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Progress and Achievements of Inter-Korean Exchanges in Historical Studies

Introduction

For over 70 years after the division, South and North Korean scholars have conducted historical research from their own respective standpoints, but open discussions or uninhibited exchange of research outcomes are still expected. For a while, joint academic conferences or exchange projects were held to share and discuss each side's opinions and interests, but such exchange are currently suspended.

The exchange of historical studies between the two Koreas was promoted to bridge the gap in perception of national history in the short term, and in preparation for unification in the long term. The actual process served these objectives to a certain extent. There is a difference in perception of history between South and North Korea, but general historical perspectives remain relatively similar, with the exception of one specific period.

The scope of inter-Korean exchanges in historical studies was centered around academic conferences on the subject of history and more precisely, Korean history. Therefore, in this review, I will concentrate on discussing the exchange between historians, but I will also comment on the activities of civic organizations aiming for the overcoming of past history of the Japanese invasion and colonization if necessary. Meanwhile, concerning cultural heritage exchanges—exhibition of relics, or investigation and conservation activities—even though they have been part of historical studies exchange, recently there have been a number of well-organized articles in the field of cultural heritage, so I will not mention them here unless necessary.¹

There have been individual recollections and evaluations of academic

conferences jointly held by the two Koreas, but a comprehensive summary is yet to be delivered. Therefore, in this article, I would like to provide a comprehensive overview on the background of inter-Korean exchanges in historical studies, how they have been promoted, the persons who primarily presented on various topics, and the topics discussed.

Background of Historical Studies Exchange

The End of the Cold War and Changes in Inter-Korean Relations

The background of exchange in historical studies between the two Koreas was formed after the end of the Cold War and corresponded with changes in inter-Korean relations. The Cold War which began after World War II started to ease in the late 1980s, and in December 1989 the United States and the Soviet Union officially declared an end to the Cold War during the Malta Conference, making the dissolution of Soviet Union certain. The end of the Cold War had a great impact on East Asia, as several countries in the region experienced a fierce hot war. Korea which successfully achieved democracy in 1987 was also highly influenced by the end of the Cold War.

A wind of reconciliation also blew in East Asia, and a number of communist countries such as the Soviet Union and China participated in the 1988 Seoul Olympics. The Roh Tae-woo administration, which was launched after democratization, actively promoted the Northern Policy (Nordpolitik) and established South Korea's diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union (September 1990) and China (August 1992), alleviating national hostility towards communism. In September 1991, when the two Koreas joined the United Nations at the same time, the two Koreas were clearly recognized as separate countries in the international community.

The Roh Tae-woo regime also made active efforts toward North Korea. Although it failed to induce North Korea's participation in the Seoul Olympics, ahead of the games, the "Special Declaration for National Self-Reliance and Unification Prosperity" was announced, and the first Inter-Korean High-Level Meeting was held in September 1990. At the 5th High-Level Meeting, the "Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression, Exchange and Cooperation between South and North Korea" was announced (December 13, 1991),

1. See the articles in *The History of Cultural Heritage Exchange of South and North Korea* published by the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage in 2018: Shin Joon-young's "Inter-Korean Joint Excavation Survey of Kaesong Manwoldae," Go Gwang-ui's "Other Inter-Korean Joint Investigations and Excavations," and Oh Young-chan's "Exhibitions of North Korean Cultural Heritage."

laying the foundation for inter-Korean relations. The two Koreas expressed the principles of independent reunification, peaceful unification, and national unity through the July 4th Inter-Korean Joint Communiqué in 1972, but they never came into practice. Therefore, the 1991 agreement had great significance in inter-Korean relations. Soon after, inter-Korean academic exchanges were held in third countries, such as China.²

The Joint Declaration announced during the Inter-Korean Summit in Pyongyang³ on June 15, 2000 served as a decisive opportunity for the field of historical studies to exchange directly within the Korean peninsula without the mediation from third countries. A new chapter of inter-Korean historical exchanges has begun. However, as historical exchanges were the by-product of politics that improved inter-Korean relations, historical exchanges were destined to face vicissitudes along with inter-Korean relations.

The changes in diplomatic relations between North Korea and Japan were also budding. In August 1999, North Korea announced the resumption of the North Korea-Japan summit in October 2002 through expressing “three principles regarding the current situation in North Korea-Japan relations.” In response, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited Pyongyang in September 2002 to discuss diplomatic relations and announced the Pyongyang Declaration. Relations between North Korea and Japan would not only greatly ease tensions in Northeast Asia, but also begin to resolve remaining tensions over the history of colonial rule.

North Korea had to prepare for new diplomatic relations with Japan as well. It was critical for the North to consider all of the problems that may arise from holding negotiations with Japan and discussing the issue of colonization. Therefore, South Korea-Japan relations were held as an example. North and South Korean scholars were able to share research on the history of invasion, colonial rule, and the anti-Japanese movement. The inter-Korean historical

exchanges became critical to draw out a common response regarding national issues.

Accumulation of Mutual Interest and Indirect Exchange in Historical Studies

The authorities and historians of the two Koreas paid attention to the trends and achievements of the other side’s historical research from fairly early on. To the state, historical research was also a matter related to the legitimacy and superiority of the regime, but academically such an interest often derived from the responsibility and curiosity of scholars who had to grasp the results of national history research from various research environments and historical views.

North Korea analyzed *Korean History (Hanguksa)* compiled by the Chintan Academic Society and evaluated it by period. Lee Ji-Rin criticized the book for borrowing the colonial view of history, blaspheming the national pride and betraying the public good. He accused it of serving as another government-patronized Joseon history (Lee and Lee 1965, 38). South Korea also analyzed the *Comprehensive History of Joseon (Chosun tongsa)* published by North Korea in 1962 and its high school textbooks. South Korea also acknowledged some of the achievements North Korea made over the past thirty years. South Korean review mentioned that it is possible to give credit for “its relative values” and “notable achievements” in archaeology, economic history, or history of thought while criticizing that North Korean history is confined to the formal understanding of materialistic conception of history (Institute of North Korean Studies 1978, 39-40).

Historians had the opportunity to learn about North Korea’s historical research outcomes personally when they were abroad, and some were even influenced by them. In the late 1950s, the Japanese historical academia also paid attention to North Korea’s leading research achievements and was compelled to consider them. Through this process, East Asian historical studies were exchanged and circulated behind the curtains (Shin 2013).

It was after democratization in 1987 that South Korea’s interest in North Korea’s historical research increased and became readily accessible. At that time, the movement to learn more about North Korea was popular, and North Korea’s historical research outcomes were at the center of this movement. In

2. One of the representative cases is the “94 Korean Computer Processing International Conference,” where South and North Korean scholars and Chinese scholars studying Korean language started to make efforts to unify the norms of the language of the two Koreas. For more information, see So 2003.

3. For non-English words including Korean ones, the new (revised) Romanization convention established by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism is basically used in the *Review of Korean Studies*. However, for the place or person names and proper nouns in North Korea in this manuscript, the Romanization convention of North Korea is exceptionally adopted since it has been already worldwide known and used.

response to the intellectual curiosity of scholars and the public, the trend of historical research in North Korea (Ahn et al. 1988; Jeon 1989), a list of research papers,⁴ and representative papers⁵ were continuously introduced, and the media introduced the historic sites of North Korea.⁶ Research publications dealing with contexts and specific topics such as comprehensive history of Joseon (e.g. *Chosun tongsa* and *Chosun jeonsa*) appeared in South Korea, followed by analysis and criticism by South Korean scholars (B. W. Ahn 1989; Jung et al. 1989; Kim 1989; Ahn and Do 1990; Kim 1994). Although the publication of North Korean books and the circulation of historical knowledge were sometimes viewed as a planned result of the NL-affiliated group (Shin 2018), the interest of South Korean scholars in the North Korean historical studies has significance in “assessing North Korea’s research outcomes as a part of the entire research history of the national community” to transform “unusually separated scholarship” into “unified scholarship” (Lee 1989, 4).

South Korean scholars suggested exchanges with North Korea from an early period. In 1985, when the North-South Red Cross Conference was held and exchanges in the fields of sports and economy began, exchanges were also proposed in the field of archaeology, where “interaction and cooperative research were urgently required more than any other field” because of the necessity in on-site investigations (Lim 1985, 189-90). The Korean History Society and

the Council of Learned Societies also proposed inter-Korean exchanges in historical studies in 1989 (Nam 1989), and Professor Ahn Byung-ook of the Catholic University of Korea sent an open letter to Dr. Heo Jong-ho to request discussions.⁷

In May 1989, North Korea responded in the name of three senior historians, Jeon Young-ryul, president of the Chosun Historical Society, Kim Seok-Hyung, professor of the Chosun Academy of Social Sciences, and Park Si-Hyung, professor of Kim Il-Sung University. They proposed the South-North Historian Conference with Park Young-seok, chairman of the National Institute of Korean History, Ahn Byung-ook, chairman of the Korean History Society, and Kim Won-Ryong, professor of Seoul National University. The agenda was “Writing a Joint Protest to Correct Distortion of Korean History Narratives in Textbooks of the United States.” The three respondents, who received unexpected proposals, wrote a reply proposing, “let’s go one step further and take this opportunity to prepare for an important turning point for solving other tasks that have been accumulated between South and North Korean historians,” but this could not be achieved due to the non-cooperation of the government (Korean History Society 1989; B. O. Ahn 2018).

With the improvement of inter-Korean relations, it was North Korea that first proposed historical exchange at the government level. On June 20, 1992, Yeon Hyeong-mook, head of the North Korean delegation for the inter-Korean High-Level Meeting, sent a letter to Prime Minister Jung Won-sik, proposing to discuss the illegality of the Eulsa Treaty and the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1907 at the Cooperation and Exchange Subcommittee and adopt a joint resolution. The resolution would announce a declaration that urges the Japanese government to acknowledge and nullify the Eulsa Treaty and the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1907. It would also suggest that Japan should formally apologize and compensate for their invasion and colonial rule of Korea. Following the proposal from the North’s government level, on June 24, President Jeon Young-ryul of the Chosun Historical Society proposed an inter-Korean historian symposium to reaffirm the atrocity of Japanese invasion and colonial rule and to correct the distorted Korean history.

In response, Prime Minister Jung Won-sik proposed an academic

4. For instance, *Critical Review of History* introduced 33 volumes of *Chosun jeonsa* in the 1988 winter issue, and in its next issue, a comprehensive list of issues of *Ryeoksagwahak* from 1955 to 1988 was introduced, followed by the tables of contents of *Ryeoksajemunje* and *Geunroja* in the summer issue. Also, *Yeoksawa hyeonsil* introduced the list of publications on North Korea’s Korean history in Volume 3 of 1989.

5. A representative example would be that *Sabowea sasang* inserted “40 Years of North Korea’s History and Science” by Jeon Young-ryul, Director of the Historical Institute at the Academy of Social Sciences, in its January issue and “On the Occurrence of Capitalist Relations with the Gesetzlichkeit of Feudal Society in Joseon” by Heo Jong-ho in its April issue. These articles were originally published in *Ryeoksagwahak*, Volume 3, 1, and 2, in 1988 respectively. Furthermore, a book called *North Korean Academia’s Debate over Korean Modern History* was published by Changbi Publishers in 1989 (edited by Lee Byeong-cheon), inserting North Korean articles on social characteristics of the modern period and division of time periods. In January 1989, the special appendix of *Shindongah* was “North Korea Seen through Primary Sources: 1945-1988,” and Monthly JoongAng published *Today’s North Korea*. Likewise, a number of articles on North Korea’s historical studies began to be published in this time period. For the detailed list, see Volume 2 of the *List of Publications and Journals of North Korea’s Historical Studies*, published by National Institute of Korean History.

6. See Kim Yu-jin’s article “Inter-Korean Exchanges in Media” and Do Jae-gi’s “Publication and Data Archiving, Informatization Projects” in *History of Inter-Korean Cultural Heritage Exchanges*, published by the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage in 2018.

7. See B. O. Ahn 1989. According to this article, a total of 6 scholars, poets, and publishers sent letters to the North Korean counterpart.

symposium between North and South Korean historians for the discovery and exchange of historical materials related to modern history, joint investigation and research, and urged the preparation of an annexation agreement on exchange and cooperation works on June 25. The Korean History Society decided to proceed with the talks by accepting North Korea's proposal; however, the South Korean government did not approve of this decision, imposing the principle of one singular communication channel. The inter-Korean historian symposium has not been held since then (Go 1992; B. W. Ahn 2018).

This proposal by North Korea is based on the study of Rhee Tae-jin, Director of the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies at Seoul National University. On May 11, he claimed that the original Eulsa Treaty signed by the Korean Empire and Japan, does not have the Great Seal and a written seal of Emperor Gojong. The evidence of a *carte blanche* from the emperor also was not present. In addition, in the certified copy of a *carte blanche* for the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1907, there was no signature of a draftsman nor the Great Seal of Emperor Gojong. Therefore, Rhee Tae-jin proved that these treaties did not properly meet the formal requirements as international treaties and thus had a crucial flaw, nullifying their causes.

Although the inter-Korean historian symposium was not held, South Korean scholars participated in a discussion on highlighting and overcoming Japan's past atrocities, particularly on the issue of "Comfort Women" for the Japanese army that was disclosed in 1991. In November 1993, joint representatives of the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, Lee Hyo-jae and Yoon Jeong-ok, attended the Pyongyang International Symposium on Japan's Post-War Settlements to discuss the compensation issue. This debate also dealt with topics closely related to historical issues.⁸

Furthermore, exchanges of North and South Korean historians continued to take place at academic conferences held abroad. Meetings between North and South Korean historians in this manner began in April 1989 at the 13th

Association of Korean Studies in Europe Conference (AKSE Conference) held in London.⁹ The AKSE was established in 1977, and since then the International Society of Korean Studies established in 1990,¹⁰ the Pacific Association of Korean Studies, the Korean Studies Association of Australasia, the Central Asian Association for Korean Studies, and the Association for Asian Studies established in March 1990:¹¹ all provided opportunities for inter-Korean academic exchanges, including those in the field of historical studies.

Development of Exchange and Cooperation Projects: After 2000

Inter-Korean Summits and Activation of Direct Exchanges

Direct exchanges in the field of historical studies between North and South Korea began after the 2000 summit, but they sharply decreased with the beginning of the Lee Myung-bak administration in 2008.¹² With the June 15th Joint Declaration, restoration of national identity has emerged as a major task, but this issue has already been discussed through exchanges abroad. In fact, historical exchanges were already being prepared during the preparation period for the summit.¹³

After the summit, societies and organizations in the field of history began preparing for inter-Korean exchanges. The Korean History Society formed

9. See http://94.136.40.103/~koreanstudies.eu/?LMCL=ReNi0e&page_id=60.

10. The International Society of Korean Studies is the world's largest academic research organization for Korean studies, headquartered in Osaka, Japan, and has branches in Seoul, Pyongyang, Europe, and North America, and holds conferences every other year.

11. In March 1990, three South Koreans, two North Koreans, and Japanese and Chinese scholars participated in the inaugural general meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in Japan. In May 1991, 16 South Koreans and 2 North Koreans participated in the second academic conference held by the Archaeological Institute of Jilin Province and the Association of Social Science in Jilin Province, and they visited the ruins of Goguryeo together.

12. I previously outlined inter-Korean academic exchanges by dividing them into three periods: 1) before the Kim Young-sam administration, 2) from Kim Dae-jung to Roh Moo-hyun administration, and 3) since Lee Myung-bak administration. From the perspective of historical exchange, current time period still belongs to the third period. See Ahn 2017.

13. The Academy of Korean Studies discussed exchanges and cooperation with the Asia-Pacific representative of North Korea in Beijing in December 1999 (Source: Interview with Professor Lee Gil-Sang of the Academy of Korean Studies, September 29, 2020).

8. Since then, organizations related to "Comfort Women" formed an International Coalition Council in which 7 countries including North and South Korea, China, and Japan participated, and they held the first conference in Shanghai in September 2003. The second conference was held in Seoul the following year with North Koreans concerned. In 2005, the third conference was held in Pyongyang. Historians such as Seo Jung-seok, professor of Sungkyunkwan University, Kim Hanjong, professor of history education at Korea National University of Education participated.

the Inter-Korean Historical Exchange Promotion Committee on July 29, and the National Institute of Korean History formed the Inter-Korean Historical Exchange Advisory Committee with senior scholars from academia and representatives of academic societies. Then, they proposed to North Korea to hold an academic conference on the theme of “2000 Pyongyang Inter-Korean Summit and Unification of Inter-Korean History Studies” and five sub-themes were derived from the topics submitted by the various history societies (January 31, 2001).¹⁴

The forms of inter-Korean historical exchanges and the organizations involved were diverse. The form of exchange can be categorized into academic conferences and exhibitions, field survey, joint research, data exchange, and cultural heritage research projects. Private organizations such as the Inter-Korean Historians Association or Minjok 21 as well as public organizations such as the National Institute of Korean History, the Goguryeo Research Foundation, and the Academy of Korean Studies participated. Here, each form of exchange will be overviewed. The focal point of the inter-Korean historical exchange was academic conferences,¹⁵ and the academic conferences held on the Korean peninsula are shown in Appendix.

The first academic conference was held at the Pyongyang Grand People’s Study House on March 1, 2001: Inter-Korean Joint Academic Conference and Exhibition on the Unlawfulness of the Japanese Invasion of Korea. The meeting, prepared by the magazine Minjok 21, which was about to publish the first issue, was led by the bibliographer Lee Jong-hak, head of the Sawoon Institute of South Korea. Also, the chairman of the National Institute of Korean History, Lee Seong-moo, the president of Sangji University, Kang Man-gil, and Professor Ahn Byung-ook of the Catholic University participated from South Korea. As representatives of North Korea, Heo Jong-ho, the head of the North Korean Historical Society, Jung Chang-gyu, the director of the Historical Research Institute of the Chosun Academy of Social Sciences, and Won Jong-gyu, the head of the Modern History team at the Institute of History participated.

The academic conference consisted of a debate, exhibition of materials, and presentation of a statement. At the debate, Director Won Jong-gyu, Chairman

of the Korea Society of International Law, Jung Nam-young, Professor Ahn Byung-ook, and President Kang Man-gil presented, but there was no discussion after the presentation. At the exhibition, about 800 pieces of materials on the period from the signing of the Ganghwado Treaty to the Japanese colonization period were displayed. These materials were provided by Director Lee Jong-hak. After the debate, the historians of the two Koreas adopted “a Joint Statement of North and South Korean Historians Who Condemn the History Distortion by Japanese” (Shin 2001; Lee 2001; Kim 2002).

This academic conference was significant in that it was the first academic conference organized by South and North Korean historians since the division. It was the “first child of the June 15th Declaration” and “the first incident after the division in which the two Koreas jointly coped with national issues.” A timely topic that both Koreas could relate to was chosen, and by exhibiting evidences, it appealed to Pyongyang citizens and students. Finally, they announced a joint statement condemning the publication of a textbook written by the “Group for Making New History Textbooks,” a Japanese right-wing group. The publication was found to be problematic as it denies the history of Japanese invasion and colonialism. It also became an opportunity to publicly announce the common perception of history shared by South and North Korean historians. Since that time, academic conferences have been formalized to consist of discussions, exhibitions, and a joint statement announcement.

This academic conference was held in February 2003, followed by the “Inter-Korean Joint Academic Conference on the Unlawfulness of Forced Mobilization of Koreans by Japanese” (C. Jung 2003; T. Jung 2003; Cho 2003b), “Inter-Korean Joint Academic Conference on the Issue of Korean National Code in English” in August (Kim 2003a), “Inter-Korean Joint Academic Conference for Return of Looted Cultural Heritage by Japanese” in February 2004, and “Joint Academic Conference on the Iniquity of Marking the ‘Sea of Japan,’” (Lee 2004) all of which dealt with important topics related to the Japanese invasion and colonization in turn, creating a regular pattern of inter-Korean conferences.

A different kind of discussion was held in Pyongyang. The debate to find out the truth of the Ukishima vessel incident held in September 2003 was the first joint debate between South Korea, North Korea, and Japan. Hong Sang-jin, the secretary of the Fact-finding Committee for the Korean Forced Mobilization, brought forwards the report the Japanese government

14. For the details of these five sub-themes, see Kim 2002, 169.

15. North Korea mostly refers to academic conference as “academic debate,” but in this paper, it is collectively referred as academic conference.

had previously submitted to the Allies as evidence, and the South Korean representative Jeon Jae-jin also submitted oral records of survivors as evidence. They asked the Japanese government to take responsibility and provide compensation. Historian Jeong Hye-kyung, who attended the conference, gave a great deal of meaning to the debate as being the first joint action of inter-Korean solidarity on the issue of forced mobilization (Kim 2003b; H. Jung 2003).

Four academic conferences were held in Seoul. The first was the “Inter-Korean Academic Conference for the Protection of Dokdo Island’s Territory and Highlighting Japan’s Past Atrocities,” held as part of the August 15th National Unification Conference in 2002. Kang Man-gil, president of Sangji University, and Heo Jong-ho, president of the North Korean Historical Society, gave keynote speeches. Also, as this was an issue concerning territory, Professor Lee Jang-hee of Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and Professor Han Sang-beom of Dongguk University, who both specialized in international law, Researcher Hwang Myeong-cheol of the Historical Research Institute, and Senior Manager Lee Hak-su of Deungdaesa presented: two presenters of each side for each category. In addition, “A Letter of Appeal for All Korean People Home and Abroad” was announced (*Pressian*, August 16, 2002).

The second was the “Inter-Korean Joint Academic Conference to Uncover the Truth of Japan’s Distortion of Korean History,” which was held in March of the following year as part of the March 1st Independence Movement’s National Convention for Peace and Unification. From South Korea, Lim Heon-young, director of the Center for Historical Truth and Justice, and Professor Kang Chang-il of Pai Chai University gave a presentation while from North Korea, Joo Jin-gu, vice-president of the Institute for National Unification, and Moon Young-ho, head director of the Language Institute of the Chosun Academy of Social Sciences presented. Through a joint news release, they declared that Japan’s concealment and distortion of history should be considered as a secondary criminal act whereas their invasion and massacre were primary crimes (*OhMyNews*, March 2, 2003). Director Moon raised the issue of the national title of Korea written in English which provided a platform for another academic conference in Pyongyang in August. These two academic conferences were similar in that they were organized as part of the National Liberation Day and March 1st Independence Movement’s National Convention. They were part of larger events, but also had their own characteristics.

The third was the “History Textbooks and Militarism Forum” organized in May 2004 as part of the Seoul Conference hosted by the International Solidarity Council Demanding to Highlight and Overcome Japan’s Past Atrocities. At this conference, Professor Seo Jung-seok of Sungkyunkwan University, Korean contemporary history specialist, gave a keynote speech. At the History Textbook Forum, one of the four thematic forums, Dr. Shin Joo-baek and Gye Seong-hun, the deputy chief of the Compensation Committee for Korean “Comfort Women” and Victims of Forced Mobilization, gave a presentation on Japan’s conservative textbooks and revival of militarism.¹⁶

The fourth was the “Inter-Korean Joint Academic Conference on the Historical Experience of the Anti-Japanese National Movement in Korean Modern History and Japan’s Conservative Swing,” co-hosted by the Academy of Korean Studies, the Association of North Korean Social Scientists, and the Institute of Ethnic Studies at Yanbian University in June 2004. From North Korea, nine people, including Choi Jin-hyuk (Choi Sang-soon), vice-chairman of the Association of North Korean Social Scientists, Song Dong-won, director of the Institute of Revolutionary History at the Academy of Social Sciences, and Jung Chi-geon, the department head of History, Kim Il-sung University, visited South Korea and stayed at the accommodation of the Academy of Korean Studies. From South Korea, three people, including Director Jang Eul-byeong, gave a presentation and from North Korea, director Song Dong-won presented the impact of Japan’s conservative swing and growing military threat on the Korean peninsula, and Jung Chi-geon spoke about the violence and brutality of Japanese colonial rule.

This academic conference was significant in that it was an exclusive conference held in South Korea on the subject of historical issues. There was a self-assessment that “confirmed is a tendency to cooperate between North and South Korean scholars, so there would be no major problems when more realistic topics would be discussed in the future” (Jang 2010, 474). However, due to the excessive control and interference of the authorities and the contents of political propaganda in North Korean scholars’ presentations, it was held privately, leaving only some of the papers by North Korean scholars published.

16. Organization Committee for Seoul Conference, International Solidarity Council Demanding Settlement of Japan’s Past. For more information, see International Solidarity Council Demanding to Highlight and Overcome Japan’s Past Atrocities’ *Seoul Conference Report* published in 2004.

Apparently even in South Korea, free historical exchanges were not guaranteed.

The topics of the academic conferences discussed so far have been about Japanese invasion, colonial rule, its history—namely, forced mobilization and the looting of cultural heritage, Japan's distortion of history textbooks, appropriate title for the nation and the East Sea, and the issue of Dokdo Island. Japanese invasion and its legacy remain a task to be dealt with by both Koreas, as a subject that they can easily agree on. Moreover, considering the necessity to address issues that may arise prior to budding diplomatic relations between North Korea and Japan, topics seem to have been selected according to the demands of North Korea. However, such topics had historical significance in that it would result in a joint response between the two Koreas.

Academic exchanges on ancient history, especially Dangun and Goguryeo, were held in the inter-Korean historical academia, and joint responses to China's Northeast Project were also discussed. In 1993, North Korea claimed to have excavated the tombs of the Dangun couple in Pyongyang, highlighting Dangun as a real person, revising the epicenter of Gojoseon to Pyongyang, and developing the Daedonggang Culture Theory and Pyongyang Holy Land Theory (Kwon 2003). In 2002 and 2003, the "Inter-Korean Joint Academic Conference on Dangun and Gojoseon" hosted by the Dangun Academic Society and the North Korean Historical Society was held in Pyongyang. It was held as part of the ceremony for the National Foundation Day of Korea, but it was impressive in that new materials were released by North Korea and experts from the two Koreas had in-depth discussions on the Dangun and Gojoseon issues by sharing various perspectives (Choi 2002, 2003a, 2003b). The Dangun Academic Society published the papers presented at these two academic conferences and the results of joint research as a book.¹⁷

In September 2002, the "Inter-Korean Joint Exhibition and Discussion on Dolmens," hosted by the World Megalithic Association and the Archeological Institute of the Academy of Social Sciences, was held in Pyongyang. 50 photos of South Korean dolmens were registered as a World Heritage Site and representative dolmens of North Korea were exhibited for 3 days, and 4 South Korean scholars and 5 scholars from North Korea's Archeological

Institute discussed trends and tasks in academic research under the theme of "Dolmen and Gojoseon Culture." Although there were disagreements about the construction period and nature of the dolmens, it was confirmed that the dolmen was a tomb related to Gojoseon, being a unique cultural heritage of the Korean people and that the Korean peninsula and Liaodong constituted a nation-state sharing the same ancestral culture. After the discussion, the Society for Korean Ancient History delivered a suggestion for joint research on Dangun and Dolmen and joint investigation of the Historic Sites of Goguryeo and Balhae Kingdom (Song 2002, 370-71; Seo 2002, 239-41).

In September 2004, the Inter-Korean Historians Association held a discussion and a photo exhibition to commemorate the World Heritage Inscription of the Complex of Koguryo Tombs in Geumgangsan Mountain. A total of 167 people, including about 30 North Korean scholars, participated. The presentation explained that Goguryeo was a powerful ancient country belonging to Korean history, and their tomb murals are an outstanding cultural heritage. In addition, it was stated that the two Koreas should cooperate in response to China's distortion of Goguryeo history.¹⁸ Nam Il-ryong, head lecturer at the Department of History at Kim Il-Sung University, argued that "underrating the Goguryeo Empire with a mere tributary and investiture system of diplomatic rituals in the feudal medieval times and even invoking it as 'a local government' or 'a subordinate country' are the actions to disregard factuality in historical consideration." He also added that "China's argument to consider Goguryeo-Sui war and Goguryeo-Tang war as domestic wars is a complete contrivance and overt distortion of history," strongly criticizing the Northeast Project. Son Soo-ho of the Archaeological Institute emphasized that Goguryeo Empire was "a millennial power in the East." After the academic conference, the South and North Korean historians issued a joint declaration that "Goguryeo history is a real history of our people and will be ours forever" and that the history academia of the two Koreas will cooperate to protect Goguryeo history. At the photo exhibition held in the plaza in front of the Geumgangsan Cultural

17. See Dangun Academic Society 2005. This book contains the joint research outcomes: 11 papers (6 of South Korean scholars, 5 of North Korean scholars) and 20 conference presentation papers (3 of South Korean scholars, 17 of North Korean scholars).

18. North Korean speakers were as follows. Lee Eui-hwa (deputy director of the Cultural Conservation Bureau, opening speech), Heo Jong-ho (chairman of the North Korean Historical Society, congratulatory remarks), Son Soo-ho (director of the Archaeological Institute, keynote speech), Nam Il-Ryong (head lecturer for archeology at Kim Il-sung University, presentation), and Young-Sik Lee (researcher at Kim Il-sung University, presentation).

Center, 63 photos on murals provided by North Korea were displayed (Inter-Korean Historians Association 2004). North Korea strongly opposed the Northeast project's scheme to integrate Goguryeo into Chinese history while not directly mentioning China, in order to avoid diplomatic conflict.

In November 2005, the Goguryeo Research Foundation and the Academy of Social Sciences held an academic conference on the joint research of the Goguryeo ruins in Geumgangsan Mountain. The subject was limited to Goguryeo mural tombs based on the joint academic survey of the Goguryeo ruins in Pyongyang area conducted in July, resulting in a devoted academic conference. Five South Koreans, including Professor Gong Seok-gu, and four North Koreans, including Professor Jo Hee-seung, presented. There was a difference in the assumption over the identity of the person buried in the Anak tomb no. 3. South Koreans argued that the buried person was Commander Dongsu while North Koreans argued that he was either King Micheon or King Gogugwon of Goguryeo (*Yonhap News*, December 1, 2005; Kim 2018, 241-44).

North Korea also sent Cho Hee-seung's thesis to the International Symposium on the History and Cultural Heritage of Goguryeo, held in March 2004 by the Joint Countermeasure Committee on China's Distortion of Goguryeo History in response to the Northeast Project. In this thesis, he emphasized that Goguryeo occupies an important position in Joseon history and that Goguryeo had been recognized as a sovereign country not only in Korea but also in foreign countries (Cho 2004).

Academic exchanges about Dangun and Gojoseon were related to North Korea's theory of Daedonggang culture, which considers Dangun as a real person and Pyongyang as the birthplace of Gojoseon. In addition, inter-Korean historical exchanges about Goguryeo were conducted in response to the Northeast Project.

On October 13, 2015, an academic conference was held in the court of Sungkyunkwan in Kaesong to evaluate 10 years of the joint excavation of Manwoldae. Son Soo-ho, director of the Archaeological Institute of the Academy of Social Sciences, and three people from the North and South each reviewed the results and significance of the project and gave a presentation on future conservation plans and tasks. The presentation of Lee Young-sik, head lecturer of the Department of History at Kim Il-sung University, was about the relationship between Manwoldae and the remains of Daehwagung Palace in Pyongyang. The excavation leader Lee Chul-joon presented on the *giwa maksae*

(convex roof tiles at the edge of eaves) excavated from Manwoldae. These two presentations were academically profound, and in particular, excavation of Daehwagung Palace had not been publicly known, thus attracting great attention (Inter-Korean Historians Association 2015). The conference on this day—held together with the opening ceremony of the exhibition of artifacts excavated through the joint investigation project at Manwoldae—was the last joint academic conference held on the Korean peninsula because inter-Korean exchanges have since been halted. The sky in Kaesong was high and clear, the temperature was warm enough to be active, and the atmosphere of the academic conference in the yard of Sungkyunkwan was focused and friendly.

Academic Conferences Continued Abroad

Even after the 2000 summit, inter-Korean exchanges in historical studies abroad continued. However, it has evolved from the previous form in which North and South Korean historians participated individually in international conferences to the form of jointly hosting academic conferences between South and North Korean institutions or with institutions of third countries. The National Institute of Korean History and the Academy of Korean Studies have actively held academic conferences abroad.

Shortly after the June 15th summit, the National Institute of Korean History, which planned the “Inter-Korean Cooperation Project for Korean History,” held the first Inter-Korean Joint Academic Symposium for Historical Studies in Harbin in August 2001, with Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences and the History Institute of Workers' Party of Korea. 40 scholars from North and South Korea participated in this symposium, including Chairman Lee Seong-moo of the National Institute of Korean History.¹⁹ This academic symposium was held annually until 2019, but since 2007, North Korean

19. The Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences served as a mediator and held the symposium together with the History Institute of Workers' Party of Korea. Until around 2007, North Korea participated in the preparation of symposium. Since then, the situation was different, so it was co-hosted with either the Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences or Yanbian University, and gradually Yanbian University took over the role and the National Institute of Korean History participated as a part. Sometimes North Korean scholars did participate or not, but when it was held at Yanbian University in 2019, North Korea also participated (Source: Interview with Kim Kwang-woon, October 21, 2020, Anguk-dong).

scholars only participated on a few occasions.

The Academy of Korean Studies also actively started exchanges. In June 2000, Director Jang Eul-Byeong and Professor Lee Gil-Sang visited Pyongyang and proposed to jointly hold the World Conference of Korean Studies (Joseon Studies) scheduled to be held in July. Although this proposal was not realized, the “Inter-Korean Joint Academic Conference” was held every year from 2001 to 2011. The first meeting held in Yanji, China was co-hosted by the Association of North Korean Social Scientists and the Institute of Ethnic Studies at Yanbian University. The theme was the 21st century’s discovery and research of ethnic literary sources of Joseon. Sixty people, including 13 from the Academy of Korean Studies and 7 from North Korea, attended the conference whose scope and themes were not limited solely to history because the Academy of Korean Studies, the host of the conference, was dedicated to many fields of scholarship. The number of presenters for the two-day conference reached 30.

In 2002, the academic conference was held in Shenyang, and the presentation sessions were divided into four divisions. In the history section, three North Korean scholars and six South Korean scholars, including Ryu Chi-young (Director of the Association of North Korean Social Scientists), Song Dong-won (Director of the Institute of Revolutionary History at the Academy of Social Sciences), and Oh Young-il (Director of the Academy of Social Sciences), presented. However, there were also skeptical evaluations on the achievements of this academic conference due to the wide scope and excessive number of presentations (Cho 2003a). Nevertheless, the framework of the academic conference jointly hosted by South Korea, North Korea, and China was maintained for a while, although sometimes the Academy of Social Sciences participated instead of the Association of Social Scientists. The conferences were mostly held in China, except for 2007 when it was held in Pyongyang jointly with the Independence Hall of Korea and the National Institute of Korean History. However, the conference was stopped in 2011 because the authorities in Yanbian did not give the North Korean scholars permission to enter the conference hall.

The Goguryeo Research Foundation also held academic conferences on ancient history with North Korea and conducted excavation and investigation projects of ruins. In February 2005, the International Academic Conference on Gojoseon, Goguryeo, and Balhae was held in Vladivostok jointly with the Academy of Social Sciences (North Korea) and the Far-eastern National

Technical University of Russia. 15 scholars from North Korea including Heo Jong-ho, the president of the North Korean Historical Society, 17 scholars from South Korea, and 5 scholars from Russia participated (*Pressian*, March 7, 2005). In his opening remarks, Heo Jong-ho stated that “it is a meaningful meeting to fulfill the mission of the intellectuals in front of the nation,” and he also gave a presentation on the class composition and social order of the Gojoseon society. Papers presented at this conference, along with other written submissions, were published in Seoul (Goguryeo Research Foundation 2005).

In addition, an inter-Korean joint academic conference marking the 100th year of the beginning of the Japanese colonization period was held in Shenyang, China in 2010. It was hosted by the Inter-Korean Historians Association and the Historical Research Institute of the Chosun Academy of Social Sciences. In September 2019, “the Academic Conference and Current Status Survey for Joint Investigation of the Historical Sites of Admiral Yi Sun-sin in Naseon City-Noktundo Island” was held in Vladivostok and Khasan. Although it was an academic conference in which three countries participated, South and North Korea scholars were not able to attend the meetings at the same place, and they separately met Russian scholars. It was an academic conference that clearly showed the severance of inter-Korean exchanges.

Exchange of Resources and Joint Research

The exchange of historical resources began with the first academic conference in March 2001. Immediately after the opening ceremony, the National Institute of Korean History donated 45 volumes of *Korean History* and 35 volumes of *History of Korean Independence Movement* published by the National Institute of Korean History, CD-ROMs including the Joseon bangyeok jido (a map of Joseon), *Gyeongguk daejeon* (*The Grand Rule of Laws*), and *Daejeon boetong* (*The Code of Laws*), and the *Encyclopedia of Korean Culture* published by the Academy of Korean Studies to the Historical Research Institute of the Chosun Academy of Social Sciences (Kim 2002, 172). After the exhibition of resources, the director Lee Jong-hak donated 1,430 pieces of materials, including the exhibited items. The National Institute of Korean History also sent more materials requested by North Korea by ship after returning to South Korea.

It is said that the Academy of Korean Studies collected and sent its publications to North Korea, and North Korea also sent publications from the

Chosun Academy of Social Sciences. Such an exchange of data was carried out from an equal standpoint.

An example of inter-Korean joint research is the “Inter-Korean Joint Research on Dangun and Gojoseon” conducted by the Dangun Academic Society and the Chosun Historical Society from winter 2003 to spring 2005. How the joint research was conducted is not known in detail, but 11 papers in Part 1 of the *Dangun and Gojoseon Research* published by the Dangun Academic Society stated that they were the result of joint research. According to this, Professors Kim Jeong-bae, Yoon Nae-hyun, Lee Hyeong-gu, Park Seon-hee, Ha Moon-sik, and Jeong Young-hoon of the Dangun Academic Society and professors Heo Jong-ho, Son Young-jong, Kim Yu-cheol, Choi Young-sil, and Seo Guk-tae of the Chosun Historical Society participated in the joint research (*Yonhap News*, September 30, 2005). Although it was not an ideal situation to conduct joint research in depth, the fact that North and South Korean historians jointly researched and published on a specific subject of Gojoseon is significant. The National Institute of Korean History jointly worked with North Korea on translating and using Russian materials related to Korea.

“The Inter-Korean Historical Terminology Joint Research,” conducted by the Inter-Korean Historians Association, the Historical Research Institute of the Chosun Academy of Social Sciences, and the National Reconciliation Council from November 2007 to May 2010, was a model for more advanced joint research. This study aimed to organize historical terms used in the North and the South from the prehistoric period to the March First Independence Movement in a dictionary format. Over 100 authors gave a description for nearly 800 historical terms under the categories of modern, ancient, and medieval terms. It was a large-scale project carried out for three years. The writers met several times and held meetings to review the manuscript. Contrary to presumption regarding the historical terminology used until the 1910s, the common perception of the two Koreas was dominant while the difference was trivial. In addition, only a few cases showed serious “political differences” while most were “cultural differences” that could converge or coexist.²⁰ However, it should be taken into consideration

that the period of the 1920s and later were excluded from this project.

Reprinting North Korean books or reissuing their publications in South Korea has been common since the 1980s, but it has been rare for the two Koreas to jointly publish books. A representative example of co-publishing is *The Encyclopedia of North Korean Geography and Culture* (20 volumes) published by the Institute for Peace Affairs and the Publishing Company of the Chosun Encyclopedia in 2004. This encyclopedia was centered on nature, humanities, and geography, recording all the changes in administrative districts in all areas of North Korea. Also, it has a “folk” volume and a volume of “people” that contain different folklore and 2,000 figures respectively. Each headword is written by the relevant specialized institutes, making it highly reliable.

The North Korean Science Encyclopedia Publishing Company supervised the manuscript writing, and the Institute of Korean Folk Culture in Shenyang typed the content. Then, it was edited and published in Seoul. The final publishing took place in South Korea, so it took a lot of time to edit and exchange opinions on terms during the final stage (Institute for Peace Affairs 2004). However, it became a good example of cooperation as the publication was done in South Korea when it was difficult to publish it in North Korea. When I visited North Korea, I also heard that there were many unpublished manuscripts piled up at North Korean research institutes due to various difficult circumstances including paper shortage.

Exchanges: Achievements and Characteristics

Achievements of Exchanges

The achievements of the exchanges between the two Koreas have been substantial. First of all, the greatest achievement was the fact that cooperation continued and mutual understanding and trust accumulated in the process. While there are many similarities between the history of the two Koreas, differences certainly exist regarding historical views. The vague fear of differences arose from the fact that there were few opportunities to face and discuss

20. See Jung 2011. The authors of this project were composed of 39 people for each ancient and medieval times (19 from South Korea and 20 from North Korea respectively) and 33 people for modern times (18 from South Korea and 15 from North Korea). In terms of categories, there were 275 South Korean terms and 284 North Korean terms for the ancient times, and 249 terms for the medieval

times, and 260 terms for the modern period.

the differences. In fact, when South Korean historians meet North Korean historians to exchange opinions, they usually feel a sense of unity rather than difference, and even if there are differences, they were careful not to exaggerate or expose the differences. It can be said that the exchange has continued in the attitude of “acknowledging differences while looking for similarities” and “exploring the truth based on facts.”

Second, the achievements in joint action on national issues should be noted. The main topics of inter-Korean historical exchange were the issue of Japanese invasion and colonization and history of Gojoseon and Goguryeo. The issue of Japanese invasion and colonial rule is an important one for both South and North Korea, and for that reason, beyond the level of historians, exchanges were conducted with various groups working on major issues such as “Comfort Women,” explosion of the Ukishima vessel, and forced or compulsory labor. This issue of the past history is a common historical task that must be solved practically, and it was a sensitive and urgent topic for North Korea, which was in the process of promoting North Korea-Japan diplomatic relations. The Goguryeo issue was also related to the academic and cultural task of researching and preserving the Goguryeo tombs, but there was a necessity to jointly cope with China’s Northeast Project. Therefore, it was very appropriate for the two Koreas to respond jointly through the 2004 academic conference in Geumgangsan Mountain.

Third, the formation of exchange organizations such as the Inter-Korean Historians Association and the continued exchange through them should be noted. In the course of preparing academic conferences, the necessity of forming a permanent organization of North and South Korean historians was acknowledged, and the Inter-Korean Historians Association, which was formed in Pyongyang in February 2004, became the first inter-Korean council formed after the division of the Korean peninsula. Its establishment set a milestone. Kang Man-gil, president of Sangji University, was appointed as the chairman of the South, and Heo Jong-ho, president of the North Korean Historical Society, as the chairman of the North. In Seoul, the Committee was formed well, but unfortunately, North Korea did not form a committee in the end, so it became a half-sided council. There was a rumor that the North Korean authorities decided that it was premature to form a single consultative body. However, in South Korea, the name of the Inter-Korean Historians Association has been used as it is. It is actively working in the field of history and cultural heritage, including

academic conferences as well as joint historical terminology research projects, joint excavation of Manwoldae in Kaesong, research and conservation projects of the Goguryeo tombs, and exhibitions of inter-Korean artifacts. It has established itself as the center of inter-Korean exchanges in the field of historical studies.

Fourth, the scope of historical exchange has been expanded. The core of historical exchange is that historians discuss historical research and education, exchange data, and increase efficiency through joint research. However, when looking at the contents of the actual inter-Korean exchanges, they have been more focused on issues such as highlighting Japan’s past atrocities that required a practical response rather than in purely academic fields. Cultural heritage exchanges such as the investigation of the Goguryeo tombs and their conservation, ancient ruins in Pyongyang, Manwoldae excavation, and exhibition of artifacts played a central role. This may be the result of embracing North Korea’s interests, but they ultimately resulted in expanding the scope of historical exchange and cooperation.

Fifth, the potentials for constant and systematic exchange were confirmed. The two Koreas continued to compile the *Gyeoremal keunsajeon* Dictionary and to investigate Manwoldae for more than 10 years. Although they were sometimes interrupted in the process and are currently all stopped, the compilation of the *Gyeoremal keunsajeon* Dictionary is still partly in process under legal protection. The Inter-Korean Historians Association is also continuing works such as archiving and exhibitions, waiting for proper process for excavation.

Characteristics of Exchanges

First, direct and indirect exchanges have been overlapping with each other. Direct exchanges began in March 2001 after the June 15th summit, but generally most of them entered a period of stagnancy in 2007. Therefore, the period of direct exchange between Pyongyang and Seoul lasted for 7 years only. After short-term exchanges, they were brought to standstill shortly after the period of stagnancy.

Even during the period of direct exchanges between Seoul and Pyongyang or Kaesong, we saw that historical exchanges with North Korea continued in foreign countries, mainly in China. Therefore, the inter-Korean exchanges after the June 15th summit were conducted in both direct exchanges (on the Korean

peninsula) and indirect (in foreign countries) manners at the same time. Also, some indirect exchanges continued even after direct exchanges were waned or virtually stopped. In this regard, it can be said that it has regressed to the time before 2000, when exchanges were made in foreign countries through third countries or at international conferences.

In the history of inter-Korean historical exchanges, direct exchanges happened during a brief period of boom, and the exchange of historical studies between the two Koreas also continued abroad. Therefore, we should ponder how to evaluate the value and imperative nature of direct exchanges.

Second, there has been an asymmetry of exchanges. Inter-Korean historical exchanges showed serious asymmetry. First of all, when it comes to selecting a location, South Korean scholars visited North Korea in most cases, and North Korean scholars only visited South Korea four times. The only time they came South to participate in an academic conference was an academic conference held by the Academy of Korean Studies in June 2004. Then, on two other occasions, they attended an academic conference held as part of a large-scale event. The other occasion was to deal with the issue of past history in a session at an international conference on “Comfort Women” organized by civic groups, so it might not be possible to call it a historical exchange.

Asymmetry is also evident in exhibitions and investigations at historical sites. North Korean artifacts have been displayed in the South several times, but South Korean artifacts have never been displayed in the North. South Korean scholars explored the remains of Kaesong, Goguryeo, Dangun, and even Baekdusan Mountain, but North Korean scholars did not have a chance to explore the remains of the South.

This asymmetry has been derived from the different socio-political positions of the two Koreas, and it is difficult to change the situation at this time. However, efforts to overcome such an asymmetry should gradually be made.

The third characteristic lies in the limited subjects and methods of selecting them. The topics covered in the inter-Korean historical exchanges were focused on the period of Japanese colonization and ancient history, especially Gojoseon, Dangun, and Goguryeo. The Japanese occupation was the main focus, in particular because the two Koreas had no different view on this issue, except for understanding of the armed struggle against Japan. In addition, the situation in which Japan was trying to distort history continued. The budding diplomatic relationship between North Korea and Japan also seems to have influenced the

main topics for discussion.

Relics and history of Goguryeo have become an important subject for both South and North Korea as they are both highly interested in this topic and China's Northeast Project was in process. However, although Gojoseon and Dangun are one of the topics that North Korea has been focusing on, it is also true that there are considerable differences regarding views on those topics between the two Koreas. Nevertheless, by dealing with Dangun and Gojoseon, the two Koreas were able to have an opportunity to understand each other's positions.

It is known that the subject is generally selected by accommodating North Korea's request. Selecting the subject in the process of exchange is very important, so it must reflect not only academic interests but also political and social interests of the era. Therefore, it is recommended that the subjects selected so far should be reviewed whether academic interests and political and social demands are adequately balanced, and refer to the topic selection in the future.

Fourth, there are cases in which exchange projects developed into official projects. Promoting joint projects through exchanges on a regular basis is the best way to stabilize exchanges. The joint projects of the two Koreas include research on inter-Korean historical terminology, excavation of Manwoldae, and publication of a local culture encyclopedia.

Historical terminology research is a pure academic project conducted by the two Koreas as a preliminary work to identify differences and commonalities and to also narrow the gap by writing historical terms up to the March First Independence Movement. It is regrettable that the public do not have an access to the outcomes due to the disagreement on the publication.

The Manwoldae excavation is a project that marked the milestone of inter-Korean joint investigation. The relevant discussion, which started in 2005 with an academic conference for the World Heritage Nomination of Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong, decided that the investigation would be conducted over 33,000 square meters of Manwoldae's western group of buildings, and the investigation started in May 2007. Since then, it has been excavated eight times until 2018, repeating excavation, suspension, and emergency withdrawal according to the inter-Korean relationship. The excavation was organized by the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and the Korean Central History Museum (Pyongyang), and about 17,900 artifacts including various types of roof tiles, metal types, and ceramics or the remains of important buildings such as Gyeongryeongjeon Hall, were

collected.²¹ It has set a turning point in exchange and cooperation through joint excavation for more than 10 years, so about 60% of the area has been excavated. However, this project has been suspended again.

Fifth, the subject and form of exchange are different between the two Koreas. In South Korea, government agencies such as the National Institute of Korean History, the Academy of Korean Studies, and the Goguryeo Research Foundation, as well as private organizations such as the Inter-Korean Historians Association and various academies became the main group of exchange. Although academic organizations were not the center of the exchange due to financial issues in the early stages of exchange, media, religious organizations, and exhibitors played an important role instead, and various groups—association of scholars and academies—gradually participated in the exchange.

In North Korea, the Historical Research Institute, Archeological Research Institute of the Chosun Academy of Social Sciences, and the Academy of Chosun History are the main agents of exchanges. The Association of Social Scientists, the History Institute of Workers' Party of Korea, the Institute for National Unification, the Korea Central Museum, and the Cultural Heritage Preservation Bureau participated. However, negotiations have been mainly handled by the Chosun Asia-Pacific Peace Committee or the National Reconciliation Council, and the history-related organizations share the work in the form of supervising the contents.

This structure also influenced South Korea. In South Korea, there were two ways. The first is when various organizations or institutions directly negotiated with North Korea, whereas in the second case, the authorities were solely in charge of deciding the content and negotiations were settled by an organization such as the Inter-Korean Historians Association. Manwoldae excavation has been carried out by the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage, while the Inter-Korean Historians Association is in charge of consultations regarding excavations. So, this would be the second case.

Conclusion

As discussed so far, inter-Korean exchanges in the field of historical studies began with the dismantling of the Cold War system and democratization of Korea in the 1980s, with the spread of interest in North Korean history among the public, along with the Northern Policy implemented by the Roh Tae-woo administration. Exchanges, which began in the form of the historians' individual participation in international conferences abroad, developed into the form of direct exchanges within the Korean peninsula with the June 15th Joint Declaration as a momentum. Even in other countries, organizations and institutions of the two Koreas jointly held occasions of exchange with foreign institutions.

The contents of the exchange were diverse as it included academic conferences, data exchange, joint research, survey and preservation of ruins, joint exhibitions of photographs and relics, and joint statement presentations. The main themes included the Japanese invasion, the period of colonization, Dangun, Gojoseon, and Goguryeo. In addition, isolated exchange events turned into exchanges on a regular basis which again developed into long-standing joint projects.

Inter-Korean historical exchanges in the form of direct gatherings became an opportunity for scholars to understand each other and to narrow the gaps, thereby resulting in a joint response to the historical issues caused by international disputes with Japan and China. However, as inter-Korean relations stumbled, historical exchanges also came to a halt after a period of stagnation. Direct exchanges were stopped after the 8th excavation of Manwoldae by the Inter-Korean Historians Association in December 2018, and indirect exchanges in foreign countries are barely maintained.

In retrospect, the exchange of historical studies between the two Koreas was like a midsummer night's dream. It lasted only for 7 years, and we can never expect when it will resume. Now that all inter-Korean exchanges have ceased, there is no prospect of re-initiating historical exchanges for now. Therefore, the opinion that the situation went back to before the 2000 summit is also incorrect. At that time, exchanges happened in third countries, and most of all, there was the prospect that the two Koreas would be able to directly conduct academic exchanges. A strongly feasible prospect. But now the situation is not as such.

21. For details, see Shin 2018; National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2008, 2012, 2015.

What topics will the two Koreas discuss when historical exchanges resume? What will be the topic that both sides want to discuss? In some ways, shouldn't the current situation be seen as North Korea having an opportunity to exchange with South Korea on the subjects that are crucial right now or to grasp South Korean research trends and achievements? Moreover, we should consider whether North Korea really acknowledges the need for historical exchange.

On a large scale, inter-Korean academic exchanges, including historical studies, are part of the process by which the two Koreas are leading the way in solving the issues of the Korean peninsula. North Korea's nuclear tests and missile launches are immediate causes of international sanctions, but inter-Korean exchanges should not be swayed by them. The field of historical studies need to make a breakthrough and expand exchange opportunities in order to restore national identity and prepare for unification. This is because the parties directly involved in Korean peninsula issues are South Korea and North Korea, and the main agents of resolution must also be them.

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Appendix. Academic Conferences on Historical Studies Held on the Korean Peninsula

Date	Title of Academic Conference	Location	Host	Participants (Presenters South/North)	Note
2001. 3. 1	Exhibition and Inter-Korean Joint Academic Conference on the Unlawfulness of the Japanese Invasion of Korea	Grand People’s Study House, Pyongyang	Academic Conference Preparatory Committee: Chosun Asia-Pacific Peace Committee, North Korean Historical Society, Chosun Academy of Social Sciences	21 South Koreans (2/2)	First academic conference
2002. 5. 3-4	Discussion on Japan’s Clearing of History in the Region of Asia	Pyongyang	Compensation Committee for Korean “Comfort Women” and Victims of the Pacific War	13 South Koreans. 2 presenters, including Professor Seo Jung-seok, participated for the issue of history distortion ²²	First international academic conference regarding the past history held in North Korea
2002. 8. 16	Inter-Korean Academic Conference for the Protection of Dokdo Island’s Territory and the Clearing of Japan’s Past	Walkerhill Hotel, Seoul		8 presenters. Keynote Speech-Kang Man-gil, Heo Jong-ho. Presentations (2/2)	Part of the August 15 th National Unification Conference. A letter of appeal announced
2002. 9. 26	Inter-Korean Joint Exhibition and Discussion on Dolmens	Yoon I-sang Music Hall, Pyongyang	Society for Korean Ancient History, World Megalithic Association, Archeological Institute of the Academy of Social Sciences	(4/5)	Filmed KBS History Special
2002. 10. 3	Inter-Korean Joint Academic Conference on Dangun and Gojoseon	Grand People’s Study House, Pyongyang	Dangun Academic Society, North Korean Historian Society	100 (5/5)	Part of the ceremony for the National Foundation Day of Korea
2003. 2. 21	Inter-Korean Joint Academic Conference and Exhibition on the Unlawfulness of Forced Mobilization of Koreans by Japanese	Grand People’s Study House, Pyongyang	Academic Conference Preparatory Committee: Chosun Asia-Pacific Peace Committee, Chosun Academy of Social Sciences, Institute for National Unification	47 (3/3)	Adopted an appeal letter

2003. 3. 2	Inter-Korean Joint Academic Conference to Uncover the Truth of Japan's Distortion of Korean History	Walkerhill Hotel, Seoul	National Reconciliation Council (Minhwahyeop)	105 North Koreans visited South Korea (2/2)	Part of the March First Independence Movement's National Convention for Peace and Unification
2003. 8. 21	Inter-Korean Joint Academic Conference on the Issue of Korean National Code in English	Kim Il-sung University, Pyongyang	Academic Conference Preparatory Committee: Chosun Asia-Pacific Peace Committee, Chosun Academy of Social Sciences	15 South Korean historians visited North Korea (3/3)	
2003. 9. 21~22	International Academic Conference on Violent Anti-Japanese Struggles	Pegaebong Hotel, Baekdusan Mountain	Academy of Korean Studies, Association of North Korean Social Scientists, Institute of Ethnic Studies at Yanbian University	29 participants visited North Korea	20 papers published in the collection of papers
2003. 9. 29	Discussion and Exhibition to Find Out the Truth of the Ukishima Vessel Incident in Pyongyang	Grand People's Study House, Pyongyang	Fact-finding Committee for the Explosion of the Ukishima Vessel, Compensation Committee for Korean "Comfort Women" and Victims of Forced Mobilization by Japanese, Fact-finding Committee for the Korean Forced Mobilization (Japan)	5 South Koreans, 10 foreigners	
2003. 10. 2	Inter-Korean Joint Academic Conference on Dangun and Gojoseon	Grand People's Study House, Pyongyang	Dangun Academic Society, North Korean Historian Society	Kim Jung-bae/Son Soo-ho (5/6)	Second meeting
2004. 2. 25	Inter-Korean Joint Academic Conference and Exhibition for Return of Looted Cultural Heritage by Japanese	Korean Art Gallery, Pyongyang	Academic Conference Preparatory Committee: Chosun Asia-Pacific Peace Committee	97 South Korean participants (2/2)	
2004. 2. 25	Joint Academic Conference on the Iniquity of Marking the "Sea of Japan"	Grand People's Study House, Pyongyang	Academic Conference Preparatory Committee: Chosun Asia-Pacific Peace Committee	97 South Korean participants (3/3)	Announced a declaration

2004. 5. 20	History Textbooks and Militarism Forum	Seoul Women Plaza	International Solidarity Council Demanding Settlement of Japan's Past	9 North Korean participants (7 general participants, 2 victims) Keynote Speech: Seo Jung-seok (Sungkyunkwan University). Presentation: Shin Ju-baek (Korea National University of Education), Gye Seong-hun (deputy chief of the Compensation Committee for Korean "Comfort Women" and Victims of Forced Mobilization) ²³	Thematic Forum of the Seoul Convention by the International Solidarity Council Demanding Settlement of Japan's Past
2004. 6. 2~5	Inter-Korean Joint Academic Conference on the Historical Experience of the Anti-Japanese National Movement in Korean Modern History and Japan's Conservative Swing	Academy of Korean Studies	Academy of Korean Studies, Association of North Korean Social Scientists, Institute of Ethnic Studies at Yanbian University	9 North Korean scholars, including Choi Jin-hyuk (vice-chairman of the Association of North Korean Social Scientists), Song Dong-won (director of the Institute of Revolutionary History at the Academy of Social Sciences), Jung Chi-geon (Department head of History, Kim Il-sung University) visited South Korea (3/2)	Not open to the public
2004. 9. 11~12	Academic Conference and Exhibition to Commemorate the World Heritage Inscription of the Complex of Koguryo Tombs	Geumgangsan Mountain	Inter-Korean Historians Association, Chosun Asia-Pacific Peace Committee	Approximately 200/70 (5/5)	Adopted a joint declaration

23. See the Seoul Convention Report of the International Solidarity Council Demanding Settlement of Japan's Past 2004.

24. See Kim 2018, 241-44; *Yonhap News*, December 1, 2005.

2005. 9. 22	Japan's History Distortion and Militarism	Pyongyang	International Solidarity Council Demanding Settlement of Japan's Past	19 South Koreans (Seo Jung-seok, Yang Mi-gang, Ha Jong-mun, Kim Han-jong)	3 rd Pyongyang Convention of the International Solidarity Council Demanding Settlement of Japan's Past (Subcommittee no. 4)
2005. 11. 18~21	Academic Conference for the World Heritage Nomination of Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong	Janamsan Inn, Kaesong	Inter-Korean Historians Association/Cultural Heritage Preservation Bureau, Chosun Academy of Social Sciences		
2005. 11. 29~30	Academic Conference on the Joint Research of the Goguryeo Ruins	Geumgangsan Mountain	Goguryeo Research Foundation, Chosun Academy of Social Sciences	9 presentations (5/4)	Difference in the assumption over the buried person of the Anak tomb no. 3: South Korea-Commander Dongsu, North Korea-King Micheon or King Gogugwon of Goguryeo ²⁴
2007. 6. 30 ~7. 7	Academic Conference on the Issue of Nationalism and Inheritance of National Culture	Pyongyang, Baekdusan Mountain	Academy of Korean Studies, Independence Hall of Korea of the National Institute of Korean History	(15/9)	Field visit to the historic sites of anti-Japanese movement
2008. 4. 25~26	First Academic Conference for the Inter-Korean Historical Terminology Joint Research	Janamsan Inn, Kaesong	Inter-Korean Historians Association, Historical Research Institute of the Chosun Academy of Social Sciences, National Reconciliation Council (Minhwahyeop)	56/55	4 meetings total

2015. 10. 13	Evaluation of 10 Years of Kaesong Manwoldae Inter-Korean Joint Excavation Survey and Future Prospect	Sungkyunkwan	Inter-Korean Historians Association, Cultural Heritage Preservation Bureau, Chosun Academy of Social Sciences	Presentation (3/3)	
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