

Review of Content on Marine Culture in Middle School History Textbooks

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Abstract. This study set out to sort out the description content related to marine culture in current middle school history textbooks and analyze its characteristics and problems, thus making proposals on the description directions of new history textbooks. The study proposed several supplementations for the description content as improvement measures.

Keywords: Jang Bo-go, Cheonghaejin, Jeoksan Beophwawon, marine faith, marine culture, Balhae

1 Introduction

History textbooks aim to help the students put together and analyze the facts from the past from the present perspective and develop the right understanding of the characteristics of each society's tradition and culture. History education that is intended to teach the history of a country in elementary and secondary school claims significance in that it helps the students develop and cultivate their abilities to lead a country in the right direction in the future.

The current middle school textbooks were written according to the Revised Curriculum of 2011, which maintains Korean history in elementary school in the general history format and organizes it in an easy manner according to the level of elementary school students, presents Korean history as general history around political and cultural history in middle school, and organizes Korean history as general history around social and economic history, ideological history, and history of diplomatic relations in high school and adjusts its achievement criteria by presenting pre-modern history from prehistory to the former half of Joseon in three units, modern history from the opening of ports to Japanese rule in two units, and contemporary history since Liberation in one unit. Such systemization of history education is based on the total new organization of the history curriculum after discarding the ones from 2007 to 2010.

The following sections will discuss the parts describing Jang Bo-go and the oceans and marine culture during the North and South States Period, which are the topics of the present study, attempting to avoid mentioning the content already discussed

above. They first briefly reviewed the research results related to Jang Bo-go and further whether those results were well reflected in the current textbooks in order to make a contribution to the publication of better textbooks.

2 Analysis of Content on Jang Bo-Go

2.1 Jang Bo-Go's Life and Activities in the Tang Dynasty

Four of the textbooks make no statement about the social class in which he was born, and the rest of them briefly mentioned that he was a "man of humble origin." There should be additional explanations about the subject.

The investigator would like to move to the nationality matter of pirates. There are several theories on the nationality of pirates including Tang, Chinese, Shilla, and Shilla+Japanese people. However, the expression "pirates of Tang" does not seem right because the students can be mistaken to understand that only the people of Tang were active in Yellow Sea, East China Sea or West China Sea if the nationality of pirates during the first half of the 9th century is limited to Tang.

2.2 Analysis of Establishment and Operation of Cheonghaejin

All of the eight kinds of middle school history textbooks allotted a couple of lines to mention the establishment and operation of Cheonghaejin, mainly mentioning that Jang Bo-go set up Cheonghaejin to protect the people from pirates and exercised the progressive spirit of the Shilla people by leading trade around it. Even though it is true that most students have an overall knowledge about Jang Bo-go from biographies, those descriptions seem too brief.

The descriptions of Jang Bo-go in middle school history books are also characterized by mentions in the economic aspect rather than the political aspect. However, there should be a supplementation in the political aspect since he holds important significance in political history as well as economic history.

3 Analysis of Jeoksan Beophwawon and Content of Marine Faith

Only three of the eight kinds of middle school history textbooks described Jeoksan Beophwawon, and only the one published by Good Books Sinsago mentioned the fact that they worshiped Jang Bo-go as "Jeoksandaemyeongshin." However, it should be mentioned in more textbooks when the general public's interest in Jang Bo-go and marine faith has been on the rise thanks to *God of the Sea* by Choi In-ho and the same-titled documentary aired on KBS. History textbooks should allot at least a minimum of space to mention it, considering that there are enough research results on marine faith and that such results will only increase.

4 Analysis of Other Content on Marine Culture

The study first pointed out that all the textbooks wrongly described the settlements of the Shilla people in Tang, where the society of Shilla people consisted of Shillabang, a settlement of Shilla people inside the fortress walls, and Shillachon, a village of Shilla people in agricultural areas outside the walls. Therefore, the current description “Shillabang, a settlement of Shilla people” should be changed to “Shillabang and Shillachon, settlements of Shilla people.”

The textbook published by Jihak mentions “‘Shilla swords’ of Shilla’s export items enjoying huge popularity in Japan, but the currently remaining artifacts in Shosoin suggest that silk fabrics and ceramics like bowls were popular in Japan, which raises a need to replace the term Shilla swords with other ones.

The current Korean history textbooks are noteworthy in that their descriptions about Balhae have made a large increase compared with those of the Seventh Curriculum, which appears to be affected by China’s attempts at distorting history represented by its Northeast Asian Project. It is very significant that almost every textbook mentions the five Dos, the major traffic routes of Balhae. It would have been better if they had decided to mention the Balhae people, especially Balhae’s merchants such as the Shilla people in Tang.

5 Conclusion – In replacement of suggestions on descriptions about Jang Bo-go and marine culture

The study has so far reviewed the results of research on Jang Bo-go and descriptions about him and the marine culture during the North and South States Period in the textbooks. The investigator would wrap up the study by making a few suggestions on descriptions about Jang Bo-go and marine culture:

First, textbooks need to describe his leadership, intrepid spirit, chivalry, pioneering spirit, tolerance for others, international eye, and brotherly love to prohibit the pillage of servants felt throughout his life instead of just simple and historical facts about him.

Second, the descriptions about him are heavily inclined toward the economic aspects. His activities, which had enormous influences on political history during the second half of Shilla, are briefly mentioned in the political history section only in one textbook. As seen with the results of research on him, however, there is no doubt that he was an extremely particular exception in Shilla society dominated by the Golpum system. The growth of the marine force represented by him was one of the major causes behind the collapse of the Golpum system.

Third, textbooks should mention the Shilla and Balhae people active across East Asia at the time. Although some textbooks mention the Shilla people and their society in Tang, there is no mention about the Shilla people and their society in Japan. It is the same with the private marine force or marine force active across the region after his death. It should be reminded that he would not have made it in such a short time without the support of the Shilla people that had struggled and settled down in Tang and Japan.

Finally, there is no mention at all about the development of shipbuilding and navigation as well as marine faith, which was mentioned only in some textbooks. Given that there are some active research results on shipbuilding and navigation in recent years and that the trades of Unified Shilla and Balhae are mentioned, they should definitely be mentioned in the science and technology sections in some way.

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