

The “National History” Education in Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria under Japanese Rule, 1920–1945

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ABSTRACT

This article is a research on history education under Japanese colonial rule in the following three regions: Taiwan, Korea (Chōsen), and Manchuria (including Manchukuo). This research aims to reconstruct the history education of these three regions and hopes, on the basis of concrete findings, to explore further the issues concerning historical construction and its limits.

Because history education in elementary schools either in Japan’s colonies or in leased territories were modeled after that in Japan proper, I devote a chapter on history education in Japan proper and then discuss it in regards to Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria in three separate chapters. History education outside Japan proper can be divided into two stages. The first stage is from 1920 to 1937 and the second is from 1938 to 1945. While the second stage was overwhelmed by the so-called *tennō shikan*—the emperor-centered historical narrative, the first stage shows that Japan adopted very different approaches to each region when compiling history textbooks. 1. In Taiwan, Japanese history was directly taught to Taiwanese children. 2. In Korea, the history of Japan and that of Korea were taught together. 3. In Manchuria, a fresh version of history was constructed. In other words, Taiwanese children were deprived of chances to learn their own history. Korean children were taught their history, but that was artificially welded to the main body of Japanese history. Children in Manchukuo studied a newly-constructed “national history” which had close relations with Japan.

In summary, Japan as a colonizer treated Taiwan as a place without its own history, while it had to compromise in Korea given the latter’s strong tradition in historiography. The case of Manchukuo, however, represents a good example of historical construction.

Keywords: Japanese colonial rule, history education, historical construction, Taiwan *kōgakkō*, Chōsen *futsugakkō*, *gongxuetang* in Manchuria