diminish these defects and try to make our classes better to address this important issue.

Finally, I would like to stress the importance of sharing the historical materials of East Asia. It is not only necessary for high school education but also for historical research and education in general. While we begin creating such a database in Japan, we can ask our neighbors to help us and stimulate them to create similar databases. It is my fervent wish that we will succeed in initiating another cycle of international cooperation on a deeper level of historical studies in East Asia in the near future.

