

COMPLETION REPORT

Research Summary

The purpose of this research project was to offer a comprehensive assessment and cross-cultural analysis of collective memories of World War II in Japan and South Korea. Specifically, the study aimed to investigate how memories of World War II were narrated in the forms of monument, sites of commemoration, and museums. Grounded in a qualitative-critical-cultural scholarship, this research utilized an ethnographically oriented methodology. The researcher located three memorial sites in Japan and Korea—Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, Japan, The Peace Memorial Museum in Hiroshima, Japan, and The National Independence Museum in Seoul, South Korea. By locating these sites for commemorating the nations' past, the researcher investigated how Japan and Korea's war experiences were narrated at these places. The study was conducted based on three research questions. Those were: 1) what would be tensions that exist between national history and "other" collective memories; 2) what is omitted, and/or added in the process of materialization and storization of memory into national and/or international history; and 3) what kind of ethical issues need to be considered, when the war memories/histories in two countries are contradicting.

The results and discussions are three-folds: 1) Yasukuni Shrine in Japan serves as a contested and contradicted site of memory between Japan and Korea; 2) Hiroshima projects a version of Japan's national WWII memory that positions oneself as victims of the atomic bomb; 3) The Independence Hall of Korea as the site of Korean national memory emphasizes the Japanese domination over Korea in its national history. First, Yasukuni Shrine as a memory site warship the dead soldiers as national heroes but denies multiple meanings of deaths in the war. That is, Japan's national story of WWII illuminates a narrative of freedom from Western colonization but ignore its dominative power over other Asian countries. Therefore, while the tradition of commemorative practices at Yasukuni Shrine represents the hope of liberating the wounded souls, the place remains as a controversial site for neighboring countries. Second, the Peace Memorial in Hiroshima represents Japan's national sentiment borne with its atomic bomb experience. The place positions Japanese citizen as victims of this horrific war experience, while the contextual stories of WWII itself was, for the most part, omitted. Finally, the Korean national identity represented through the Independence Hall of Korea placed a strong emphasis on Japanese annexation of Korea. At this Hall, many narrative stories explain Japan as the main suppressor in Korean history, and therefore, there seems to exist a gap between a Japanese and Korean version of World War II story in terms of Japan's position. Concluding the study, the researcher suggested the notions of "embodied memories and situated histories" in an attempt to emphasize the plurality, embodied, and situated nature of collective memories and histories. The "embodied memories and situated histories" teaches us history is never neutral and transparent, transcendental and universal: Rather, each collective memory needs to be considered as mediated and materialized, political and engaging in its nature.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

Han, M. & Lee, J (2012). Collective memories of World War II: A cross-cultural analysis. Presented at the Pacific Asian Communication Association Conference, July 3-5, Seoul, Korea.

(This conference paper was a part of the granted project, and awarded as the best presentation at the PACA conference named, "Culture, Communication, and New Vision in Asia.")

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

Earlier version of this project was submitted to a journal named, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. While our initial submission was declined, the reviewers' comments provided some important feedbacks and offered us insights for further development of our research. After receiving additional feedback from our PACA presentation, we are re-writing our paper again, in order to submit our essay to a journal named, *Text and Performance Quarterly* (expected date for submission: August, 2012).

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)