My professional education began at the Korean History Department of the graduate school at Korea University in 1991. At that school, I got a MA degree in 1995 with the MA thesis titled “Korean National Youth Corps (1946. 10 ~ 1949. 1) and Its Connection with 'Future Korean Leader' Policy by United States Army Military Government in Korea.” And then, I, completing my doctoral course in 1997, and as a candidate for the Ph.D., wrote a dissertation whose topic was 'the politicization of South Korean military right after its institutional organization.' While writing the dissertation in 1998, I decided to study abroad in America for the purpose of articulating my theoretical problematics. In the following year, I began my Ph.D. course at history department of the University of Chicago, and in 2004 I wrote a Ph.D. dissertation whose title was “the Making of the Republic of Korea as a Modern Nation-state”.

I took the position of professor at History Department of Chonnam National University, South Korea, in 2006. From that time on, I have taught the courses as follows: the contemporary history of Korea, the modern history of Korean art, the modern history of Korean historiography, and others. Like this, my teaching career has been developed at the same university for 16 years except one year from 2012 to 2013. In that year, invited as a Fulbright scholar by the US Department of the State, I opened my graduate seminar course on the modern history of Korea at the department of East Asian Language and Culture of the University of California at Los Angeles. This is my teaching career.

Then, now is the time for me to introduce my researches. One of my research topics is concerned with my problematics on history-writing. My research bases itself on the idea that the invisible culture wields its own ultimately decisive power over historical evolution in many ways. Based upon this idea, my research has paid its attentions to the representations of an event which produce the historical meanings of the event, and also the epistemology which works as a template fashioning people's ideas and practices.

My research topic is related to my methodology of meeting with the past, too. My research, laying emphasis upon the methodological significances of language and discourse, applies the method of analyzing language and discourse to my own actual history-writing. Therefore, among Korean historians, I am currently said to be one of most prominent Korean historians in recovering the proper place of language and discourse.

Based upon the problematics and methodologies, I contribute to the developments of historical materials. My professional articles develop, as historical texts, literary materials, including literary travelogues, and even fictitious writings such as SF. Recently, I use painting works as historical materials in order to appreciate contemporary aesthetics, which expresses my idea that aesthetics serves as momentum in constructing modern subjectivity, so that Korean historians need to tackle with the conundrum of aesthetics.

Given this, my biggest concern is to comprehend the making of the Republic of Korea (ROK hereafter) institutionalized on August 15, 1948. With this in mind, I focus on what strategies the South Korean polity employed to represent itself as a modern nation-state in order to secure the recognition from the Korean people. While doing my research, I try to go beyond national historiography ordinarily by contextualizing the global history, and sometimes by focusing on the border between the nation-states as well as the local history.

Also, I try my best to show how post-colonial Korean present and its immediate colonial past interrelated in terms of modernity. What is more, my interrelation of the two temporalities is not a lineary one. That is, I take into fullest account the “bifurcating” effects of the Asian-Pacific War and its results upon the progress of post-War East Asian history and also the post-colonial Korean history. Not only did, according to my researches, the victory of the Allied in the War bring to an end the Age of Empire and bring forth the first establishment of nation-state system in the East Asia. But it rehabilitated Western-oriented modernism vehemently criticized by the elites in the Japanese imperium previously in the era following the Great Depression. These post-War developments constituted the historical context of the contemporary East Asia and also Korea. Given this, my explanation of the post-colonial history of Korea, including the historical event of the inauguration of the ROK, could be said to be crucially different from the common linear narration of the post-colonial history.

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