

# Korean Economy Described in Foreign Textbooks

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This study aims to grasp the characteristics of the Korean economy as described in foreign textbooks. The analysis of 306 textbooks from forty different countries was used in this study. The textbooks were mainly history, geography, and social studies textbooks.

The Korean economy as presented in the textbooks is rather positive but not stable. There is the common image that Korea is a model country that has successfully achieved economic growth despite many unfavorable conditions and has nearly approached developed countries. However, Korea is still seen as a developing country with strong governmental support of its economic growth, low wages, technical aid from Japan and the United States, an economic structure focusing on a small number of conglomerates, and a non-democratic society. There is no evidence presented in the textbooks that Korea has completely emerged from the 1997 economic crisis. In general, the image of Korea is that it achieved tremendous economic growth, close to 'a miracle', but remains 'a country to be watched'.

Keywords: foreign textbooks, economic crisis, a model of economic growth, economic development, economic structure, an Asian Miracle

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## Introduction

Despite Japanese colonial rule and the ill effects of the Korean War, Korea has accomplished rapid economic development since the 1960s. According to a German textbook, Korea, like Ghana and the Sudan, was one of the poorest countries in the world with \$79 of per capita GDP until 1960 (Barth et al. 2001:92). The textbook described that a report of the then World Bank viewed

the future of Burma and the Philippines as brilliant and evaluated the economic outlook of Korea as gloomy because of its lack of resources. Fewer than 40 years since then, however, the economic size of Korea is between tenth and twelfth in the world in GDP. According to the 2007 World Development Indicators of the World Bank, Korea's GDP is \$796.1 billion, about one-fifteenth of the United States' \$12.4 trillion GDP, the world's largest, and one-fifth of Japan's \$4.5 trillion GDP, the second largest in the world. Considering that the population of the United States is six times and the population of Japan is nearly 2.6 times that of Korea and Korea is ranked 109th in terms of size, the present economic growth of Korea cannot help but be considered marvelous. This economic growth enabled Korea to become an OECD member in 1996.

Based on 2004 statistics, the world market share of Korea's shipbuilding industry was ranked first with 33.2%; semiconductors, 3<sup>rd</sup>; electronics, 4<sup>th</sup>; and textile, steel, petrochemicals, and automobiles all ranked 5<sup>th</sup>. Korea has been exercising considerable influence on the world economy in most industries. The 2005 statistics showed that Korea's R&D investment was 7<sup>th</sup> in the world while the ratio of investment to GDP was 2.64%, 8<sup>th</sup> in the world. The number of college entrants and Internet users was ranked first in the world.

However, the appraisal of the Korean economy by Koreans is very negative. Such expressions as "slow growth," "economic slump," and "real depression" have become commonplace. Expressions such as "a difficult situation between Japan and China," "an economic crisis caused by non-economic elements," and "staggering Korean economy" have been used to describe the Korean economy. These expressions are very pessimistic views of Korea's present and future economy.

Meanwhile, how does the rest of the world view the Korean economy? Is it the same or different from the opinions within Korea? While a great deal of attention has been paid by well-known economists and futurologists, and the economic prospects of international economic organizations and banking facilities have been utilized, no one has been concerned about how foreign textbooks portray the Korean economy. This paper aims to find out what content concerning the Korean economy is contained and how it is described in social studies textbooks from non-Korean secondary schools.

While there are minor differences in school systems among countries, this paper has, on the whole, used textbooks from the seventh to the twelfth grade of a twelve-year curriculum. Economics education typically begins in secondary school. It would be difficult to include college textbooks since in most countries

	History	Geography	Social Studies	Total
Asia	44	26	33	103
Americas	24	18	33	75
Europe	54	29	19	102
Middle East / North Africa	14	9	3	26
Total 136	82	88	306	

professors choose their own textbooks and the content is frequently changed. The analyzed textbooks total 306 from forty countries.<sup>1</sup> They are classified according to region and subject as follows:

The majority of textbooks used in this study are history texts, totaling 136. History textbooks include world history, and local history and regional history (e.g., Asian history). Textbooks on ancient and medieval history are excluded since they would not deal with the subject of economics. But diachronic history textbooks dealing with ancient and modern times together and textbooks on modern and contemporary history were analyzed. Next, the eighty-two geography textbooks, which include atlases, and the eighty-eight social studies textbooks were analyzed. Not only textbooks titled “Social Studies” but also a variety of textbooks on politics, economics, civilization, and environment were included. Textbooks with such titles as “History and Geography” or “History and Society” were also included.

As for the regions, there are 103 textbooks from eleven Asian and Oceania countries,<sup>2</sup> 102 textbooks from thirteen European countries,<sup>3</sup> 75 textbooks from seven countries<sup>4</sup> in the Americas, and 26 textbooks from nine Middle Eastern and African countries.<sup>5</sup> These textbooks were generally published between 2000 and 2005. A few textbooks published in the late 1990s were included since they

1. In the case of Japan and China, only some of their textbooks have been selected. Most other countries' textbooks have been included in the analysis. The analysis of the 306 textbooks is the largest research to date.

2. The Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Australia, Japan, and China.

3. Germany, France, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Austria, Turkey, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Russia.

4. The United States, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, and Paraguay.

5. Egypt, the Republic of South Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Kuwait, and Iran.

are still being used in the classroom or it is unclear whether they have been revised.

## 1. Major Contents Described in Foreign Textbooks

The most frequently covered topics of ‘Rapid Economic Growth’, ‘Background Information about Economic Development’, ‘Contents of Korean Economy’, ‘Korea as a Model of Economic Growth’, and ‘Economic Crisis’ will be explained in the following sections.

### 1.1 Rapid Economic Growth

Korea’s rapid economic growth, which began in the 1960s, is a primary topic in foreign textbooks. For instance, a Russian world history textbook says: “The miracle of South Korea was marvelous. The South Korean economy has successfully caught up with that of Japan, and South Korean enterprises have joined the most famous and richest group in the world. According to some experts, South Korea falls economically 10-15 years behind Japan at present. However, this gap will be shortly narrowed” (Khachatran 2000:480). One hundred fourteen of the 306 textbooks describe the rapid economic growth of Korea. Since most history textbooks seldom describe modern and economic affairs and the majority of geography textbooks focus on their own national geography, the detailing of Korea’s economic growth is an exception. Most of the textbooks dealing with modern Asian history have used the phrases “the Four Dragons of Asia,” “the Four Tigers of Asia,” “Newly Industrialized Countries,” and “the Miracle of the Han River” when describing Korea’s economic growth. As for regions, textbooks from Europe and Central and South America show a keen interest in this subject.

The way of describing Korea as a newly industrialized country varies. The most common expressions are “the Four Dragons of Asia,” “the Four Tigers of Asia,” or “Newly Industrialized Countries.” Other common expressions are “the Second Japan” or “New Japan.” Argentinean and Chilean textbooks use these expressions. However, Korea is unexpectedly described as an “advanced country” in many countries’ textbooks. Uruguay’s history textbook introduces Korea as the 8<sup>th</sup> most powerful economy in the world (Corral et al. 1999:271). A social studies textbook from Thailand describes Korea as a developed country on the basis of statistics that the rate of R&D expenditure is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest in the world

(Palainei et al. 1999:143). In addition, Mongolian and Polish geography textbooks and Chinese history textbooks describe Korea as already having joined advanced countries. A geography textbook from Brazil classifies Korea as “the most advanced among newly industrialized countries” (Coelho and Terra 2001:336). A German geography textbook describes Korea as “a country that had already reached the standard of advanced industrial countries” in the 1990s among the four small Asian dragons and as “one of the leading trade powers in the world” (Barth et al. 2001:92-9).

## 1.2 Background Information About Economic Development

The second topic that foreign textbooks focus on is the background or cause of Korea’s economic development. This information has been mentioned in more than sixty-six textbooks out of the 114 textbooks that describe Korea’s rapid economic growth. The background information about Korea’s economic development achieved under the unfavorable conditions of Japanese colonial control, unfavorable natural environment, and the Korean War is of interest to foreigners.

The government’s effective economic development policy attracts the most interest. In particular, the five-year plan for economic development and the economic policy for export drive are described as factors for Korea’s rapid economic growth. The training of high-quality technical manpower through government investment in education and the people’s enthusiasm for education are also factors that influenced Korea’s economic growth. Economic cooperation with advanced countries like the United States and the introduction of technology are also described as factors. Asian values helpful to the growth of enterprises are sometimes mentioned. The long-sustained low wage system is often mentioned as a favorable condition for the rapid economic growth of Korea. Japanese colonialism and the acquisition of technology from Japan are still described as primary factors leading to Korea’s economic growth. This colonial view of modernization is a point of issue in both Korea and the United States. In some textbooks, the economic aid and support from the United States is also given as background information about Korean economic development. On the whole, the image strongly remains that Korea achieved rapid economic growth under the influence of Japan and the auspices of the United States.

Several German textbooks analyze in detail the economic background and development stages of Korea. A high school geography textbook on Asia and the Pacific region concretely describes the history, geography, and society of

Korea after the introduction of the four Asian dragons (Barth et al. 2001). The two factors for Korea's economic growth mentioned in this textbook are the existence of strong governmental support for economic growth and the forced low wage system. It explains that the military government's limitations on people's political freedoms and the concentration of all national resources for Korea's economic growth enabled Korea to achieve rapid growth. It interprets the causes of economic growth as follows: while supporting enterprises by means of a tax reduction, preferential financing, and subsidiary payments, the government also supported entrepreneurial activities by oppressing the activities of labor unions and forcing laborers to put up with low wages and various discriminatory policies. Another German geography textbook analyzes and suggests both unfavorable and favorable conditions to Korea's economic growth (Bóhn et al. 2001:110). The unfavorable conditions are the lack of arable land, insufficient resources and energy, and the destruction of staple industries during the war. Meanwhile, it suggests seven favorable conditions: 1) close political solidarity with Western countries, 2) security with the help of the United States, 3) overseas training of men, especially in the United States, 4) existence of professionals trained during the Japanese colonial rule, 5) people's desire to achieve and communal consciousness based on Confucianism, 6) industrialization tactics of the Park Chung Hee government, and 7) formation of excellent entrepreneurs. It also arranges Korea's industrialization into seven stages (Bóhn al. 2001:110-1).

1<sup>st</sup> stage: Development of Light Industry to Substitute Import

2<sup>nd</sup> stage: Export-oriented Light Industries

3<sup>rd</sup> stage: Development of Heavy Industry to Substitute Import

4<sup>th</sup> stage: Export-oriented Heavy Industries

5<sup>th</sup> stage: Development of Capital Goods Industry to Substitute Import

6<sup>th</sup> stage: Export-oriented Capital Goods and High-value Consumer Industry

7<sup>th</sup> stage: Overcoming Economic Crisis and Becoming an Advanced Industrial Country

There are textbooks that have minutely analyzed the economic growth of Korea and Japan. An Argentinean textbook describes four points that are the same between Korea and Japan's economic growth: 1) national intervention for growth, 2) strong national consciousness, long civilization, and expert labor power, 3) export tactics—import of cheap materials and then export of products,

and 4) economic growth centering on a small number of large enterprises. It also indicates the differences between the two: Korea's relatively lower standard of living, Korea's higher war expenditure, and Korea's lower standard of science and technology (Bertone de Daguerra and Sassone 2001).

Recently published Vietnamese textbooks concentrate on the economic development and the causes of economic growth of the four Asian dragons including Korea. One of the geography textbooks describes such major factors as the positive inducement of foreign capital, lower wages and abundant labor power, the construction of economic zones, positive development of technology, and investment in R&D (Nguyen et al. 2005).

### 1.3 Contents of Korean Economy

After rapid economic growth and background information about economic development, the most popular topic is major Korean industries, which is described in sixty-two textbooks. While the textbooks published in the 2000s describe, on the whole, the development of high-tech industries such as electronics, automobiles, shipbuilding, and petrochemicals, a few textbooks published during the 1990s describe Korea's primary industries as cereals and agricultural products.

Other popular topics are foreign trade such as exported and imported commodities, which is described in forty-two textbooks; major economic indexes such as GNP and GDP, thirty-five textbooks; major Korean cities and the problem of urbanization, thirty-three textbooks; and entrance into international economic organizations such as APEC and OECD and the conclusion of FTAs, twenty-two textbooks. The textbooks also mention Korean traditional industries such as agriculture and fishery, along with its insufficient natural resources and wage problems.

A considerable part of the contents on the Korean economy don't reflect the real situation and are far from the truth. The best example is per capita GNP. Among the analyzed textbooks, French textbooks describe per capita GNP most frequently. Most textbooks list varying GNP figures which are not even close to the correct figure: figures ranged from a 2001 textbook that included Korea among the group over \$5,000 to another textbook published that same year which placed Korea in the group over \$12,000. Very interestingly, the textbook that mentioned Korea's GNP as \$10,186 described Ulsan as the richest with a GNP of \$22,272 and Jeju as the poorest with a GNP of \$830. German textbooks have described Korea's GNP as: \$8,600 in 2001; \$10,000-\$20,000 in 2000; and

\$10,100 in 2001. While a Polish textbook published in 2003 included Korea among the advanced group<sup>6</sup> with a GNP over \$20,000, another one that was published the same year mentioned \$9,631. Recently published textbooks from the United States mentioned \$16,100 and \$18,000, which is closer to the actual figure. Meanwhile, a 2003 Chilean textbook mentioned \$4,500 without presenting the basic year. Other countries classified Korea in various groups: the Czech Republic listed \$16,100; Egypt, \$10,000; the Philippines, \$13,000 or \$17,800; Thailand, \$16,610; Uruguay, \$8,260 (for the year 1994). While Japanese textbooks generally describe many facts about Korea, only one textbook described Korea's per capita GNP.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, Korea's per capita GNP is described anywhere from \$4,500 to \$20,000. In most cases, it is described as about \$10,000. It seems that most of the textbooks in use nowadays were written between the late 1990s and the early 2000s when Korea was in the beginning of overcoming its economic crisis.

As Korea's trade partners have become diversified recently, many foreign textbooks haven't reflected this point. Most of them describe Korea as still having a trade structure which centers on the United States and Japan. They don't reflect the fact that the trade volume with China has surpassed that of the U.S. and Japan nor have they shown any interest in Korea's trade with the EU.

Some textbooks have dealt with exceptional topics. The Malaysian textbook introduces the New Village Movement during Park Chung Hee's rule (Halim Him 2002:187-8). An Australian textbook introduces Samsung Conglomerate and its chairman Kun-Hee Lee, as well as deals with the problem of bachelors from the rural areas wanting to get married (Chidzey and Valmadre 1995:232-8). A social studies textbook from Thailand compares science, technology and human resources between Thailand and Korea. It also compares per capita GNP, investment in R&D, the number of engineering graduates per year, the number of master's degrees in science and technology, and the number of engineers and scientists per 10,000 persons (Palaineoi et al. 1999:143-4).

The big three conglomerates of Samsung, Hyundai, and Daewoo have been introduced in foreign textbooks. In the case of LG, some textbooks still describe

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6. The United States, all Western European countries, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, and Korea are in the advanced group.

7. *Geography B* was published by Jegukseowon (帝國書院). This textbook listed Korea's per capita GNP in 1995 as over \$10,000.



it as Lucky and Gold Star. Kia Motors, Hanjin, and Posco are also described in a few textbooks.

#### 1.4 Korea as a Model of Economic Development

Of the four Asian dragons, Korea is more often described as a model of economic development than Hong Kong, Singapore, or Taiwan. Though the per capita GNP of Singapore and Hong Kong is higher, they are city-states assuming transit trade ports and have lost favor in foreign textbooks. Instead, interest has centered on the economic development of Taiwan and Korea. Due to the development of high-tech industries such as IT, shipbuilding, and automobiles, and while performing a rather important role in international politics and sports, Korea has attracted more attention than Taiwan. In foreign textbooks, Korea is not one of the four Asian dragons but is considered the first dragon in Asia.

The economic development of Korea has been especially described as a role model. In Asia, the high school geography textbook from Malaysia for 12<sup>th</sup> graders is typical (Halim Him 2002). It introduces the economic development in every industrial field, the population policy, the investment in social welfare, the housing policy, and every aspect of Seoul and the city network. Among European textbooks, those of Germany and Austria are characteristic. The German geography textbook analyzes the status of the Korean economy amid the world economy and also describes the aftermath of industrialization. Using an interview with Yeong-gil Kwon, former president of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, it introduces the positive and negative sides of Korea's economic development (Barth et al. 2001:99). Another German geography textbook describes the background of Korea's economic development and, in addition, the growth of the Hyundai Conglomerate through the life history of its founder, Chung Ju-yung (Bóhn et al. 2001). Another German textbook introduces the gold-collecting campaign developed to cope with the 1997 economic crisis (Dielmann et al. 2001). The Austrian textbook shows Korea's economic growth process in a similar way to the German textbook (Hitz et al. 1998).

A social studies textbook from Egypt introduces the Korean economy as a special topic (Alaccani et al. 2003). In particular, it indicates the introduction of foreign advanced technology, the excellent organization of enterprises, enthusiasm for education, and others as background for Korea's economic development. In chapter two 'Asia', this textbook describes Korea and various aspects of its economy in about ten pages. There are special chapters only for Korea in Asia and France in Europe. In *World History* from Kuwait, there is a whole

chapter which focuses on Korea and its development (Jasimalhajiri et al. 2002-2003). It systematically describes the Korean economy along with Korean geographical characteristics.

As shown above, Korea's economic development achieved in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has attracted a significant amount of attention in many foreign textbooks.

### 1.5 Economic Crisis

Many foreign textbooks introduce the Asian economic crisis, which was caused by the foreign exchange crisis in 1997, as well as Korea's economic crisis. Thirty-four textbooks mention the economic crisis, and there are three different interpretations. First, some textbooks published in the late 1990s simply mention that the Korean economy couldn't be exceptional during the economic crisis in Asia. Second, textbooks published in the early 2000s state that Korea suffered from the economic crisis in 1997 and has been recovering from it. They do not state that Korea has completely recovered from the economic crisis because they were published prior to that time. Japanese textbooks are a typical example. In Japan, the Korean economy is mainly described in world geography textbooks for high school students. The present world geography textbooks were written in 2001, authorized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in 2002, and printed and distributed in 2003. Third, other textbooks analyze the background of the economic crisis, Korea's efforts to overcome the economic crisis, and tasks to do after recovery. German and Austrian textbooks are typical examples.

The German geography textbook introduces the reasons for the 1997 economic crisis and the economic reforms instituted by the IMF (Barth et al. 2001:97).

In the early 1990s, the expansionist policy of conglomerates came to an end. Advanced countries didn't provide unconditional high-tech support anymore. Many Korean enterprises risked their competitiveness by neglecting R&D. Also, excessive dependence on foreign capital made Korean enterprises economically vulnerable. Soon after the bankruptcy of many enterprises, especially KIA Motors in 1997, the sudden withdrawal of foreign capital caused serious problems for conglomerates with large debts. The \$57 billion IMF bailout for such conglomerates as Hyundai, Samsung, Daewoo, and LG was provided under the strict con-

ditions of thorough and comprehensive economic reform.

- \* Prompt reduction of the number of subsidiaries through sale or affiliation by the end of 1999.
- \* Concentration on a core business.
- \* Reduction of debt and balance the debt-equity ratio below 2:1 by the end of 1999.
- \* Lessen the economic inter-dependency between subsidiaries and encourage independence.
- \* Separation of management from ownership.

With concise statistics, this textbook also introduces the increase of foreign debt and unemployment, the decline of the Korean *won*, reduced domestic demand, bankruptcy of enterprises and massive layoffs, and the decrease of domestic and foreign investment and GNP during the economic crisis (Barth et al. 2001:98). Moreover, this textbook concisely introduced Korea's efforts to overcome the economic crisis.

Enterprises introduced economic reform in 1998 but its realization was too slow, which forced about 2,000,000 people to lose their jobs. A merciless personnel reduction resulted in a several week strike at Hyundai Motors in 1998 and enormous damage to production. As the recovery of the national economy still depended on the power of the conglomerates, the government couldn't exert strong pressure. Nevertheless, the economic recovery beginning at the end of 1998 reflected the effectiveness of economic reform.

Production, investment, export, import, and purchasing power are increasing. Though it hasn't reached the low unemployment rate (2.7% in 1997) that existed prior to the economic crisis, the unemployment rate has been lowering (4.6% in October 1999). Many experts are already worrying about business overheating. In 1999, more than 30,000 companies were established.

This textbook analyzes the economic crisis that Korea suffered from more concisely than Korean textbooks. The Korean economy is dealt with in the fourth chapter, which introduces the emerging industrial countries in Asia. Apart from this textbook, many geography and some history textbooks describe in detail the

development of the Korean economy and its structural problems.

## 2. Descriptive Trends According to Subjects and Regions

The Korean economy has been dealt with in geography, social studies, and history textbooks. There were fifty-eight geography textbooks and thirty-eight social studies and history textbooks that dealt with the Korean economy. In the case of history textbooks, only thirty-eight out of the 136 textbooks covered the Korean economy, which is around 28%. In contrast, fifty-eight of the ninety-two geography textbooks dealt with the Korean economy, which is 63%. In the case of social studies textbooks, thirty-eight out of the eighty-eight textbooks detailed the Korean economy, which amounts to 43%. History textbooks do not describe the Korean economy except when it is a modern history textbook.

Among Asian countries, Japanese textbooks treat the Korean economy very well. The Korean economy has been extensively detailed in high school geography textbooks. All the textbooks provide a separate chapter for its neighboring countries of Korea and China, describing in detail society, culture, politics, and economy. Of the Southeast Asian countries that have covered the Korean economy, it is mainly dealt with in geography textbooks or geography textbooks combined with social studies and history. Textbooks from East and Southeast Asian countries that have a close relationship with Korea geographically, economically, or culturally treat the Korean economy as a very interesting topic. Textbooks from Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines have described the Korean economy a lot. In particular, the Malaysian textbook (Halim Him 2002:198-9) and the Thai textbook (Palineoi et al. 1999) describe Korea as an advanced country. However, among the countries that have active economic and human relations with Korea such as Taiwan, Mongolia, and Singapore, their textbooks show a lack of interest in the Korean economy.

In the case of the Americas (North and South American countries), most geography textbooks describe the Korean economy but history textbooks tend to be indifferent to the subject. Recent descriptions in American textbooks have dramatically enlarged and improved the contents concerning Korea. The world geography textbook published by McDougal Littell Publishing Co. introduces the Korean economy as follows: "South Korea, like Taiwan, is one of the economic tigers of Asia. It is a highly successful and competitive economy. It has the world's largest shipbuilding industry, as well as large automobile, steel, and

chemical industries. South Korea is today one of the world's top trading nations." (Arreola et al. 2007:650). Recently, such an example began to appear in an extra page of a high school economics textbook. The economics textbook introduces Samsung as an origin of next generation technological revolution under the title of "Samsung and the Next Great Tech Revolution" (Mcek et al. 2007:65).

Textbooks from Central and South America show an even interest in the Korean economy. Despite limited content, positive descriptions have increased. Textbooks from this region, Argentinean textbooks being typical, tend to describe Korea as "the second Japan." Chilean textbooks already describe its FTA with Korea (Cembrano Perasso et al. 2003:102). Uruguayan textbooks describe Korea as the 8<sup>th</sup> largest economy in world and "an Asian miracle" (Corral et al. 1999). In the Middle East and Africa, textbooks from Egypt and Kuwait are notable. They describe Korea as a representative example of Asian economic miracles. However, the Korean economy is not found in any other country's textbooks from the region.

Most European geography textbooks contain information about the Korean economy, but only a small number of world history textbooks describe the Korean economy. Interest in the Korean economy varies according to region. It is impressive that textbooks from Germany, France, Austria, Russia, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Turkey deal with Korean economy beyond expectation. No other country's textbooks have described the structural problems of the Korean economy more scientifically and technically than the German textbooks. They consider it very educational to compare the success, failure, and present situation of the Korean economy with neighboring European countries. They are interested in the Korean economy because it can be a very useful model to understanding Asian economies and the German economy. Textbooks from the Czech Republic and Poland have more content about the Korean economy since the collapse of socialism. But textbooks from Northern Europe and Southern Europe generally do not have any content about the Korean economy.

### 3. Conclusion

Certain characteristics can be found in the description of the Korean economy in social studies textbooks from foreign secondary schools.

First, while Korean media and economic experts have a negative view of the

Korean economy, it is positively portrayed in foreign textbooks. Though this positive image doesn't properly reflect Korea's various economic problems, it can help strengthen the international competitiveness of Korean enterprises and commodities.

Second, except for a few recently published textbooks, most do not fully reflect that Korea has completely recovered from its economic crisis. This is because most of the textbooks currently used were written at the end of the 1990s or in the first half of the 2000s.

Third, there are many textbooks that present Korea as a model of economic development. This development was achieved despite many difficulties such as small land, an unfavorable natural environment, and a war. The textbooks from the Middle East, Central and South America, and South East Asia tend to emphasize this development.

Fourth, it hasn't been fully described that the structure of the Korean economy and its socio-political order have already been restructured to resemble those of Western developed countries. Korea still has a dual image: Korea has achieved economic success but its social structure hasn't developed. Even though Korea's current economy is quite different than in the past, many foreign textbooks still mention low wages, a trade structure centering on the United States and Japan, and the government's strong control of economy as characteristics of the Korean economy. It is necessary to provide information about Korea's economic development, such as increased wages because of democratization, the spread of labor activities, the deregulation by the government and the diversification of trade, so that foreign textbooks accurately reflect the current situation in Korea. It is also necessary to provide sufficient data and information

Fifth, there are many textbooks from countries that have ties to Korea that don't contain any information about the Korean economy. Some examples are Southern European countries such as Italy and Spain, Northern European countries such as Sweden and Norway, and Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore and Taiwan.

Sixth, Korean economic statistics are generally outdated. The statistics come from the mid-1990s, and it is imperative that Korea provides recent economic statistics and information to textbook writers and editors.

The description of the Korean economy in foreign textbooks is rather positive but not stable. There is the common image of Korea as a model country that is nearly developed and has successfully achieved economic growth despite many unfavorable conditions. However, there is still an image of Korea as a

developing country with strong governmental support of its economic growth, low wages, technical aid from Japan and the United States, an economic structure focusing on a small number of conglomerates, and a non-democratic society. The fact that Korea has overcome the 1997 economic crisis is not apparent in the textbooks. The general image of Korea is one of incredible economic growth close to ‘a miracle’ but a country that still should ‘be watched’.

As expressed in the phrase “Textbooks are a message toward the future and about the future” (Apple 1991:4), textbooks reflect the reality of a country and a society and contain the aspect of the future as well. In this context, the contents about the Korean economy in foreign textbooks can be foreigners’ expectation or prospect for the future of Korea’s economy. We wonder whether Korea’s future development will be as positive as the description of Korea’s economy in foreign textbooks.

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