Sociology and "How Multicultural Youths Become Koreans" (with Hyun Jeong Woo) in *Social Theory*.

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The Civil Sphere in East Asia

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For those who have struggled, theoretically and practically, for civil repair in East Asia

12

Reconciliation through the Transnational Civil Sphere?

Historical Dialogue and the Tri-National Joint History Project in East Asia

Horng-luen Wang*

INTRODUCTION

It has been asserted that we are now living in what has been called a "post-conflict," "post-violence" or "post-trauma" era in which the politics of identity have been deeply intertwined with traumatic collective memories and contradictory historical narratives (Alexander 2012; Bell 2006; Brewer 2010). Much of the conflict and violence has been associated with nation-states and nationalism, which emerged as the most powerful political force in the modern age. As previous studies have shown, state-making and war-making are two sides of the same coin, while military conflicts, armed struggles, violent oppression, and resistance have been characteristic of nation-building and state-formation (Giddens 1985; Hall and Malešević 2013; Tilly 1992; Wimmer 2012). In addition to nation-states and nationalism, these conflicts also have deep roots in imperialism and colonialism, which sought not only political domination but also resource extraction and economic exploitation, often in the name of the Enlightenment and civilization (Alexander 2013; Malešević 2010). The global expansion of the international system, accompanied by the predatory forces of colonialism and imperialism, has made violence, oppression, and suffering widespread. All of this violence, oppression, and suffering have left profound imprints on the inflicted groups, which later remain as negative memories or collective traumas. After two devastating world wars, there emerged a new cultural code of universalizing moral principle that champions humanitarian values over national/ethnic emancipation; people began to reflect on the craze in the past as they made various endeavors to mend damaged solidarity, repair broken relations, and

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restore justice, as well as overcome traumas by acknowledging the suffering of the self and of others (Alexander 2012, 2016; Olick 2007; Torpey 2003).

In East Asia, we have witnessed similar scenarios, but with some peculiar twists. The complicated legacies of colonialism, war, and domination, most of which are associated with the pre-1945 Empire of Japan, are still haunting the region, while contesting interpretations of past wrongdoings further stimulate virulent nationalistic sentiments in different societies (Kwak and Nobles 2013; Shin and Sneider 2011). Since the 1990s, there has been an escalation of nationalistic politics in the region, manifested in such issues as territorial disputes and traumatic memories about war and/or colonialism that involve Japan, China, Taiwan, and Korea. At the core of these disputes lies the so-called historical perception problem (歷史認識問題), which refers to diverging, most of the time conflicting ways of "perceiving history" and interpreting the past of the region known as East Asia today.[1] The fervent debates surrounding history textbooks and historical education since the 1980s indicate the complex nature and profound impacts of the historical perception problem. As latecomers in the history of modernity that predicates nations and nationalism (Greenfeld 1992), none of the (national) states, namely Japan, China, Korea, and, to a lesser extent, Taiwan, are willing to soften their political stance on nationalism-related issues, while the history taught in these countries remains highly nationalistic in order to cultivate and strengthen national identity. Moreover, these nationalisms have been characterized by conflicting structures of feeling that hinder dialogue and mutual understandings between people from different societies, which, in turn, poses obstacles to reconciliation in the region (Wang 2014a).

Against this backdrop, a group of scholars, high school teachers, and nongovernmental organization (NGO) activists from Japan, Korea, and China has been collaborating to write joint history textbooks for high school students in the three countries for reconciliatory purposes. Such an undertaking, originating in 2002, has continued for over a decade with fruitful outcomes: thus far the group has produced two joint history texts, almost simultaneously published in the three countries in their respective languages, as supplementary teaching materials. The publication of the texts has received considerable publicity and evoked discussions (including both praise and criticism) in all three countries. This joint project to "write history beyond national boundaries," viewed in light of Alexander's (2006, 2015) civil sphere theory (CST), is worth investigating for both theoretical and empirical reasons. Three key elements in CST are of particular interest here: civil repair, solidarity, and the civil sphere beyond national boundaries. I elaborate them in order.

[1] 歷史認識 is a term peculiar to postwar East Asia. Some have used "historical consciousness" to translate the term, but I believe "historical perception" is more appropriate because its denotation differs somewhat from "historical consciousness" as usually understood.

According to Alexander (2006: 4), the civil sphere is conceptualized as "a world of values and institutions that generates the capacity for social criticism and democratic integration at the same time." In this light, East Asia as a whole is anything but civil in that no such values and institutions can be found in the region. To be sure, a civil sphere exists at best on the national level in each society, but not on the supranational level. Unlike its Western (especially European) counterpart, where moral universalism has been developed through the traumatic process after World War II (Alexander 2012: 31–96), the aftermath of war in East Asia has been characterized by divided memories and conflicting interpretations of history.[2] As a result, there are few common cultural codes concerning values and meanings for people in this region to share, while formal reconciliation on the state level appears to be quite unpractical. Under such circumstances, nonstate efforts to bridge political chasms created by nationalisms can be regarded as a kind of civil repair that the state can hardly provide. It is regarded as civil repair not only because it is carried out by nonstate agencies but also because it aims to create values and institutions through historical dialogue, on which a new kind of solidarity can be generated and sustained. As Alexander (2015: 172) has put it, "[w]hen conflict is transformed into dialogue, it sustains more civil solidarity." So does the joint history project examined here.

Thus, by analyzing this project through the lens of CST, this study intends to make a theoretical contribution to CST by modifying and expanding its concepts in innovative ways. To begin with, while Alexander's original conceptualization of "civil repair" refers to a form of boundary relations between civil and noncivil spheres within a given society, I expand this concept to the remedy of relations between societies that are divided by different binary codes. Such an expansion is based on good reasons, which lead us to the second and the third kinds of conceptual expansions. In Alexander's original formulation, the civil sphere is conceptualized as simultaneously inclusive and exclusive, civil and anticivil, which, in turn, accounts for how democratic nations could have civil spheres functioning domestically but simultaneously engage in anticivil violence outside the nation. In this study, however, I argue that CST could be used to think about transcending anticivil violence (such as wars and their legacies) between nations. Solidarity across national boundaries divided by the binary codes of each national society is a key for us to understand how this can happen. Furthermore, since civil society is territorially and spatially fixed, the civil sphere is often conceptualized as existing within a given bounded community, mostly molded by the nation state. However, this study explores the emergence

[2] For a useful guide to related issues, see Kim (2016). However, one has to be mindful to note that, as a "handbook," this edited volume is flawed in that it has left the memory and reconciliation concerning Taiwan (including the tensions between Taiwan and mainland China, which have been building up in the past two decades or so) totally out of its scope.

of a *transnational civil sphere* above the national level, and thus we can understand how such a sphere takes shape in its formative stage. As I shall demonstrate, new modes of communication, group interactions, and public pedagogy, among others, are key elements that have played crucial roles throughout the process. In other words, this chapter is not merely an application of CST but is also intended to be an expansion of such theory by enriching our understanding of (the emergence of) a civil sphere in both theoretical and empirical terms.

To examine this joint history project in light of CST, therefore, we can raise the following questions: Through their cross-border collaboration that has lasted for more than a decade, is there anything close to an emergent transnational civil sphere? Is a transnational civil sphere, which by implication transcends or transgresses the boundaries of nation-states, possible, and if possible at all, what would it look like? What are the conditions and institutional foundations of its formation? How can ruptured memories and contradictory "structures of feeling" be mended through historical dialogues? This chapter is a modest attempt to explore preliminary answers to these questions.

Regarding data and method, I have conducted twenty-three interviews with key participants in the project and have attended their meetings as an observer for more than two years. Most of the discussions that follow are based on a reconstruction of the information that I have collected firsthand from the field. Unless an informant asks that his or her identity be revealed, informants will be referred to anonymously.

In the following section, I first provide a brief sketch of the joint history project from the perspective of CST. I then explore the relevance of this project to CST by focusing on three concepts: civil repair, solidarity, and the idea of a transnational civil sphere. The final section will conclude with reflections for further investigation.

WRITING A COMMON HISTORY: A SKETCH OF THE PROJECT

Initiation and First Stage

When the Japanese government authorized the *New History Textbook* published by Fusōsha in 2001, criticisms arose both within and outside of Japan. The textbook was authored by the right-wing Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform, which had been controversial for promoting historical revisionism that eulogized Japanese aggression and downplayed Japan's war crimes during World War II.[3] Not only did leftists in Japan severely criticize the textbook for distorting history, but the governments of

[3] For further analysis on the relations between historical revisionism and neonationalism in contemporary Japan, see Wang (2010).

China and Korea also expressed their grave discontent. To counter this tide of historical revisionism upheld by right-wingers in Japan, enthusiastic activists from Japan, Korea, and China contacted each other to discuss how the "historical perception problem" could be settled and how history should be understood correctly. In March 2002, the first Historical Perception and East Asian Peace Forum (referred to hereafter as the Peace Forum) was held in Nanjing, China. During the forum, Tawara Yoshifumi and Arai Shinichi from Japan proposed to write a common history textbook for the children in the three countries in order to "let the next generations understand history correctly." The proposal obtained support from Chinese and Korean participants, and it was soon decided that a committee composed of members from the three countries be organized to fulfill the task.

The project started in August 2002 when the first meeting was held in Seoul. A committee, later named the China-Japan-Korea Common History Text Tri-National Committee, was formed by three teams from the respective countries. In terms of its constitution, each team had its own characteristics. The Korea team was based on a new association named the Asia Peace and History Education Network, established expressly for this purpose. The term *network* was used to indicate that the organization was an association of several preexisting civil groups that had been active in related activities in Korea. Because the organization was established ad hoc, the main members of the Korean team all belonged to this organization, which consisted of university professors, high school teachers, social movement activists, and concerned citizens.

The Japanese team mainly hinged on an organization called Children and Textbooks Japan Network 21, which was founded in 1998 to tackle the history textbook problem in Japan. The leader, Tawara Yoshifumi, has been rather active both domestically and internationally. As one of the initiators of this joint history project, he was the pivotal person to organize a group of experienced university professors, school teachers, and graduate students to form the Japanese team. Similar to Korea, a new organization named the Asian Network for History Education, Japan was founded in 2002.

In contrast, there was no organization behind the Chinese team. Because it was virtually impossible to organize civic associations in China due to its particular political situation, members of the Chinese team participated in the project as individuals through personal networks. There were basically two groups, one concentrated in Beijing and Harbin in the north and the other in Shanghai and Nanjing in the south. While some members of these groups were researchers in official institutes such as the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), others were government-appointed administrators of war memorial museums that carried political overtones. Thus, compared with its Japanese and Korean counterparts, which both consisted of civic participants from NGOs, the Chinese team was rather more "official" than "civic," even though its

members participated in the project voluntarily as individuals. As will be noted later, such a background gave rise to doubts and criticisms at a later time.

At first, the goal was straightforward and limited: to rectify the history distorted by the right-wing textbooks in Japan. Although the ideal was to write a common history textbook, it was made clear from the outset that the final product could at best constitute "supplementary teaching materials" due to institutional constraints in practice. In all three countries, textbooks must be written according to the official curricular guidelines and authorized by the state. Because the three countries each had their own curricular guidelines that differed greatly from one another, it was impossible to write a common textbook that could obtain official authorization in all three. As a result, the common text could serve as supplementary teaching material to be voluntarily adopted by instructors. In addition, the committee also decided that such a text should be sold as a trade book for the general public.

With this aim in mind, the committee set out to discuss what was to be written and how to write it. However, the participants soon discovered that the work ahead was much more difficult than they had expected. The first problem they had to wrestle with was the outline of the book. Initially, each team brought up its own outline and then tried to work out a new one that could be accepted by all the three. However, because the outlines differed greatly from one another, it turned out to be more difficult than they had imagined. Even though the participants had the common goal to "rectify" history, they met together only to find that there was more discord than consensus. The differences in the views of history (史觀) among the three nations were evidently exposed.

It took one and a half years for the committee to finalize the table of contents. Once the outline was fixed, the committee picked up the pace to write the main text. Eventually, after twelve intensive meetings, accompanied by numerous emails, the final product, titled, *A History to Open the Future* (referred to hereafter as *Open the Future*), was published almost simultaneously in the three countries in May/June 2005. The deliberately chosen title bears rich symbolic meanings that are both self-evident and profound: to have a common future, people must have a common history first. Since it was the very first time such an undertaking – to write a common history text through collaboration from three nations – was accomplished in East Asia, the publication received wide publicity when it came out. It was reported and discussed in newspapers, magazines, and TV programs and on the Internet in all three countries, albeit to varying degrees. In Korea, President Roh Moo-hyun, who actively promoted reconciliation in Northeast Asia (including improving the relations between North and South Korea), thought highly of the book and delivered a special speech through video at the new book conference. It is also noteworthy that the publisher of the Korean version, *Hankyoreh* (literally meaning "the Korean Nation"), is one of the major newspapers in Korea, which also helped to promote the book in Korean society.

The timing of publication was by no means accidental. In fact, the committee chose 2005 to publish the book because it marked the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War II, and it was considered that the publication of a jointly written history would bear strong symbolic meanings for the reconciliation in the region. Ironically, the year 2005 witnessed turbulence in Japan-Korea and Japan-China bilateral relations. Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro, who had insisted on visiting the Yasukuni Shrine since his inauguration in 2001, incurred waves of criticism from China and Korea. What is more, the revision of the right-wing Fusōsha history textbook was authorized, once again, by the Japanese government in April 2005. In response, large-scale anti-Japan protests burst out in major Chinese cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Chongqing.

The tense, rather than peaceful, atmosphere in East Asia at the time unwittingly stimulated sales of the book, especially in China. Because the goal of *Open the Future* was originally to rectify the history distorted by the Fusōsha textbook, and because the revision of the latter was authorized in 2005 shortly before the book was published, publication of the book was welcomed as a timely response to Japanese rightists. The book has sold well and has been reprinted in all three countries. Within just two years of publication, an estimated 270,000 copies have been published, most of which have been sold.

Despite its positive publicity, however, the book received quite some criticism as well. The most common criticism was that it was nothing more than a juxtaposition of three national histories rather than a general history of East Asia with an integrated framework. Worse yet, these national histories were considered to be rather nationalistic; some critiques sarcastically characterized it as "the tale of three kingdoms" (三國志). It was also found that the three versions differed from one another in some details, ostensibly for nationalistic reasons (Shimokawa 2005). This implied that not only was there a lack of consensus among the writers of the three nations, but nationalism also had been reinforced rather than transcended in such a collective project.

Meanwhile, academics, historians in particular, tended to be more critical of the book for several reasons.[4] To begin with, since *Open the Future* was written as a textbook-like teaching resource, it was not regarded as a serious academic piece that deserved scholarly scrutiny. When professional historians took it seriously and examined the contents, they found many points of dissatisfaction. The state of the art in historical research, it was claimed, was not reflected in the textbook; instead, many parts simply reiterated or even reinforced narratives from certain nationalist ideologies.[5] Besides, the "official" background of the Chinese participants also incurred criticism that questioned the credibility of the text.

[4] There were, however, variations in the academic reception of the book among the three countries.

[5] For instance, the number of victims in the Nanjing Massacre and the cause of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident are typical examples under dispute. See the discussions later.

The Second Stage and Onward

The issue of publishing a second and even a third book emerged in the agenda during the writing of *Open the Future*. It became increasingly clear to the participants that there existed profound disagreements among the members that could not be easily resolved in such a concise book. The three teams gradually formed a consensus that a second and even a third stage would be needed.

At the Peace Forum held in Kyoto in November 2006, more than one year after the first book was published, delegates from the three countries decided to start the second stage of the project. They used the term *new book* to refer to the intended product. In terms of the topics covered and issues discussed, this project went much deeper and broader than the first stage. Partly in response to the criticisms that *Open the Future* had received from the outside, and partly to resolve the problems they had encountered during the previous stage from the inside, the committee decided that the new book should contain two separate volumes: the first volume would deal with the changes and transformations of the international order in East Asia in chronological order, whereas the second volume would be organized by themes to discuss cross-border topics such as migration, urbanization, railroads, mass media, and war memories. This design was meant to tear down the "national frames of narrative" that had received harsh criticism after the publication of *Open the Future*.

For the new task ahead, the committee made the necessary adjustments in members and modes of collaboration. After fourteen meetings, the second book was published in 2012 (in Korea and Japan) and 2013 (in China). There were slight differences in the titles. The Chinese version was titled, *A Modern History of East Asia Beyond the Boundaries*; the first volume bore the subtitle, *The Transformation of the International Order*, whereas the second volume was titled, *Institutions, People, Society*. The titles of the Korean and Japanese versions were similar, which read *New Modern History of East Asia*, with the subtitles, *Reading History from the Change of International Relations* and *Reading History from Themes Regarding People and Interchanges*, respectively.

In contrast to the first book, the second was better received by academics but attained poor publicity for several reasons. First, because it was the second publication of the project, the sense of novelty had declined sharply. Moreover, the political atmosphere at that time was not favorable to the spirit behind the book. In Korea, the conservative party had resumed power in 2008, while President Lee Myung-bak went to Dokdo/Takeshima, an islet under dispute between Korea and Japan, to claim sovereignty in 2012. Later in the same year, conservative Abe Shinzo stepped up as the Prime Minister of Japan, while the political strongman Xi Jinping became the leader of China. With such changes, nationalism in all three countries rose, and the spirit behind the second book, which emphasized mutual understanding and reconciliation across national

boundaries, ran against the tide. Under such circumstances, it tended to be ignored, if not unwelcome.

There was an even more serious problem behind the publication of the second book. According to mutual understanding, the final text in the three versions should have been identical, approved by the committee, and published simultaneously in the three countries. However, this condition was violated in the second stage. The Korean version was published before the Japanese and Chinese ones, and it contained a chapter over which there had been no consensus. There were major disagreements regarding the contents of chapter 8, "War and People," written by two Korean scholars. This chapter elaborated how ordinary people were mobilized and victimized during World War II and how ruptured war memories and conflicting interpretations of history emerged during the postwar period. The Chinese and Japanese teams had strongly disagreed with some of contents, but the Korean scholars who wrote the chapter did not revise the manuscript accordingly. Worse yet, the Korean team needed to publish the book by May 2012; otherwise, it would lose the funding it had received. Under time pressure, the Korean team decided to publish without revising the chapter. Such a decision deeply upset the other two teams. To remedy the problem, the Chinese and Japanese teams wrote dissenting opinions, which were then attached to the eighth chapter when the book was published in China and Japan. As a result, the Chinese and Japanese versions were different from the Korean one. The Korean team promised to include these dissenting sections in their second edition as a means of compensation.

The dispute over this chapter is by no means accidental. Rather, it reflects the sheer fact that even though the committee had been working together for nearly a decade, there were still rifts and cleavages that could not be easily overcome. Although some of the participants felt frustrated, fatigued, or even hurt, the committee decided to move on to the third stage, which aimed to face these problems head-on by probing more deeply into the differences and disagreements among the members. The third stage started in 2014 and is currently underway.

HISTORICAL DIALOGUE AND ITS RELEVANCE TO CST

To analyze this project in light of CST, three key issues are explored: civil repair, solidarity, and the emergence of the transnational civil sphere. The order of discussion is by no means arbitrary; rather, it reflects the logical and temporal orders of the project's actualization. In conventional CST, the civil sphere (most of the time given) is presumed before speaking about solidarity and civil repair. In this case, however, the order is reversed: it is the intention of reconciliation that creates the possibility for civil repair, followed by solidarity that is gradually developed through historical dialogue, and finally, we can speak of a transnational civil sphere taking shape. Of course, it can be expected that once

solidarity has developed and a transnational civil sphere established, the scope and extent of civil repair can be further expanded, but what is noteworthy in this case is that the willingness for civil repair precedes solidarity and actualization of the civil sphere.

Civil Repair beyond National Boundaries: Creating Communicative Institutions and Carrier Groups

In Alexander's (2006) original formulation, civil repair takes place *within* the existing civil sphere, which, in the modern era, corresponds roughly to the boundaries created by nation-states. In this case, however, civil repair remedies the ruptures and chasms created by (nation) states, achieved outside the existing civil sphere. In a later elaboration, Alexander (2012: 141) notes that civil repair on a global scale is emergent, but "the celebrations were premature, ignoring, once again, the contradictory character of civil society in its national form." To view the joint history project in this light, I examine how civil repair beyond national boundaries occurs and the extent to which it can overcome the "contradictory character of civil society in its national form."

As pointed out earlier, there is currently deeply rooted animosity and resentment among people in East Asia, but formal reconciliation on the state level appears to be quite impractical. Under such circumstances, civil repair through nonstate actors seems to be a more feasible option. The joint history project can be seen as one of the collective efforts to seek cross-border civil repair by nonstate actors on the cross-national or transnational level. Prior to this project, there had been similar efforts (most of which were bilateral between Japan and Korea) to address historical perception problems in East Asia. However, the current project stands out because it has a longer duration, a broader scope (involving trilateral partners), and greater ambitions. In fact, the project has been part of a larger undertaking that contains three parts: supplementary teaching materials, a peace forum, and a summer camp.[6] In fact, the joint history project was born out of the first Peace Forum in Nanjing in 2002. The Peace Forum continues to be held annually, under the consensus that the three countries should take turns hosting the forum. It was also decided that in order to let the youth in the three countries have opportunities to understand each other and to learn history from different perspectives, there should be a tri-national historical perception summer camp for adolescents. Again, the three countries take

[6] Indeed, these features – a longer duration, a larger scope, and bigger ambitions – have been largely overlooked in existing literatures. For instance, the recent handbook edited by Kim (2016), which has made noticeable contributions to the field by providing a useful guide to the issues concerning memory and reconciliation in East Asia, fails to recognize the importance of this project. While the handbook limits its attention to bilateral reconciliation, this tri-national joint history project has been merely mentioned passingly in at most three places in the entire volume.

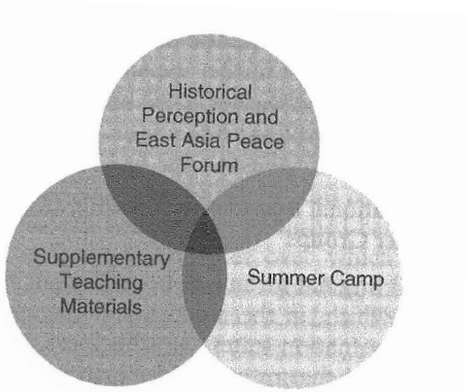

FIGURE 12.1 Three pillars of communicative institutions in historical dialogue

turns hosting the summer camp, which is held in a different country than the Peace Forum.

Put together, these three types of activities create a kind of communicative institution that consists of three pillars. As shown in Figure 12.1, each of them overlaps with the other two in the sense that some of the participants and organizations are the same. These three pillars can be said to be a "new mode of communication" in the civil sphere. In Alexander's conceptualization, communicative institutions include public opinion, mass media, polls, and associations. However, in this case we encounter a new mode of communication, constituted by the three pillars of the Peace Forum, supplementary teaching materials, and summer camps, which functions as "public pedagogy," so to speak, to create the foundation for an emerging (transnational) civil sphere. Indeed, public pedagogy through these communicative institutions spreads the seeds of new values and new solidarity that is yet to be fostered and developed, and such a "seeding" may bear fruit eventually – a point to be discussed in a later section.

These undertakings of historical dialogue have been characterized by the participants as a "quaternity" that combines four dimensions: research, education, discourse, and movement (Saito 2008: 14). To put it in Weberian terms, the core actors engaged in historical dialogue represent *carrier groups*. However, the collaboration among these carrier groups, who come from different countries, has been by no means easy because their initial contact was anything but smooth. Although they share the goal of writing a joint history and solving the historical perception problem, their common ground for collaboration was shallow and narrow at the very beginning. Members from different teams barely knew each other before they participated in the project, and their views on history differed greatly. In terms of bilateral exchange among the three teams, while there had been some interaction between Japan and Korea, as well as between Japan and China, prior to this, China and Korea were quite unfamiliar with each other. Many Chinese participants admitted that they had had no contact with Koreans before they participated in this project.

In the early phase, many participants were skeptical about the feasibility of the project. As pointed out earlier, although they had a common enemy (namely Japanese right-wingers), they convened only to realize that there were profound differences among themselves that were no easier to overcome. There were certainly some binary codes (leftist/rightist, peace/war, civil/anticivil) that brought these groups together because they believed that they stood on the same side. However, binary codes alone did not necessarily guarantee the ground for solidarity, and there were other binary codes that divided them (see below). After the first few rounds of meetings, some of the participants speculated that it was almost impossible to carry out such a project and were ready to give up.

How did such a combination of people – carrier groups from varying backgrounds divided by binary codes among different national civil spheres – overcome the initial obstacles to accomplish the task? To answer this, we need to understand the microprocess through which they interacted with each other to develop a new solidarity.

The Way to Solidarity: Binary Codes and Feelings Restructured

Because the differences between the participants' views were more profound than expected, throughout the process of the joint project, confrontations, debates, and even quarrels were not unusual. And because Japan has been identified as the "invader" during the pre–World War II period, it is quite reasonable to expect that the participants from China and Korea would be most critical of their Japanese counterparts and that acute conflicts or disagreements would emerge between Japan and the other two teams. However, far from many participants' expectations, the most severe conflicts during the first stage burst out between China and Korea.

The nature of these conflicts can be attributed to contradictory views of history. For instance, the interpretation of the relations between China and Korea in the premodern era was one of the contested issues. While Chinese members regarded Korea as no more than a subordinate state under the Chinese tributary system during the imperial period, Korean members considered it equivalent to other states, including China. Thus the intervention of the Qing court in the Korean peninsula in the nineteenth century was regarded as a violation of sovereignty to the Korean state. In this light, China was portrayed as no less an invader than Japan. Such a view was totally unacceptable to the Chinese participants; as a consequence, fierce quarrels broke out.[7]

[7] Another backdrop that fueled the disputes between the Chinese and the Korean teams was the so-called Northeast Project, a research project sponsored and endorsed by the Chinese government

TABLE 12.1 *Frames of War into Binary Codes*

Civil	Anticivil
Grievable	Nongrievable
We	Others
Friends	Enemies
Victims	Victimizers
Trustworthy	Untrustworthy
Just	Unjust
Good	Evil
Sacred	Profane

Different views result from different frames of reference. In the case of nationalism, such frames of reference are usually related to what Judith Butler (2009) calls "frames of war," which distinguish between the "grievable" and the "nongrievable" (hence the distinction between insiders/outsiders, we/others, etc.) in invoking a national subject. Such frames of war then constitute part of the fundamental binary codes in the civil sphere, which, in turn, provide rich symbolic elements for different meanings and sometimes conflicting interpretations of the past in the name of national history.[8] The relations between frames of war and binary codes are schematically shown in Table 12.1.

In a typical Chinese narrative of national history, for instance, Chinese people (and China as a whole) are portrayed as victims of imperialist invasion, whereas Japan is regarded as the representative of invaders. In the binary scheme in Table 12.1, China/Chinese (= grievable = victims = we = trustworthy = just = good) is located on the left (sacred) side, whereas Japan/Japanese (= nongrievable = victimizer = other = untrustworthy = unjust = evil) is on the right (profane) side. Such binary codes organize the narratives of national history seen in textbooks and popular culture, including films and TV dramas. A similar binary scheme can be found in Korea. However, in Japan, the situation is reversed. Japan/Japanese is on the left (sacred) side, whereas other nations exist on the right (profane) side.[9]

that aims to "restore historical facts" regarding the history and current state of the Chinese northeast borderland. Since it involved controversial interpretations of history in the Korean peninsula (e.g., treating the history of Goguryeo as part of Chinese history), it sparked widespread outrage in South Korea.

[8] For the relations among the binary codes of "frames of war," nationalism, and history, see Wang (2014b).

[9] It is noteworthy that, although Japan has often been portrayed as a victimizer in the region by China and Korea, national identity in postwar Japan has also been built on the sense of victimhood in the sense that Japanese as a whole are the victims of war (especially of atomic bombs). Although Japan does not usually view China and Korea as "victimizers," a sense of anti-China and anti-Korea has become widespread in recent years.

Thus each national civil society has its binary codes, but these binary codes easily collide head-on in the cross-national or transnational sphere because they tend to view each other as standing on the opposite side in their own scheme.

In addition to mutually colliding binary codes, there exist other barriers to communication. The use of language, for instance, is worth mentioning. Although a number of the participants are bilingual, none can master all three languages, and most of the participants can speak their own mother tongue only. Interpretation thus became essential for mutual understanding, which made the task even more tedious. The meetings took three times as long, for each statement had to be repeated twice: after the original speaker made a statement, it had to be interpreted into the other two languages in turn. With rare exceptions, most interpreters could deal with only two languages, so their interpretations were based on the interpretations by other interpreters if the original statement was not made in a language they could handle. This increases the risk of misinterpretation, and hence miscommunication and misunderstanding, during the discussion.

Despite these obstacles, participants have been able to overcome some of their disagreements through debate, negotiation, and compromise. Dialogues have helped to generate new ideas, but this was achieved not only through rational deliberation but also through feelings for others. This is where the civil sphere distinguishes itself from the Habermasian public sphere, which is often conceptualized as an idealized sphere in which people engage in rational deliberations through ideal speech-acts. However, rational deliberation cannot take place in a sociocultural vacuum; instead, social milieus and cultural meanings such as expressive symbols, binary codes, and feelings for others play a key role when people try to communicate with each other and establish solidarity.

During this process, the role of gender should not be overlooked. Most participants in the project were men, but women sometimes played crucial roles.[10] When a major disagreement emerged, a female Korean scholar would often jump in to mediate conflicting opinions. While she was good at summarizing different opinions and bringing up her eclectic alternative as a solution, her remarks could also mitigate the tense atmosphere and ease strained emotions.[11]

[10] Regarding gender constitution, the Japanese team considers itself as the most balanced, as the Korean team has only one female member, while the Chinese team is comprised of predominately men.

[11] It is, of course, not my intention here to advance a reverse sexist argument by essentializing gender differences, nor do I suggest that there is a "traditionalist framework" in which men accept the women's role as soothers to mediate male's fights. However, it is undeniable that modern social, political, economic, and cultural institutions have all been built on a rather patriarchal, male-centered masculine tradition, and it is through self-aware struggles by women that such modern institutions, including those in the civil sphere, have gradually become more gender balanced (or gender indifferent, as it were).

However, frictions and disputes were not always settled at the table during the meetings. After each and every meeting, there would be a dinner banquet, often featuring special local cuisines, with which the host team treated their guests to show their hospitality. This was a mutual understanding based on the principle of fairness and reciprocity. In return, the guest teams would bring special wines or liquors representative of their own countries. Drinking and toasting at the banquet were important rituals in which the friction and discord during the meeting were dissolved, at least momentarily. Here the barrier of language did not necessarily hinder the interaction; rather, it may have become a factor that stimulated and facilitated interpersonal exchange. Words were less important in such a situation. Gestures, facial expressions, and body language played a much more important role to show one's sincerity. Those who felt that they might have had hard feelings during the meeting would often toast each other during the banquet. Besides, singing at the banquet may have further enhanced their feelings for each other. Because most participants identify as leftists, sometimes they sang *L'Internationale* together to show solidarity. They sang in the lyrics translated into their own languages, but the same melody wove them together into a chorus of a peculiar kind.[12]

More often than not, there were also postbanquet gatherings (called *nijikai* in Japanese, literally "the second party"), which were informal settings where people from different countries mixed together more easily. *Nijikai* can be said to be part of the drinking culture in Japan and Korea, so most of the time the initiators were Korean or Japanese participants. Only a small number of participants would go for the second party, making it a much smaller gathering in which closer interactions could take place and deeper communication could be facilitated. In such a situation, not only were friendship and comradeship further cultivated, but sometimes new ideas, proposals, or solutions were also developed.

It was through eating, drinking, and singing, along with body language, that the barriers of communication gradually melted down. Feelings for others were restructured, while a sense of comradeship or fellowship grew bit by bit. Looking back, most participants tended to have a positive attitude toward the quarrels and fights that they had gone through.[13] A Chinese participant quoted an old Chinese saying: "Friends are often made after a fight." The disagreements did not disappear, but the participants had learned how to agree to disagree. Many participants admitted that they had never seen things from a perspective other than their own. However, through participating in the

[12] *L'Internationale* was mainly sung at the banquet after the Peace Forum, not the meetings of the joint history project, but most of the time, project members were also attendees of the Peace Forum.

[13] This has been confirmed by the majority of the informants I have contacted. There are, of course, a few notable exceptions. Some feel that their feelings have been deeply hurt, while a few others remain antipathetic toward the individuals with whom they have had a fight.

dialogue, they gradually learned to see and consider things from others' perspectives. Almost all the participants acknowledged that they had learned a lot through the process, and they all cherished the experience.

One may well argue that these informal rituals of eating, drinking, and singing only help to foster friendship, not solidarity. But we should not forget that prior to this project, these three groups of people could have seen each other as potential foes according to the binary codes they carry from their own societies. Only when foes become friends can we talk about solidarity. All forms of civil repair require the process of "becoming friends" on the interactional level (albeit to varying degrees), and this realization is what this project contributes to CST.

Not surprisingly, there was little, if any, consciousness of an East Asian solidarity at the very beginning. Solidarity has been created where it did not previously exist. As with other cases, such a sense of solidarity was supposedly based on binary codes: initially, these codes were anti (Japanese) right wing/right wing or peace/war. However, within the project members themselves, there were binary codes such as invader/invaded, victimizer/victims, and colonizer/colonized that divided members from different countries. The divisions created by these binary codes needed to be overcome before new solidarity could be developed. To this end, restructured feelings for others have helped to dissolve such divisions. The dissolution of divisions is a subtle process that can be observed during the discussions in the meetings. Participants may give up what they insisted on during yesterday's meeting or become more willing to listen to others' opinions by momentarily putting aside their own, resulting in self-reflection and self-growth that has been made explicit in their books.

Envisioning the Transnational Civil Sphere: Values and Ideals

Finally, let me explore the possibility of what can be called the *transnational civil sphere*. In his later elaborations of the civil sphere, Alexander (2012: 155–65, 2015) points out that it may be cosmopolitan and global. This case provides us with an opportunity to examine how a civil sphere beyond national boundaries can come into being. The civil sphere is about values and institutions, which means that it embodies a normative dimension. We have examined new communicative institutions as well as the interactional level of the civil sphere; now we consider values. How are values in the transnational civil sphere different from those in the national civil spheres?

Ideally, a transnational civil sphere exists above national societies, which ought to transcend or transgress national frames. Thus conceived, the transnational distinguishes itself from the international in that it emphasizes not merely the interrelations between nation-states and societies; rather, it

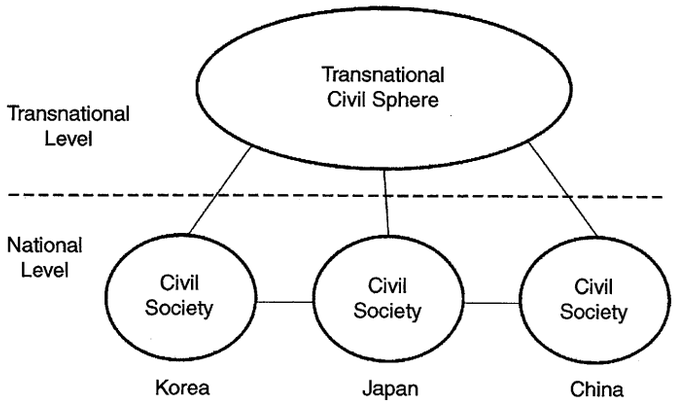

FIGURE 12.2 An ideal-typical model of the transnational civil sphere

represents a loosely integrated sphere at a higher level. An ideal-typical model is shown in Figure 12.2.[14]

Based on this model, the initiative of the common history project was not originally transnational. Rather, with perhaps the exception of Japan, it was quite national on both the Chinese and Korean sides, especially at the very beginning. Although nationalism was not openly advocated, the original goal of "fighting Japanese right-wingers" easily resonated with Chinese and Korean nationalisms. This explains why the first book was criticized for being nothing more than the juxtaposition of three national histories. In response to such criticism, however, the committee made significant efforts to "write history beyond national boundaries" in the second book. Indeed, even in the first book, they tried to draw a picture of a brighter future by promoting certain values above the nation. It is worthwhile to examine them at some length.

In the Preface of *Open the Future*, the committee makes the background, motivations, and goals of the project rather clear:

East Asia's history during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was marred by invasions, war, the suppression of human rights, and various other scars that cannot simply be washed away. At the same time, we should also add that East Asia's past is not all dark memories, for there is also a long tradition of exchange and friendship, and there are people today who are actively reaching across national boundaries in the effort to create a brighter future for the region. By *reflecting on the mistakes of the past* and carrying

[14] This model, of course, shows only an ideal-typical situation. However, it also suggests that the degree of development of civil society in each nation, or whether participants are actually from civil society, will certainly affect the formation and the functioning of the transnational civil sphere. For the specific case of concern here, this remains to be an empirical question to be examined in a separate study.

forward the positive aspects of bygone eras, we can bring into being a peaceful and bright future for this beautiful planet.

What lessons can history teach us that will help us create an East Asia in which *peace and democracy prevail and human rights are guaranteed*? Bear this question in mind as you read this book. (CJSKCHTTC [2005]2015: 451–57, italics added)

Two things are worth noticing here. First, "reflecting on the mistakes of the past" is regarded as important, although the question of "whose mistakes" has never been raised. Second, peace, democracy, and human rights are specified as primary values that the project intends to promote. Toward the end of the Preface, reconciliation as a theme emerges:

Our three countries are deeply and inescapably interconnected both geographically and historically. This book was prepared, in this era of the encroaching "global village," in the hope that it will allow our respective neighboring countries' histories and our mutual interdependence to be better understood. *It is our hope that you, the young people of our three countries, will work together to reconcile the differences that generations up to the present have been unable to reconcile.* The book covers the modern histories of the three countries as completely as possible and for that reason, there may be parts that are difficult to follow. But do not be discouraged! It is precisely your desire to understand one another that will help open up a brighter future for East Asia and the world. (CJSKCHTTC [2005]2015: 460–64, italics added)

The first book does not specify what "a brighter future" is, but the second one does. In the Preface of the second book, the committee, drawing on successful examples in Europe (e.g., between Germany and France or Germany and Poland), is quite self-reflexive about their own undertaking:

Since 2002, what has driven us to move forward is the common consciousness to "build a peaceful East Asia Community."

Different from the situation in which we launched our project at the turn of the century, there have been rather active discussions surrounding the "East Asian Community" in the three countries. *We hope that this book can help to resolve the disputes among the three nations and build peace. This is the only way for future development through which people in East Asia can truly communicate, share cultures, and exchange thoughts with each other.* (CJSKCHTTC 2013: 3, italics added)

This is the first time the theme of an East Asian Community is mentioned, and it reemerges in the final chapter, which is titled, "Overcoming the Past, Facing the Future." Here the background and rationale of the project are further elaborated:

"The common history" that we maintain is not to unify all understandings into one. Only through dialogue can we understand the reality that is different from our living environment and educational background, as well as why there have been different angles for viewing history. *In order to transcend that kind of difference, we cannot ask others to become identical to us. What we can do is only to adjust our own angles, on the one hand, while requesting a response from others, on the other hand.* Of course, we do not grant concession, compromise, or eclecticism without

principle; rather, based on *mutual recognition of differences*, we hope *to build a trust relationship* to carry on our research and discussion. Whenever there is opposition or inconsistence among us, we must prepare for repeated discussions and statements of [different] opinions. (CJSKCHTTC 2013: 331–32, italics added)

To overcome the differences in historical perception, it is not their goal to achieve a unified understanding of history but rather mutual recognition of differences. But to recognize the differences in each other is not enough; it is important to transcend oneself. One must learn to know one's own limits by learning from others via dialogue. While reflecting on one's past is often criticized by Japanese right-wingers as "masochistic," the new book tries to respond to such criticism:

Making efforts to transcend oneself to understand history is by no means what some have criticized as "masochistic." On the contrary, *it is much needed to understand the insufficiency of knowledge in oneself by actively engaging in dialogue with others*. Having dialogue with others, as well as with past history, may precisely be the mark of self-growth. *The process of human growth is to understand the historical experience of others through dialogue, that is, to achieve common historical understandings*. (CJSKCHTTC 2013: 332–33, italics added)

Here the means and methods toward reconciliation are specified: they are self-reflection, self-growth, and self-transcendence through dialogue. Toward the end, the committee provides a nonstate perspective on a transnational sphere envisioned as an East Asian community:

In the recent years, talks about an East Asian Community have been everywhere, although in many occasions they refer to economic ties at the state level. However, *we must pay attention to angles other than the state's* – namely, observations based on individual experience, for the economy cannot represent everything. The East Asian Community is not something that has already taken shape; it is neither naturally formed nor doomed to be created by somebody at some time. Rather, it is something that keeps changing and adjusting. Different people have different understanding of the concept of "East Asia," which, in fact, has multiplying rather than fixed meanings. In this sense, we bring forth [the concept of] East Asia in order to provide a platform for dialogue that opens the window for the future. (CJSKCHTTC 2013: 333, italics added)

The committee emphasizes the nonstate aspects of the East Asian community, but they are cautious not to provide a fixed, essentialized meaning to East Asia. Instead, they provide an open-ended answer to the inquiry:

What is East Asia? What are the characteristics of the East Asian Community? These are questions people are talking about today. We want to remember history because we think there is an urgent need to face our future through dialogue across national boundaries. For this purpose, we must turn to the history of past wars as well as those problems that remain unsettled today. Enhancing historical understandings beyond national boundaries is the task that people living nowadays must face squarely. (CJSKCHTTC 2013: 333)

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have analyzed the joint history project in light of CST. In so doing, I make theoretical contributions by (1) developing new thinking about the civil sphere by exploring its capacity to transcend wars, nationalist frames, and binary codes among nation-states, (2) identifying new kinds of communicative institutions that carry the function of seeding through public pedagogy by their carrier groups, (3) expanding the concept of civil repair to the remedy of relations among societies divided by the binary codes of nationalist frames, (4) presenting analysis of what can be called the *interactional* level of the civil sphere, and (5) examining empirically the possibility of global/transnational civil spheres. Synthetically put, this study expands the concept of civil repair to the reconciliation among national societies that have been antagonistic to each other due to binary codes (frames of war). In this process, I have located a new level of civil sphere that warrants further attention – that is, the interactional level. In his original formulation, Alexander deals only with the cultural and institutional levels of the civil sphere, but in this case, I find that interactions at the microlevel play a no less important role in the making and functioning of civil spheres. Furthermore, this study points to the possibility of a transnational civil sphere. The formation of the transnational sphere does not presume a preexisting community (as observed in nationally bounded societies), but to make its emergence possible, national-cum-transnational civic associations, along with new modes of communication, are essential.

Empirically speaking, the joint history project demonstrates a form of civil repair occurring beyond national boundaries to remedy the political mistrust and emotional chasms created by nation-states and nationalisms. Contradictory historical narratives and conflicting "structures of feeling" resulting from the binary codes of different national civil societies can be mended, to a certain extent, through historical dialogue. In this process, solidarity across national boundaries has been fostered, although it remains unclear whether universalizing moral principles have been created to sustain a transnational solidarity. It can hardly be denied that such a project is somewhat utopian and "unrealistic" in the sense that it cannot affect *Realpolitik* at the state level. Sarcastic critics may even say that a peaceful East Asian community is nothing more than lip service by hypocritical politicians and naive scholars. However, insofar as this joint history project is concerned, the participants are not simply "pacific idlers" (平和ボケ) who take peace for granted but take no action to build a peaceful world. Rather, they have actively sought to turn their ideals into reality by writing two editions of common history texts, holding an annual Peace Forum, and educating youngsters through a summer camp every year. These communicative institutions spread the seeds of hope for a peaceful future through public pedagogy for mutual understanding and reconciliation. The actual impacts they have had thus far may not be significant, but the seeds they have sown may one day grow into vital trees that bear fruit in the future.

However, there is criticism and skepticism as well. For instance, some may say that national frames have not been really transcended thus far, because people from places such as Taiwan and North Korea have been excluded from the dialogue. Besides, although the ideals and spirit of the project are laudable, many observers are skeptical about the actual influence such a project can have to change the real world. These are questions to be empirically examined in the future.

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