

New Perspectives on the Study of Korean Diplomatic History: *Diplomatic Documents of Korea (2009-2018)* and *Korea's Foreign Relations and Diplomatic History (2019)*¹

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A History of Research on Korean Diplomatic History

‘Diplomatic history’ refers to the academic study of the history of relations between nations, including treaties, wars, trade, based on the analysis of diplomatic documents.² The historical narrative on international relations can be found in ancient historical texts such as the *Chunqiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals) or the *Peloponnesian War*, but the establishment of diplomatic history as a distinct academic discipline with its own methodology occurred in the late 19th century with Leopold von Ranke. One of Ranke’s major contributions was transforming historical narrative from amateur literature writing into an organized realm of scholarly inquiry conducted by historians equipped with specialized skills in analyzing historical documents, rather than mere literary endeavors. Further-

¹ The portion of this article that describes the history and challenges of research on Korean diplomatic history is a revised and supplemented excerpt from the author’s essay ‘*Professor Kim Yong-gu on Korean Diplomatic History*,’ in *Kim Yong-gu Research Reflections* (Seoul: Yönamsoğa 2021).

² Kelly Boyd, ed, *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writings* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999), 314-315.

more, he established the subject of history as nations and peoples, and advocated for the relative superiority of political diplomacy over all other social domains such as economics, culture, and religion. Consequently, Ranke and his students believed that the truth of history lay in the historical documents hidden within state archives, and thus devoted themselves to the excavation and empirical study of such documents. The traditional understanding that diplomatic history research should fundamentally rely on official archival materials is derived from Ranke.³

The First World War (1914-1918) became a significant turning point in the development of modern diplomatic history by providing the opportunity for the mass publication of diplomatic document collections. In 1917, the newly established Soviet Union shocked European nations by mass-publishing secret treaties and diplomatic documents from the era of Imperial Russia to validate the legitimacy of its regime amidst the First World War. In the aftermath of the war, victorious and vanquished nations alike began systematically compiling and publishing diplomatic documents from the war. This phenomenon expanded to the publication of personal documents of main policy-makers such as their diaries, memoirs, and letters. Diplomatic documents that were once concealed in national secret archives and could only be accessed by a handful of government officials became abundantly available to the public. As a result, diplomatic history research experienced a surge in vitality and rapid development.

This phenomenon also spread to East Asia. In the 1930s, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs began to publish *Kyujyōyakuisan* (The Compilation of Old Treaties) and *Dainihongaikōbunsho* (Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy), a collection of diplomatic documents from the Meiji era. Japanese universities also began earnestly engaging in diplomatic history research and education. For example, the first course on diplomatic history was established in the Faculty of Law at Tokyo Impe-

³ Kim Jong-Hak, "The Ethos of Modern Japanese Positive Historiography and Tabohashi Kiyoshi's Studies on Korean History," *Korean Cultural Studies*, Issue 34, 2018.

rial University in 1904. However, the content of the lectures mainly focused on international legal topics such as treaties and international institutions at that time. In the 1930s, led by Tabohashi Kiyoshi, young emerging scholars like Watanabe Katsumi, Osatake Takeki, and Yano Jin'ichi began to publish new research findings on Korean-Japanese and Sino-Japanese relations based on the positive analysis of diplomatic documents. During the same period, Chinese scholars like Jiang Tingfu, Wang Yunsheng, Shao Xunzheng, and Wang Chenzhong began studying the diplomatic history of Sino-Japanese relations, the Sino-French War, and the Sino-Japanese War.

What of diplomatic history research in Korea? It is easy to imagine that research on Korean diplomatic history conducted by Korean scholars would have been practically difficult under Japanese rule. In 1924, Keijo Imperial University was founded, and in 1928, a course on diplomatic history was established within the university. However, study on diplomatic history at Keijo Imperial University had remained the exclusive research area of Japanese scholars such as Okudaira Takehiko and Tanaka Naokichi.⁴ Furthermore, as evidenced by the fact that Professor Tabohashi Kiyoshi of Keijō Imperial University was commissioned by the *Chōsensihensyūkai* (Chosŏn History Compilation Committee) to oversee the compilation of Volume 6 of *Chosŏn History* [covering the reigns from King Sunjo (r. 1800-1834) to Kojong (r.1864-1907)], these Japanese scholars virtually monopolized Korean historical sources against the backdrop of the administrative power of the Chosŏn Government-General. Even the Kyujanggak and Changsŏgak archives became the exclusive primary sources for Japanese scholars' research, leaving Korean researchers with only the option of citing Japanese research or catching glimpses of them through Japanese publications. On the other hand, there were also studies on Korean diplomatic history conducted by Western scholars, missionaries, and journalists from the Anglo-American academ-

⁴ Ito Shin'ya, *The Diplomatic Arena and Diplomatic History of Modern Japan* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyoronsha, 2011).

ic community. However, those studies heavily relied on their own country's diplomatic sources, presupposing an understanding of Korean diplomacy from the standpoint of Western governments without question.⁵

The liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule in 1945 promised Korean scholars academic freedom, access to domestic materials, and the possibility of discovering new documents. Immediately after the liberation of Korea, major universities in Korea, including Seoul National University (known as Kyōngsōng University from 1945 to 1946), established courses related to diplomatic history, such as 'Diplomatic History,' 'Korean Diplomatic History,' 'Theory of International Organizations,' 'Colonial Theory,' 'East Asian Diplomatic History,' 'Western Diplomatic History,' and 'International Law.'⁶ Additionally, research books on Korean diplomatic history were written by Moon Il-pyung, Lee Ki-beom, Kang Deok-soo, Min Tae-won, Kim Sang-gi, and Yoo Ja-hoo, while textbooks on diplomatic history were authored by Shin Ki-seok, Park Bong-yang, Kang Sang-woon, and Park Kwan-sook. Along with this, many Western books on late Chosŏn dynasty's diplomatic history, including F.A. McKenzie's *Tragedy of Korea* (1908, with the first Korean translation published in 1946), began to be translated.

Research on Korean diplomatic history remained at a standstill due to the Korean War. Above all, research in diplomatic history is a discipline made feasible only under the condition of having extensive diplomatic materials organized and available, more so than in other fields of study. However, the reality within the Korean scholarly community was that not only were diplomatic documents, including unpublished documents from various countries, lacking, but also even those related to Korea were not adequately available.⁷

⁵ Lee Yonghee, ed., "Preface," in *Complete Catalogue of Modern Korean Diplomatic Documents: Foreign Section* (Seoul, National Assembly Library of the Republic of Korea, 1966).

⁶ Son Je-seok, "Trends in Research and University Education in International Politics," *Journal of the Korean Association of International Studies*, Vol. 2, 1967.

⁷ Hong Soon-ho, "Issues and Directions in Diplomatic History Research," *Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 1991.

What troubles us in diplomatic history research today is not only an inevitable aspect of our national history, which has never taken control over the course of our long history, but also the fact that our political and diplomatic studies cannot afford to be overly reliant on foreign sources. Moreover, both political history and international politics, as fundamental components of the broader field of political science, encounter the challenge of being primarily reliant on foreign subjects. This exacerbates the issue of securing essential research materials.⁸

This is a citation from a 1975 article published in a scholarly journal. However, the issue of securing primary sources for diplomatic history, which forms the basis of research in Korean political history or diplomatic history, is still difficult to consider resolved. In other words, identifying and collecting the scattered diplomatic history materials lost during the political and social upheavals of the late periods of the Chosŏn Dynasty (1392-1910), Japanese colonial rule, and the Korean War, and finally organizing them into published collections of Korean diplomatic history documents still remain an unfinished task. In this sense, recent publications such as the *Diplomatic Documents of Korea* and the series *Korea's Foreign Relations and Diplomatic History*, sponsored by the Northeast Asian History Foundation, have provided significant value as pioneering attempts in Korean diplomatic history research and have opened up new in this field. The former is a collection of diplomatic documents, including unpublished ones, both domestic and foreign, concerning Korea's external relations during the modern period (1863-1910), while the latter is a vast historical work that narrates the comprehensive history of Korean diplomacy from ancient to the modern era.

⁸ Park Bong-sik, "Issues and Problems in the Study of International Political History," in *Collected Papers from the Joint Academic Conference of Korean Political Scientists in North America*, 1975, 393.

Diplomatic Documents of Korea, 13 Volumes, 2009-2018

Diplomatic Documents of Korea (hereafter referred to as DDK) is a collection of diplomatic documents from the Chosŏn Dynasty to the Korean Empire (established in 1897), spanning from 1864 to 1910. These documents include policy documents of major powers such as China, Japan, the United Kingdom, Russia, the United States, France, and Germany concerning the Korean Peninsula. As of now, a total of 13 volumes have been published. The practical challenge faced by scholars studying modern Korean history or East Asian international politics and diplomatic history centered around the Korean Peninsula is the difficulty in accessing primary sources. These documents are often dispersed and not systematically organized in each country's archives. In this regard, *DDK*, which includes around 3,400 documents, including approximately 1,000 unpublished ones, can be considered an extremely valuable resource for researchers of modern East Asian and Korean diplomatic history.

The Compilation Committee of *DDK* was chaired by Kim Yong-gu, a renowned scholar in the field of Korean diplomatic history and an honorary professor at Seoul National University. The committee included prominent researchers in political science, diplomatic history, and general history in Korea, such as Kim Jong-Hak, Kim Hyeong-jong (Seoul National University), Kim Heung-soo (Hongik University), Shin Wook-hee (Seoul National University), Woo Cheol-gu (Yeungnam University), Lee Geun-wook (Sogang University), Lee Sang-chan (Seoul National University), Jang In-sung (Seoul National University), Choi Deok-gyu (Northeast Asian History Foundation), Choi Deok-soo (Korea University), Choi Hee-jae (Dankook University), and Hwang Ki-woo (Sungkyunkwan University). They have conducted archival research not only in Korea but also in various foreign countries over several years. For example, they have visited the National Archives I (Washington, DC), National Archives II (College Park, MD), The Library of Congress (Washington, DC), New York Public Library (New York, NY), University of Rochester (Rochester, NY), and Navy Archives (Washington, DC) in the

United States. In France, they accessed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives (Courneuve) and the National Archives (Paris). In Taiwan, they utilized the Institute of Modern History Archives, Guo Tingyi Library, Humanities and Social Sciences Library, Fu Sinian Library, Institute of Historical Language Research Archives, and Palace Museum Archives. In Japan, they explored the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Diplomatic Archives (Tokyo), National Diet Library Constitutional Materials Room (Tokyo), Ministry of Defense Defense Research Institute Library (Tokyo), National Diet Library (Tokyo), and Kyoto University (Kyoto). In the United Kingdom, they visited The National Archives (London), National Maritime Museum (Greenwich), British Library (St. Pancras), and the Department of Manuscripts and University Archives (Cambridge University). Additionally, they accessed the State Archive of the Russian Federation (RGIA) in Russia.

In addition to compiling scattered diplomatic documents related to Korea from various countries' archives into a unified collection, the usefulness of this book lies in converting handwritten 19th-century documents into printed format, making them easily accessible for modern researchers. One of the greatest challenges in dealing with 19th-century diplomatic documents is that reading and interpreting the primary sources is not an easy task for modern scholars. For example, English diplomatic documents written with a typewriter only began to appear after the 1890s. In case of Chinese documents, they follow a unique format called 'liwen' (吏文), while Japanese documents at that time used a classical style called 'Sorobun' (候文), which is different from modern Japanese. Furthermore, most of these documents are written in undecipherable cursive script (草書), rather than in formal script (正書). Therefore, deciphering these diplomatic history documents requires extensive training to read and understand, in addition to knowledge of 'liwen' and 'Sorobun.' German documents are also written in a unique font called 'Fraktur,' so in order to read them, one must become familiar with this typeface itself. Furthermore, the *DDK* adopts a chronological arrangement of documents based on major diplomatic events or topics, using a narrative style compilation method. This is believed to be helpful in understanding the caus-

al relationships between the diplomatic policies of major powers towards the Korean Peninsula within the context of modern Korean political and diplomatic history. Furthermore, it is expected that providing basic information such as sender-receiver, date of dispatch-receipt, document title, etc., for each document by the Compilation Committee will greatly alleviate the efforts of researchers.

As mentioned earlier, the DDK has been published in a total of 13 volumes so far. The topics of each volume and the future publication plans are as follows.

(1) Phase 1

- Volume 1 General Sherman Incident of 1866/ French Campaign against Korea of 1866
- Volume 2 Oppert Incident of 1867/ United States Expedition to Korea of 1871
- Volume 3 Korea-Japan Treaty of 1876
- Volume 4 Korea-United States Treaty of 1882
- Volume 5 Korea-United Kingdom Treaty of 1882, 1883

(2) Phase 2

- Volume 6, 7 Imo Military Revolt of 1882
- Volume 8-11 Kapsin Coup of 1884
- Volume 12, 13 Port Hamilton Incident, 1885-1887

(3) Phase 3 (Future publication plans)

- Volume 14, 15 Park Jong-yang as the First Ambassador to the United States
- Volume 16-19 Sino-Japanese War, 1894-1895
- Volume 20 Triple Intervention of 1895
- Volume 21-23 Assassination of Empress Myōngsōng of 1895 / Korea Royal Refuge at the Russian Legation, 1896-1897
- Volume 24-28 Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905
- Volume 29-32 Loss of National Sovereignty and Diplomacy for Independence

The compilation of the *DDK* was the first attempt by Korean academia to collect modern Korean diplomatic documents scattered both domestically and internationally and compile them into a unified collection of diplomatic documents. There are similar works, including the publication of the *Compilation of Old Korean Treaties* in three volumes (1964-1965) by the National Assembly Library. This compilation includes original texts and translations of treaties concluded with foreign countries from Chosŏn Dynasty to the era of the Korean Empire. Additionally, the National Institute of Korea History published the facsimile edition of the late Chosŏn (1788-1881)'s *Tongmun hwigo* in four volumes in 1978. Furthermore, the Asiatic Research Institute at Korea University, sponsored by the Ford Foundation, has published facsimile editions of the *Old Korean Diplomatic Documents and Supplementary Documents of Old Korean Diplomacy*, which are housed in Kyujanggak at Seoul National University. Apart from these, there are works such as *Anglo-American Diplomatic Materials Relating to Korea, 1866-1886* (Shin Mun Dang, 1982) and *Anglo-American and Chinese Diplomatic Materials Relating to Korea, 1887-1897* (Pusan National University, 1984), compiled by Dr. Park Il-Keun; a 45-volume collection titled *Collection of Korea-UK Diplomatic History Primary Sources* (Tonggwang Publishing, 1997), which includes documents related to Korea from UK-China records (F.O. 405), UK-Japan records (F.O. 410 and 371), and UK-Korea records (F.O. 523) housed in the Public Record Office; and a 50-volume series titled *Comprehensive Collection of Unpublished Secret Korean-Japanese Diplomatic Primary Sources* (Asia Cultural Press, 1995-1996), compiled by Professor Kim Yong-gu, which reproduces documents missing from the Japanese Diplomatic Documents stored in the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. However, these are merely reproductions or reprints of related files and cannot be considered collections of diplomatic documents at an international standard.

The large-scale compilation project of *DDK* has drawn the academic community's attention to diplomatic documents related to Korea that are located overseas. Since then, joint research projects to discover, organize, and translate these documents have significantly increased in the

Korean academic community, with the support of organizations such as the Korea Research Foundation and the Academy of Korean Studies. For instance, notable achievements include *Annotated Old Korean Diplomatic Documents Qing Records* (6 volumes, 2017-present) by the Institute of Incheon Studies at Incheon National University, *German Diplomatic Documents on Korea* (15 volumes, 2019-present) by the Institute of German Culture at Korea University, *Modern East Asian Diplomatic Documents* (27 volumes, 2017) by the Institute of Korean History at Korea University and the Institute of International Affairs at Dongguk University, *Modern Korean-French Diplomatic Materials* (3 volumes, 2018) by the Institute of French Studies at Sungkyunkwan University, and *French Foreign Ministry Materials on the Korean War* (6 volumes, 2021) compiled by the same institute. Along with this, the DDK compilation project has also achieved the unexpected success of nurturing the next generation of scholars. Graduate students who participated as research assistants in this project later submitted twelve doctoral dissertations on the subject of modern Korean diplomatic history.⁹ These scholars are ex-

⁹ Park Joon-hyung, *The Reorganization of Spatial Structures and the Establishment of Colonial Mixed-Residence Spaces in Modern Korea: Focusing on the Legal Status of Qing Nationals and the Qing Concessions* (Tokyo: Waseda University, 2011); Min Hoi-soo, *A Study on the Supervisory Offices of Modern Korean Open Ports and Markets* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 2013); Kim Jong Hak, *The origin of Gaehwa-dang and its secret diplomacy, 1879-1884* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 2015); Han Seung-hoon, *A Study on Joseon's Policy Toward Britain in the Late 19th Century (1874-1895): Establishing and Disrupting the Relationship Between Joseon's Balance Policy and Britain's Intervention Policy* (Seoul: Korea University, 2015); Park Han-min, *A Study on the Establishment and Operation of the Japan-Korea Treaty System (1876-1894)* (Seoul: Korea University, 2017); Jo Guk, *The Reality of 'Opened Japan' During the Concession Era (1859-1899) and the 'Foreigners': Focusing on the Status and Management Issues of Qing Residents* (Tokyo: Waseda University, 2017); Han Bo-ram, *A Study on the Reform Forces in the Early Reign of King Kojong* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 2019); Lee Kyung-mi, *National Discourse in Colonial Korea Under Imperial Japan: The Development of Non-Sovereign Subjectivity* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 2019); Jin Ching, *The Joseon Maritime Customs and the Reforms of H. F. Merrill in the 1880s* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 2020); Cho Byung-sik, *A Study on the Tianjin Judicial Office During the Late Qing Dynasty's New Policies Period* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 2021); Bae Min-jae, *Western Perceptions of Korea During the Modern Transition: Focusing on the Knowledge Classification in Literature Lists from the 18th to Early 20th Century* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 2021); Han Dong-hoon, *Mutual Perceptions and Diplomatic Policies Between Joseon and Russia in the Late 19th Century* (Seoul: Korea University, 2022).

pected to play leading roles in the future research of Korean diplomatic history.

The first phase (2007-2010) of the *DDK* compilation project was supported by the Northeast Asian History Foundation, and the second phase (2011-2015) was carried out with financial support from the Basic Research Infrastructure Project of the Korea Research Foundation. However, one regrettable aspect of the *Modern Korean Diplomatic Documents* project is that the follow-up work planned after volume 13, 'The Kōmundo Incident,' was discontinued. I hope that the *Modern Korean Diplomatic Documents* Project will resume promptly, and that diplomatic documents from both domestic and international sources, spanning from the Sino-Japanese War to the forced annexation of Korea by Japanese Imperial power, will be unearthed, thereby fully illuminating the entirety of modern Korean diplomatic history. The documents from volumes 1 to 5 of the *DDK*, sponsored by the Northeast Asian History Foundation, can be viewed with brief summaries through the Northeast Asian History Net (<http://contents.nahf.or.kr>).

***Korea's Foreign Relations and Diplomatic History* (4 Volumes of the Pre-modern Period, 3 Volumes of the Modern Period, 2019)**

In July 2015, the Northeast Asian History Foundation formulated a plan to compile a comprehensive history of Korea's foreign relations and diplomacy by consolidating the research capabilities of domestic academia. The aim of this project is to elucidate the diplomatic concepts and practices of the Korean people from ancient times to the present, the changing relationships with neighboring countries including China and Japan, and the national identity of the Korean people that has been formed within this context. This project bore fruit with the publication of *Korea's Foreign Relations and Diplomatic History* in 2019, consisting of a total of 7 volumes. *The Korea's Foreign Relations and Diplomatic History* not only provides an extensive volume that is difficult to find in any of the previous works on Korea's foreign relations and diplomatic history, but

also draws attention as a groundbreaking project in Korean academia, with the participation of over 50 renowned Korean political scientists and historians.

Especially, despite dealing with the specialized field of diplomatic history, this book is written in a straightforward manner and with content accessible to undergraduate students. Unlike in the United States, where diplomatic history is considered part of the discipline of history, diplomatic history lacks a firm standing in either political science or history in Korean academia, remaining on the periphery of major disciplines. As a result, *Korea's Foreign Relations and Diplomatic History* was originally developed to address academic shortcomings in Korea and serve as a textbook at a level that enables undergraduate students majoring in international relations and related fields to prepare for careers as diplomats and easily understand Korean diplomatic history.

The Northeast Asian History Foundation publication series, *Korea's Foreign Relations and Diplomatic History*, consists of four volumes on the pre-modern period and three volumes on the modern period. The compilation committee for the pre-modern volumes was chaired by Ku Dae-yeol, an emeritus professor at Ewha Womans University and a renowned scholar in the field of Korean diplomatic history. Professors, Gong Seok-gu from Hanbat National University, Lee Jin-han from Korea University, Han Myeong-gi from Myongji University, and Kim Jong-Hak were responsible for the ancient, Koryŏ Dynasty, Chosŏn Dynasty, and modern periods, respectively. A total of 42 researchers in Korean history participated as authors: 10 for the ancient period, 10 for the Koryŏ dynasty, 10 for the Chosŏn dynasty, and 12 for the modern period.

The critical perspective of this book series is well reflected in the 'General Introduction' written by the chief editor, Professor Ku Dae-yeol. According to the 'General Introduction' by him, diplomatic history is not merely the 'history of diplomacy' but can be considered a repository of knowledge and experience accumulated through major domestic and international events. Furthermore, the reality of international politics does not exist in an abstract state, but is formed through the complex and dynamic international environment and the diplomatic actions that nations

choose and execute within their foreign relations. However, the key concepts used by East Asians today to interpret international political phenomena are nothing but interpretations and conceptualizations based solely on the unique historical experiences of the West. Therefore, *Korea's Foreign Relations and Diplomatic History* signifies the establishment of a new foundation for the advancement of Korean international politics by systematizing the facts and actions that have emerged in Korean history from the perspective of Koreans themselves. Additionally, it is worth noting that among the four volumes of the pre-modern period the ancient, Koryŏ, and Chosŏn volumes are reported to be undergoing English translation in the form of separate summaries for foreign Korean studies researchers.

The modern section covering South Korea's diplomatic history after the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule in 1945 consists of three volumes, covering the 1950s, the 1960s to 1970s, and the 1980s to 1990s. Furthermore, unlike the pre-modern volumes, it adopted a format of case studies, selecting about 30 major diplomatic events in South Korea and conducting in-depth analyses rather than providing a comprehensive historical narrative. According to the 'General Introduction' written by Ha Young-sun, honorary professor at Seoul National University and the chief editor of the modern section, the reasons for the weakness in the study of South Korea's diplomatic history lie in the difficulty of securing relative autonomy for Korean diplomacy in its relations with surrounding major powers, the limited maneuvering space for South Korean diplomacy within the reality of the North-South division, and, finally, unnecessary and consuming debates caused by domestic ideological conflicts, which have hindered diplomacy. In light of this critical reflection, the following principles were established for the compilation:

First, this collaborative research goes beyond traditional, revisionist, anti-revisionist, and recent global historical approaches, utilizing a new analytical framework of the tripartite complex system consisting of the international system, the division system of North and South Korea, and the domestic system. This endeavor seeks to analyze to what extent South Korea's diplomacy is influenced by the international system led by

major powers, how the unique reality of North-South division constrains its diplomacy, and finally, it aims to clarify how changes in the domestic system, such as industrialization and democratization, have impacted modern South Korean diplomacy.

Second, to ensure objectivity and persuasive power, as many primary sources as possible, particularly diplomatic documents, are utilized. Especially extensive reviews of diplomatic documents from socialist countries, including the Soviet Union, that have been publicly available since the post-Cold War era are conducted. Additionally, diplomatic documents from the United States, including those from the Cold War International History Project at the Woodrow Wilson Center, are also compared and analyzed.

Third, rather than describing the development of modern South Korean diplomacy through a textbook format, the approach mainly focuses on selected major diplomatic cases from each period of South Korea for concentrated analysis. This decision stems from the judgment that understanding the characteristics and development process of South Korean diplomacy is more effectively achieved through in-depth analysis of representative diplomatic case studies rather than a comprehensive narrative. Therefore, selected 30 major diplomatic events of South Korea from 1945 to the 1990s are chosen for case studies in the modern section of this book series.

After establishing these principles, the authors presented their research findings at monthly study meetings, conducted mutual reviews, and further developed them through exchanges with the international academic community. In 2016, a first round of discussions was held with Japanese scholars specializing in modern Korean history at the University of Tokyo, followed by a second round of discussions with Chinese scholars specializing in modern Korean history at the Cold War International History Research Center led by Professor Shen Zhihua at East China Normal University. After these discussions, the first draft manuscript was prepared. Subsequently, in 2017, an international workshop was held in Japan with experts from South Korea, Japan, the United States, and China to review the current research trends in South Korean modern dip-

lomatic history within the global academic community. In 2018, after holding discussions with researchers specializing in modern Korean diplomatic history from Japan and China in Tokyo, the final manuscript underwent revisions. As a result, the table of contents for the modern section of *Korea's Foreign Relations and Diplomatic History* is as follows.

(1) Volume 1

- Liberation Politics (Resolutions to the Korean Peninsula Issue by the US and the Soviet Union before and after the liberation of Korea from the Japanese colonial period: Trusteeship and Division Occupation, 1943-1945 / Advance to and Withdrawal from the Korean peninsula by the Soviet Union / Post-Liberation Nation-Building Efforts in Korea and the United States: The Korean Preparatory Committee as Defined in US-Japan Relations) - Lee Wan-beom (The Academy of Korean Studies)
- Korean War (Background History and Outbreak of the Korean War / Involvement and Roles of the US, China, and the Soviet Union during the Korean War / Korean War Armistice Talks and the Establishment of the Post-War Regime) - Jung Byung-joon (Ewha Womans University)

(2) Volume 2

- 1960s Diplomacy (From Northern Expedition to Nation-Building: Early 1960s US Policy and Interaction with Korean Politics / The Vietnam War and Korean Diplomacy / National Security Crisis on the Korean Peninsula in the Late 1960s and the Triangular Relationship between South Korea, North Korea, and the United States) - Ma Sang-yoon (Catholic University of Korea), Hong Seok-ryul (Sungshin Women's University)
- Korea-Japan Relations (Diplomacy of Settlement of Japanese Colonial Legacy under the Lee Seung-man Government: Initiating the Demand for Reparations from Japan / Diplomacy of Reparations towards Japan under the Park Chung-hee Government / Historical Diplomacy towards Japan under the Kim Young-sam Government) - Lee Won-deok (Kookmin University)

(3) Volume 3

- 1980s South Korea-US, Inter-Korean, and Northward Relations (South Korea-US Cooperation in the Early 1980s under the Chun Doo-hwan and Reagan Administrations / North Korea Strategy and Diplomatic Strategy of the Chun Doo-hwan Government / Northward Policy of the Roh Tae-woo Government and Changes in Inter-Korean Relations) - Jeon Jae-seong (Seoul National University)
- 1980s Korea-Japan Relations and Diplomatic Diversification (Origins of Diplomacy between the Chun Doo-hwan Government and Japan and the Initiation of Korea-Japan Security-Economy Cooperation / Diplomatic Diversification of the Chun Doo-hwan Government: Presidential Visits to ASEAN, Africa, and Southwestern Asia / Chun Doo-hwan Government's Diplomacy with Japan and Korea-Japan Historical Disputes: the Issue of Distorted Japanese Textbooks in 1982) - Cho Yang-hyun (Korea National Diplomatic Academy)
- Korea-China Diplomacy (Progress towards Normalization of Diplomatic Relations between Korea and China in the 1980s / Background, Process, and Issues of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Korea and China in 1992 / South Korea's Diplomacy towards China and North Korea in the 1990s) - Lee Dong-yul (Dongduk Women's University)
- 1990s Diplomacy (North Korea Nuclear Diplomacy and Inter-Korean Relations under the Kim Young-sam Administration in the 1990s / Globalization Policy and External Policy in Response to the Financial Crisis in the 1990s / United States' East Asia Strategy and Changes in the US-Korea Alliance in the 1990s) - Hwang Ji-hwan (Seoul City University)

As mentioned earlier, more than 50 renowned researchers from the Korean academic community participated in the writing of the *Korea's Foreign Relations and Diplomatic History*. In that regard, it would not be an exaggeration to say that this book reflects the academic standards of the current Korean academic community. Due to the typical peninsula's geographical conditions in East Asia, Korean history has evolved within

the East Asian historical space, interacting with and developing alongside China, Japan, Russia, and others for thousands of years. In particular, there have been frequent instances where Korea has inevitably adopted a passive stance in response to the influence of the formidable power of China. This has led to a passive historical perspective in Korea, as it historically found itself caught in the competition and negotiation among neighboring major powers, due to the inherent limitations of research necessitating dependence on foreign sources to study Korean diplomatic history.

Regardless of the pre-modern or modern period, it is undeniable that the international environment, or the influence exerted from the 'outside,' has played a crucial role in shaping and developing the course of Korean history. Korean Diplomatic history was not merely a peripheral aspect of Korean history; rather, it was an essential factor that propelled its developmental process. In this sense, the publication of the *Korea's Foreign Relations and Diplomatic History* will serve as an opportunity to correct biases and distorted perceptions regarding Korean diplomatic history in both domestic and international academic circles. Furthermore, it will stimulate interdisciplinary research between international politics and history.

The Future Tasks and Missions of Korean Diplomatic History Research

The tasks and missions faced by Korean diplomatic history research since the liberation from Japanese colonial rule can be broadly categorized into three main challenges. The first challenge is the discovery and organization of domestic and international diplomatic documents, particularly classified documents, which form the foundation of diplomatic history research. The issue is that it is not limited to diplomatic sources within Korea alone. In international politics, a small or weak country is one where external influences overshadow internal political changes. Therefore, researching Korean diplomatic history requires analyzing the policy documents of major powers that have shaped the international po-

litical environment concerning Korea. Moreover, from the perspective of major powers, the Korean Peninsula was considered less important compared to China or Japan, resulting in numerous instances where documents related to Korea were omitted from their diplomatic archives or misclassified in their document repositories. As a result, Korean researchers should directly work in the archives to discover classified documents or correct any misclassifications.

The second challenge is to establish a tradition of empirical Korean diplomatic history research based on domestic and international diplomatic documents. Due to the geographical conditions of the Korean Peninsula, which is adjacent to major powers such as China, Japan, and Russia, Korean history has developed with a close interconnection between domestic politics and foreign relations. In that sense, Korean diplomatic history cannot be relegated to a peripheral aspect of Korean history; rather, it can be considered an essential element for a comprehensive understanding of Korean history as a whole. It has been the survival strategy of Korea to confront China, with humility, cunningness, and sometimes forcefulness, to preserve its national identity. The issue lies in the inevitable passivity and reliance on sources from neighboring countries that emerged in this process, leading to the creation of a passive historical perspective that depicts Korea historically as merely a subject of competition and negotiation among neighboring major powers. As mentioned earlier, it is likely that the current tendency for diplomatic history to be situated within the periphery of political science and history departments in Korean universities is related to such historical biases.

The third challenge is related to criticisms raised within the international academic community regarding the study of diplomatic history itself. Starting from the 1960s, the overall interest in historiography gradually shifted from political history to social, economic, cultural, intellectual history, and other areas. Among these, the most vehement criticism of diplomatic history came from the Annales School in France. They criticized diplomatic history as merely events driven by chance of ‘*histoire événementielle*,’ advocating instead for attention to structural changes evolving gradually over the long term, known as the ‘*longue durée*’ per-

spective. As historiography shifted its focus from traditional political and diplomatic history to social, economic, cultural, and intellectual history, diplomatic historians had to both refine traditional research methods based on diplomatic documents and redefine the significance of diplomatic history research. As a result, some diplomatic historians began to adopt the concerns and methodologies of social history or international relations, focusing on economic, social, cultural, and military factors that influence diplomatic policy decisions.

The aforementioned tasks have been developed simultaneously due to the outstanding contributions of scholars in the Korean academic community. It is necessary to establish the intellectual tradition of Korean diplomatic history and further explore its distinctive and creative academic development in line with the general trend of development in the international academic community. Both *Diplomatic Documents of Korea* and *Korea's Foreign Relations and Diplomatic History* represent the solutions proposed by the Korean academic community. With the publication of these series, it is hoped that Korean diplomatic history research will take another qualitative leap forward.