

## Introduction

This volume is a product of four workshops by Bilateral Joint Research Projects between Slovenia and Japan, which were held in Ljubljana and Tokyo with the financial support of Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MHEST) and Japan Society for Promotion of Science (JSPS) from 2010 to 2011. The joint research was given the title “Comparative Analysis of History Textbook in Japan and Slovenia: Structures, Contents and Interpretations”.

Before this joint research, we had organized two international symposia on the similar theme at the University of Tokyo; one is “In Search of a Common Regional History: the Balkans and East Asia in History Textbook”, in November 2005<sup>1</sup>, the other is “How to construct regional histories in the Balkans and East Asia: From historiography toward history education”, in November 2007<sup>2</sup>. We discussed the way to describe regional histories and to teach them in the Balkans and East Asia at the two international symposia. We could make sure of the importance of adopting the view of regional history into history education, but also shared the difficulty of the way to teach regional history in classes of each country in the Balkans and East Asia through them. So we may say that this joint research followed as them.

At the time of the joint research, we confirmed that it is essential to compare and analyze the contents of two countries’ history textbooks and curricula from various kinds of view, but we didn’t restrict our joint research to the framework of bilateral study. We set the following four aims. The first one is to compare and analyze the attempts to relativize each national history in Japan with a mind to East Asia and in Slovenia bearing Yugoslavia or the Balkans or Central Europe in mind. The second is to compare the attempts to have dialogues for understanding among historians and history teachers by the initiatives of governmental, non-

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1 See; Nobuhiro Shiba (ed.), *In Search of a Common Regional History: the Balkans and East Asia in History Textbook*. Tokyo: The University of Tokyo, 2006

2 See; *European Studies* (The University of Tokyo), Vol. 7, 2008, pp. 134-177.

governmental and international institutions among the Yugoslav Successor States and among Japan, China and Korea. The third is tightening the joint works between historians and history teachers through this joint research project. The fourth is building a bridge between historians and philologists through the textbook research. The first aim is connected with the problems on regional history in East Asia and the Balkans or Central Europe. The second one is related to the problems of reconciliation through history textbooks and the third one shall be associated with the problems about the mutual relationship between historiography and history education. The last one may make a contribution to nationalism studies from the viewpoints of national history and national language.

So, we got history teachers and philologists to participate as the member of our joint project and tried to get a lot of them to take part in the workshops freely. We could not achieve enough all sorts of our purposes through only four workshops, but we could establish a relationship of trust among two countries' researchers in addition to building the foundation of the joint research.

We were not unaware of the method for comparing history textbooks, but we aimed at doing research based on concrete examples. On the way of comparing history textbooks, Falk Pingel, the former Deputy Director of the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research insists that it is necessary to construct a new way for discussing and comparing the sensitive historical issues with different understanding in public space as after the end of the Cold War, history textbook revision is carried out on the initiatives of academic circles, international institutions and NGO groups, not those of states or governments. In addition, he discusses whether European model of history textbook revision after World War II could be applied in East Asia or not, insisting on shifting research form from bilateral to multilateral and setting up an academic field of textbook studies<sup>3</sup>. We also think that it is important to make an academic field of textbook studies consisting of researchers with various disciplines and agree to his proposal. We hope that this volume shall be conducted to make such an academic field.

*On behalf of our joint research.*

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<sup>3</sup> See; Falk Pingel, "Old and New Models of Textbook Revision and Their Impact on the East Asia History Debate", *The Journal of Northeast Asia History*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Winter 2010, pp. 5-36; "Mediating Textbook Conflicts", in Gotelind Müller (ed.), *Designing History in East Asia Textbooks*. London and New York: Routledge, 2011, pp. 245-276.