

Constructing Narratives: The Controversy over High School History Textbooks

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Abstract

Teaching is often referred to as a political process. This is even more evident within the teaching of history. Controversy surrounds high school history textbooks over their content and adoption. This paper examines this controversy within Japan while also showing that these issues are not unique to the Japanese context.

Keywords : ① textbooks ② history ③ high school education

0. Defining the Issue

Schools are important to nations as a place to develop the values and traditions of its citizens. These values form the basis of a democratic citizenship, but there are other competitors for the message to be transmitted by education. “The vision of education as a tool of democratic citizenship has coexisted uneasily with other models: notably, education to compete in the global marketplace, to conform to officially sanctioned ideals of homogeneity, and to sacrifice for national security goals.” (Hein, pg.5) One of the biggest tools used in schools to achieve this goal is textbooks. They provide a national narrative and transmit the values of society. Textbooks exist not only in schools but expand out to the community and are considered to be a primary source of information. They link students, parents, teachers, and others, but are also often the center of controversy in education.

With controversy often comes change, but in the case of textbooks change has been slow. “Generally speaking, however, since textbooks define the content and shape the form in which students encounter that content, their

conservative character serves to resist change.” (Eisner, *Who Decides*, pg. 339) Textbooks controversies, especially in Japan, have been resistant to change, but changes do occur. Both external and internal factors of a country such as war, political change, and social movements, can result in changes in educational programs. Some of the largest changes sought by textbook reformers revolve around problems of what values need to be transmitted and how these values should be presented. War, specifically the Second World War, has been a major catalyst for change for Japanese high school history textbooks and also the center of controversy. The central question is based on how has the Japanese government sought to shape the presentation of its history? To answer this question I will describe the history of high school history textbooks since the end of the Second World War, reaction to changes made, and the current state of textbooks in Japan.

1. History of the Textbook Issue

From 1902 until the end of the Second World War Japan had a national textbook system within

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which the Ministry of Education (MOE) would create, produce, and supply textbooks to the whole country. All schools would use the same textbooks and there was no opportunity to differ from this plan. With the end of the Second World War and the occupation of Japan major changes were made to this system. Initially the defeated Japanese government made some changes in educational policy, but later major changes were required by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP). After the occupation ended, the Japanese government has generally attempted to continue the textbook policies of SCAP and more specifically the Textbook branch of the Civil Information and Education Section of SCAP.

With the end of hostilities the Japanese government issued a series of directives concerning education. “Between its surrender on 15 August and the formation of SCAP on 2 October 1945, the Japanese government took the initiative in demilitarizing education by nullifying wartime education laws and ordering the censorship of undesirable phrases in textbooks.” (Thakur, pg. 264) On Sept. 15 MOE issued the Outline of Education for Construction of New Japan (*Shin nihon kensetsu no kyoiku hoshin*) which described goals for education after the war especially focusing on the ideal of developing Japan as a peaceful nation. Just a few days later on Sept. 20 MOE issued another document entitled Concerning Handling of Textbooks in Accordance with the Post War Situation (*Shusen ni tomonau kyokayo tosho toriatsukaikata ni kansuru ken*) which called for the deletion of all militaristic parts of textbooks. “A textbook compilation officer of the National Education Bureau explained that one reason for the deletions was to give a favorable impression of the ministry to the SCAP.” (Thakur, pg. 265) Teachers, students, and others cut and blackened out sections of textbooks, but this

was really done on the local level as officials had not given specific instructions beyond the term militarism. References to the imperial tradition were, however, left in the texts. The first round of education reform was complete and the occupation forces moved in.

Just as defeat had resulted in a new set of directives by the MOE, occupation resulted in SCAP issuing several orders concerning educational content. On Dec.15 SCAP ordered that state Shinto was not to be taught in schools followed by another order on Dec.31. This subsequent order stated that morals (*shushin*) and Japanese history were not to be taught in schools. Because of these changes a former school teacher and historian, Ienaga Saburo, wrote his own history textbook entitled New Japanese History (*Shin Nihonshi*). As a tool to foster a form of democratic education SCAP required all textbooks to be authorized by itself and by the MOE. Ienaga’s book avoided this requirement as it was published as a regular book and not as a textbook.

While many of the officers involved with SCAP had received specific training on occupation duties, they were still military officers and not fulltime educators. In order to help gain more insight into the best methods of educational reform for Japan SCAP, in Oct. of 1945, planned to have a group of educators come to Japan from the United States to “to advise the military staff” of the Civil Information and Education Section of SCAP. (Trainor, pg. 68) The report issued by the First United States Education Mission in April 1946 was a reconfirmation of many of the policies already in place but seen as an opportunity by the MOE and taken as policy. The report called for a continuation of textbook deletions and the development of textbooks to promote democracy. The MOE began to write new history textbooks in late 1945. These new textbooks still required the approval of SCAP. On May 21, 1946 a small group

of people including Saburo Ienaga were assigned to write a new textbook and they were given just a few months to complete the project. The first textbook to be approved after the war was published in September 1946. It was called The Progress of the Country (*Kuni no Ayumi*) and did not contain any references to the foundation of Japan as associated with the imperial family. It did include a short statement concerning an issue which continues to be debated to this day: “Our army... ravaged Nanjing, the capital of the Republic of China.” (Inokuchi, pg. 100) The book was criticized by both foreign and domestic groups as still being too closely related to imperial ideology. Criticized by many groups Ienaga even stated that “The Progress of the Country was only a stop-gap, under taken in order to fill a transitional need.” (Ienaga, *Japan’s Past*, pg. 130) On body which voiced opposition to the book was the Allied Council for Japan (ACJ); it was a group founded in February 1946 to allow allied powers to coordinate with SCAP concerning Japan. The Chinese representative on the ACJ protested the new textbook in November 1947 and he was supported by the Russian member as well. The domestic element of criticism came largely from Marxist historians who stated that the textbook was still centered on imperial traditions, but Communists groups also protested. “They were extremely upset that any Emperor received favorable mention, it being their view that the whole Imperial system should be destroyed.” (Trainor, pg. 99) This was just the first postwar incident of international criticism of Japanese high school history textbooks.

With the institution of the new constitution in 1947 several new laws addressing education philosophy were passed by the Japanese government. Included in these on March 31, 1947 were the Fundamental Law of Education and the School Education Law. The Fundamental Law of Education described the objectives of

postwar education while the School Education Law provided the basic administrative rules for the operation of schools and also outlined how new textbooks would be screened by “competent authorities”. The idea of who were “competent authorities” would become an issue of contention. Textbooks would no longer be produced and approved by the MOE. Instead SCAP called for local groups to take over responsibility for textbook screening but these local groups were not in place so SCAP had MOE create a textbook committee to formulate a plan. In 1948 this committee remained in place and became the Textbook Authorization Committee. This group took over full responsibility for textbook authorization in 1950 and in May of 1953 the passage of the School Education Law eliminated the discussion of local school boards authorizing textbooks and placed the authority solely with MOE. Several different groups submitted their own versions of textbooks. Anyone could produce a textbook, but that textbook would be screened by the MOE and then local school boards would be able to decide which textbook would be used in local schools out of the ones authorized by the MOE. While this was a shift from the prewar and wartime system of textbook adoption giving local school boards some choice it was seen by many as a continuation of the central control of education by the government. Many groups organized with the intention of resisting what was seen as the efforts by the government to maintain central control and one of the better known groups was teachers. “Teachers unionized in great numbers and, as if to atone for past subservience to the state, commonly adopted a confrontational stance vis-à-vis the power structure.” (Dower, pg. 250) Meetings were held with representative of the Japanese teachers union or JTU (*Nikkkyoso*), but the confrontation between the JTU and the MOE only worsened. Article 5 of the Code of Ethics for

Teachers (*Kyoshi no ronri koryo*) issued by the JTU stated: “Teachers shall allow no infringement on freedom in education” and went on to link this statement with guarantees in the constitution. (Beauchamp, pg. 132) The MOE responded with several declarations including Maintianing the Neutrality of Education (*Kyoiku no churitsuo mo iji nit suite*), Report Concerning the Preservation of Political Neutrality of Teaching Staff (*Kyoin no seijiteki churitsusei iji ni kansuru toshin*), Concerning Temporary Measures for Ensuring Political Neutrality in Compulsory Education (*Gimu kyoiku shogakko ni okeru kyoiku no seijiteki churitsu no kahuko ni kansuru setchi ho*), and others. The conflict continued.

During the occupation textbooks had to be submitted in both English and Japanese for approval by both the MOE and SCAP. Very few textbooks passed this screening process. In 1952 Ienaga submitted a revised version of *Shin Nihonshi* to MOE for approval. It was rejected. However, when he resubmitted the book without making any of the required revisions it was approved in 1953. Feeling that some of the reasons for the initial rejection of his textbook, such as the suggestion that the Second World War took up too much of the book, were an infringement of freedom in education and also contrary to the ideals of the new constitution he brought these concerns to the *Asahi* newspaper. The 1950’s was with a difficult international situation, the Korean war, the cold war all contributed to a change in policy at SCAP which included a return of some members of the wartime power structure who were until this time kept from decision making positions.

“The Occupations ‘reverse course’ policy of integrating Japan into an anti-Communist bloc led by the United States subverted the pacifist spirit of the Constitution. … Minister of

Education Okano Seigo’s remarks in the Diet in February 1953 caused a public sensation. In response to a question, he said ‘I do not wish to pass judgment on the rightness or wrongness of the Greater East Asian War, but the fact that Japan took on so many opponents and fought them for four years.. proves our superiority’”. (Ienaga, *The Pacific*, pg 252)

Their return and the return of conservative influences in the country collided with more liberal views within the field of education over textbooks and with groups such as the JTU. With the elections of 1955 and the debates over the constitution (US-Japan security issues) issues such as a system of centralized production and authorization of textbooks was initiated by Nakasone Yasuhiro of the *Minshuto* Party. The debate over the constitution ended with the election but the debate over textbooks continued. Debates over the bias of textbooks were widespread. The LDP (formed in 1955) tried in 1956 to gain control of education by initiating legislation aimed at creating government appointed school boards instead of locally elected ones. It also attempted to change the Fundamental Law of education, and to place further restrictions on textbook authorization. The first initiative passed but the second two failed. At the same time, MOE was attempting to control the authorization of textbooks by placing more conservative people on the authorization committee. The committee members were made fulltime employees of MOE and did not issue documents which listed requirements for textbook authorization but instead only gave comments when a book was submitted. Many books were rejected for issues such as criticism of the wartime government.

Ienaga resubmitted his *Shin Nihonshi* in 1962 and it was rejected with 23 listed items to be corrected. He resubmitted the book with the

corrections and it was conditionally approved with the stipulation that he make an additional 293 changes. He made the required changes and the book was published but he considered this process censorship so he went to court. The first of Ienaga's three court cases declared that state screening of textbooks was unconstitutional and sought financial compensation for psychological stress. He was supported by groups such as the JTU. The case became stalled as MOE refused to disclose documents which showed the internal criticisms of Ienaga's book. When the court ordered the documents to be disclosed the MOE appealed to a higher court. At this time Ienaga also filed a second motion to reverse changes he made with the resubmission of his textbooks focusing on just a few select points. This case, being more narrowly focused, concluded before the first and found in favor of Ienaga. It concluded that the government could check textbooks for mistakes but could not change content. MOE appealed the case to a higher court but this appeal was dismissed a few years later. Meanwhile Ienaga's first case was still ongoing and MOE had finally handed over its documents concerning the screening of Ienaga's book. In 1974, the court found in favor of Ienaga on only a few counts of his complaint. Both sides appealed the decision. The case had, however, attracted media attention and with the documents presented by MOE concerning the textbook screening process debate outside the courtroom grew.

With the second court case victory in 1970 and the increased media attention articles began to appear in newspapers concerning such subjects as the Nanking Massacre, comfort women, and other war issues. Textbook screening lessened and these issues began to appear in textbooks.

The election of 1980 saw a large victory for the LDP and a renewal of their attempts to control education and more specifically textbooks. They

argued that anyone who supported textbook revision or the JTU was supporting communism. In the 1980's there was also a widespread public criticism of nuclear energy. This caused the Science and Technology Agency (STA) to feel threatened and throw itself into the debate on textbook revision. It wanted changes in the description of nuclear power in textbooks. Other groups as well sought to have descriptions of various industries in textbooks changed to promote their interests. The media coverage continued and even international pressure came to bear as both Korea and China protested changes in Japanese textbooks. In 1980 "by September more than 2,000 reports on Japanese textbook screening had appeared in the press of nineteen Asian countries." (Inokuchi, pg. 113) Citing international friendship as a goal the Japanese government announced a new set of textbook screening policies and then declared the problem solved, but within MOE many of the same issues surrounding textbook authorization persisted. "The Japanese government announced that it would add another criterion to the guidelines concerning textbook screening process, that is, to pay due consideration to diplomatic relations with neighboring countries." (Yamamoto, pg. 239) With this government declaration, Ienaga submitted a new revision of his textbook in 1983 with changes in descriptions of international relations. This book was also conditionally accepted with multiple suggestions for changes. Ienaga filed his third lawsuit. This lawsuit disputed the idea that MOE was the sole authority to determining truth in history and focused on several key terms including those associated with the invasion of China and the Nanking Massacre. The court found for Ienaga on one point relating to an historical point from the Meiji period and ordered the government to pay him 100,000 yen, but still held that MOE had the authority to authorize textbooks. Both sides

again appealed the decision. After several appeals Ienaga won on two additional points, the first being references to the Japanese army's Unit 731 and the second the Nanking Massacre, but lost on the others and on the critical point that MOE had practiced censorship in textbook screening.

Currently the textbook authorization process is still in place. A brief description of this process is given below:

1. Authors and the textbook companies submit the complete manuscripts to the Ministry of Education, applying for authorization.
2. On receipt of a manuscript, the Ministry of Education concurrently sends it to two places for review. Review officials within the Ministry are asked to examine the manuscripts. An advisory council, the Authorization Council for Textbook Review (*Kyokayo Toshō Kentai Chosa Inkai*) also is asked to judge the appropriateness of the textbook.
3. The Authorization Council puts together the results of the internal review and its own review and makes the final decision
4. Based on the Council's decision, the Ministry of Education informs the applicants of the approval decision. Even if the manuscript is approved, there may be parts that the Council has judged inappropriate. In that case, textbook review officials give advice on improvements to be made at specific points in the manuscript. There are two levels of advice: *advice to correct*, which is compulsory, and *advice to improve*.
5. When the revised text is submitted, the officials examine it to see whether the recommended revisions have been adopted. (Taro, pg. 306)

From occupation to today the struggle to present the nation in textbooks has evolved depending not just on education policy but

also on public interest, governmental, and international forces. However, the government has maintained through the textbook authorization process the ability to control its presentation of history. Many of the features of the textbook authorization process the government uses to do this are a continuation of policies implemented by SCAP.

2. Comparative Textbook Issues

The Japanese government utilizes the textbook authorization process to control its presentation of history and since many parts of this process were developed by a foreign occupation force, SCAP, it would be interesting to see how controversial textbook issues are handled in other parts of the world. Despite the image created due to the large amount of media coverage of textbook issues in Japan, debates over control of content in high school history textbooks range all over the world. In the United States one sensitive issue is the Vietnam War. "Among the topics that teachers felt students were interested in discussing but that most teachers believed should not be discussed in the classroom were politics, race relations, and the Vietnam War." (Loewen, *Vietnam* pg. 150) Specifically looking at the Vietnam War and its representation in American high school history textbooks Loewen conducted a study of ten high school history textbooks published up to the 1980's and did a pictorial analysis looking for any of the pictures which he described as capturing the American image during the time of the war such as the assassination of a Viet Cong in the streets of Saigon, bodies in a ditch after My Lai, and the self immolation of a Buddhist monk, but most of the textbooks examined by Loewen had none of these images. A majority of Vietnam War images were of American military strength in the form of equipment such as B-52s in flight. Controversial actions by American servicemen

are avoided even with the widespread knowledge of events such as My Lai which had been described by the current Senator Kerry as an everyday occurrence during the war.

Any photograph of an American soldier setting fire to a Vietnamese hootch (house), a common sight during the war, would get this point across, but no textbook uses *any* photograph of *any* wrongdoing by an American. Indeed, no book includes any photograph of any destruction, even of legitimate targets, caused by our side. (Loewen, *Lies* pg. 245)

The representation of the Vietnam War in American textbooks is subject to the same type of manipulation as certain topics in Japanese textbooks. In the United States, however, there is no large group with an interest in promoting the cause of what was North Vietnam. For a time after the conflict concluded the United States and Vietnam had no formal relations further limiting the voice against its portrayal in American textbooks. Japan did not have the option to reject formal relations with other countries after the Second World War.

There are critics of the content concerning the Vietnam War, such as Loewen's study, but the largest majority of textbook complaints in the United States involve the representation of minority groups within textbooks resulting in another problem. "Although textbooks are far more inclusive than they once were – for instance, students encounter Frederick Douglass as well as Thomas Jefferson – they are still ... more about hero worship than the careful consideration of ideas." (Ruenzel, pg. 44) With the centralization of hero worship in textbooks, history classes simplify to present the message that 'we are the best' and the 'we' is supposed to represent a mass collection of many groups

both in the minority and in the majority, but all American.

Out of the twenty-two states which have government committees select textbooks Texas and California are the largest. "Since they represent 20 percent of the market, most publishers try to develop textbooks that please both Texas and California." (Spring, pg. 239) Textbook publishers are for profit businesses and thus cannot afford to produce multiple versions for various states. Students in Rhode Island may read more about Texas and California history in their textbooks than they do about their own state. As publishing companies competed "for more than \$230 million in the 2003-2004 school year" which is the total of the Texas textbook market, publishers wrote textbooks that held a high probability to be accepted by the Texas textbook authorization process. (Manzo, pg. 11) These textbooks would be the same textbooks distributed to multiple states.

Criticism of textbook authorization plans is not unique to Japan. In 1995, with concerns over the power of the Texas textbook review board, the Texas legislature passed a law limiting the ability of the board to manipulate content. "As a result, the board can restrict only texts that are insufficiently aligned to state standards or that have factual errors." (Manzo, pg. 11) A debate followed this ruling which called for the omission of information to be considered as a factual error.

Deciding what content should be placed in textbooks is a very controversial subject. Textbook writers have an incredible power in the way they word events. Looking outside the United States at events in American history can provide an interesting example of how wording can change the interpretation of an event. The following passage is from a Chinese high school history textbook in a section on the American Civil War:

Many people participated in the capitalist class war. The capitalist class utilized workers and farmers in fighting an anti-slavery war to strengthen its own position. After the Civil war the United States became an advanced capitalist nation. During the war the workers organized labor unions and demanded the eight hour work day. But the liberated Negroes did not want to obtain real liberation. They obtained neither land ownership nor racial equality. (Robinson, pg. 53)

Looking at the same event in a high school history textbook from Taiwan shows another view on the American Civil War:

The United States was reunited, the authority of the central government greatly strengthened. The slaves were liberated and King Cotton brought down. This was followed by the development of industry and railroads and American overseas expansion by military power. The influential men in the states were mostly capitalists of the north and cultivators in the west. (Robinson, pg. 53)

Researchers at Indiana University after looking at both of these textbooks stated: “The Communist Chinese textbook emphasizes U.S. aggressive tendencies from the time of the thirteen colonies to world domination, radical prejudice against the American Indians and the Negroes, the capitalist monopoly of domestic and world markets, and suppression of labor movements based on Marxist theories.” (Robinson, pg.53)

Another look at American history from a textbook from the former Soviet Union further reinforces the view that textbooks solidify the values and traditions a country wishes to cultivate within its citizens.

The American bourgeoisie and slave-holders

not only oppressed the masses of the U.S.A., especially the “colored” population, the Negro and Indian, but also sought to seize as much foreign land as possible; first of all they started to annihilate the Indians in order to seize their lands. American generals who were fighting against the Indian said, ‘The only good Indian is a dead Indian.’...

In 1823, the president of the U.S.A., a large slaveholder named Monroe, sent a message to Congress in which he declared the U.S.A. would not permit the formation in the two Americas, either North or south, of any new colonies by European states, but he did not declare in this that the U.S.A. itself would not strive for seizures. The essence of Monroe’s message is thus phrased “America for the Americans,” that is, all of America for the U.S.A. After that, the capitalists of the United States usually referred to the Monroe Doctrine when seizing foreign lands, even lands far from America, for example, the Philippines or the Hawaiian Islands. (Robinson, pg. 55)

The United States did control the Philippines after the Spanish –American War, but the reflection of America in high school history textbooks is not negative. The following is an excerpt from a high school textbook from the Philippines describing its contact with the United States.

The United States replaced Spain as our mother country. She established a democratic form of colonial government in our country and gave our people the blessings of democracy. Her rule was more benevolent than that of Spain. She did not exploit or persecute our people. The early American governors – Taft, Wright, Ide, Smith and Forbes – were good administrators. They succeeded in winning

the friendship of our people. In due time people came to love America and to accept her political ideas and cultural influence.

...It was the policy of the United States to govern the Philippines for the welfare of our people and to train us in the ways of democracy, so that some day we should be capable of independence. Thus President McKinley told the U.S. Congress in 1899: 'The Philippines are ours, not to exploit, but to develop, to civilize, to educate, to train in the science of self-government.' And President Wilson said: 'every step we take will be taken with a view to the ultimate independence of the Islands.'

America faithfully followed this policy in our country. It was enforced by all American presidents from McKinley to Franklin D. Roosevelt and by all governors from Taft to Murphy.

Finally, the American educational system fostered our spirit of nationalism. It inspired our people to cherish freedom. In the schools and universities, our youth read the American Declaration of Independence, the epic of the American Revolution, and the exploits of George Washington and other American patriots. They recited with pride the flaming words of Patrick Henry: 'Give me liberty or give me death!' (Robinson, pg. 54)

While these interpretations of American history came in World history high school textbooks, at least one country offers American history as a separate course alongside its native history. In Australia, American history is a popular course. "The Australian view of American history is so similar to the American view as to be scarcely distinguishable. Of the three leading texts used in

Victoria, two were written by Americans and the third is a compilation in which two-thirds of the chapters are by Americans." (Robinson, pg. 54)

What do foreign textbooks on American history show us? They reinforce the idea that textbooks are a tool a government can use to provide a national narrative and transmit the values of a society. There is wide variety in the interpretations of history in high school history textbooks, but it is only in regard to Japanese textbooks that the controversy has reached such a high level of international debate. One of the main reasons for this situation was the position Japan was placed in right after the Second World War. Japan had lost the war and placed under the control of a foreign power. Institutions such as the ACJ provided a voice into domestic politics for powers such as China to contribute to the debate over the interpretation of history within Japan. China does not have such a voice into the American educational system. If this is the case then why hasn't Germany as well been the center of a controversy? Germany, unlike, Japan was involved with larger scale issues which are undebatable and undeniable such as the holocaust. Legislation in Germany has created an environment in which controversy over these types of issues are suppressed. Even with room for debate over issues in Japan change has been slow. This is due to the large amount of resistance to change in Japan.

3. Resistance to Change

Twenty years after the initial media explosion of the textbook issue especially concerning the Nanking Massacre, the debate continues. Resistance to change has taken place in many forms including official positions of the government. The Japanese government has made apologies and stresses regret, but often these statements are made ambiguously. Many Japanese leaders have followed this pattern and

have remained ambiguous over various matters of war guilt. They are just one of many forms of resistance to change.

Resistance to change in Japan has taken many forms including views on war guilt, organizations, and the control of the education system. The varied views on the motivations and assessment of war guilt have been a cause of resistance to change in educational materials because of the amount of debate on the matter. One view point is known as the 'renegade' view of the war.

This deliberately ambiguous approach reflects a view of history that may be called the "renegade" view of the war. In this view, only a small group of "renegades" – mostly military men like Tojo Hideki – led Japan into war. This group essentially usurped the power of the emperor and misled the Japanese people into a self-destructive and imperialist war. (Benfell, pg. 5)

The renegade view of the war was supported by the Tokyo War Crimes trials. SCAP did not allow the investigation of the emperor for possible war crimes charges. "If the emperor had been duped and victimized by the militarist conspiracy, then so too had the Japanese people, the civilian leadership, and even the majority of officers in the army." (Benfell, pg.7) The blame for the war was clearly placed on a small number of military people who were tried during the Tokyo War Crimes trials. "Moreover, relatively few Japanese leaders were ultimately tried and convicted of the "crimes against peace" with which the allies charged them – a fact which reinforces the view that only a handful of renegade leaders was responsible for aggression." (Benfell, pg.6)

Once the trials were completed SCAP reinforced the verdicts of the trials and encouraged the renegade theory of war responsibility. Both SCAP and the new leadership

in Japan wanted to move forward and work towards the rebuilding of Japan rather than linger on the idea of war guilt. This viewpoint is still a strong center of resistance against movements to change certain aspects of history textbooks.

Another viewpoint on war guilt revolves around the issue of reparations. The issue of reparations was addressed in the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951. "This treaty was important because it explicitly codified the monetary component of Japan's war responsibility, and it set the international legal precedent for subsequent bilateral reparations agreements." (Benfell, pg. 7) The treaty also reinforced the Tokyo War Crimes Trials view of war guilt. It was signed by Japan and many of its former enemies, but it was not signed by the Soviet Union, China, or Korea. Later separate treaties were also signed with some countries including China and South Korea. China and Japan signed The Tanaka – Zhou Communique of 1972 which reconfirmed the statements made in the San Francisco Treaty. "South Korea demanded the relatively paltry sum of \$500 million from the Japanese government (at a time when the Japanese government had "sufficient resources" to pay much more), with no provision for future claims, while the Chinese fully renounced their "demands for war indemnities from Japan." (Benfell, pg.7) These treaties are still referred to as the answer to new charges concerning war reparations and are used to resist change in textbooks.

Organizations also contribute to the resistance of liberal change in textbooks. Some of these groups include the Japan War Bereaved Family Association (JBFA) represent families of people killed in the war and the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform. Both of these groups, along with others, see Japan as a victim of the war. This idea of victimization is reinforced every year on Aug.15.

Each August 15, at least three events of symbolic importance occur. First, the prime minister offers a speech or statement on the war, often issuing “apologies” and memorializing Japanese and other “victims” of the conflict. Second, this speech has been given for over thirty years at an enormous bereavement ritual held at Tokyo’s Budokan Hall and attended by top government officials, the emperor and empress, and the leaders and members of the JBFA. Third, many top government officials choose this day to worship at Yasukuni Shrine to both honor the war dead and at least implicitly glorify their actions. (Benfell, pg. 8)

Many groups including right wing revisionist groups have produced separate theories on war responsibility. They press the issue that the war was forced on Japan due to the imperialism of the Western powers. The war was a great cause because it was not an attempt to conquer Asia but it was an effort to liberate Asian nations. Some politicians have challenged the results of the Tokyo War Crimes Trials as a result of victor’s justice.

The Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (*Atarashii reikishi kyokasyo o tsukuru kai*) not only resists liberal change in textbooks but is pushing for a much more conservative view. It describes its goals as providing a new history textbook which does not present Japan as an evil nation. Current textbooks, as described by this group, use enemy wartime propaganda to teach the students of today in Japanese classrooms. Their main point of revision in textbooks is the comfort women issue which they state should not be included in textbooks. One member of this group and a professor of education at Tokyo University, Fujioka Nobukatsu, has described the treatment by textbooks of “Japan’s history is inordinately negative, even though they were

designed for the use of Japanese students at Japanese schools. This tendency is worst in sections describing comfort women” (The Restoration, pg.8) because they state that the comfort women sections of history books are based on dubious testimonies, distorted historical facts, and double standards. Due to this, they and other groups are resistant to liberal changes in textbooks.

Educational policy also provides resistance to liberal change in history textbooks. Images of the war in Japanese education often reflect the image of Japan as a victim. Pictures and emphasis in textbooks highlight the suffering of Japanese due to events such as Hiroshima, Nagasaki, the Tokyo bombings, and the Russian invasion of Manchuria.

The one issue on which all (elements resistant to textbook change) agree is that the atomic bombings of Japan were evil and should never be repeated. The one commemoration in which all Japanese share, regardless of the specific view of the war, is that of the atomic bombings. As a result, virtually all Japanese share at least some sense of Japanese victimhood that is inextricably intertwined with such commemoration.” (Benfell, pg. 10)

One major aspect of a Japanese students’ academic life is the passing of entrance exams. Students attend *juukus* after school and on Saturday to be able to pass these exams. Entrance exams do not address issues surrounding the war giving a clear message to students on the importance of that subject.

Even with all this resistance to change, some things have changed. Due to media attention in 1982 during the height of the Nanking Massacre textbook controversy, the Ienaga textbook court cases, and some government changes variety in textbooks has started to appear.

4. Japanese Textbooks

Multiple issues are debated concerning Japanese high school history textbooks but one of the most well known issues involves the presentation of the Nanking Massacre. Most of the controversy settles on how the Massacre should be worded in comparison to the United States where the incident is almost nonexistent. “A thorough examination of secondary-school history textbooks in the United States revealed only a few even mention the Rape of Nanking.” (Chang, pg. 6)

Of course, the issue of textbook censorship is far from over. Rather than denying the massacre outright, some officials in Japan now focus on minimizing its scale. In 1991 screeners at the ministry ordered textbook authors to eliminate all references to the number of Chinese killed in the Rape of Nanking because authorities believed there was insufficient evidence to verify those numbers. (Chang, pg. 208)

In 1982 some scholars formed the National Association for the Defense of Japan (*Nihon o mamoru kokumin kaigi*) work against the government which they saw as being too liberal in its response to foreign pressure concerning this issue. They have even published their own textbook. This government response has allowed a variety of textbooks, often with different viewpoints to become available.

Middle school textbooks as well as high school textbooks have faced this issue and here are examples from two middle school texts.

Shinpen – Atarashii shakai: Rekishi (New Social Studies: History, New Edition). Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 1998. Used by 41% of middle schools. From the section “The Start of the Sino – Japanese War” (p. 254):

Having brought Manchuria under its control, Japan advanced into northern China. The Sino – Japanese War began on July 7, 1937 (Showa 12), with the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, a clash between Japanese and Chinese armed forces at the Marco Polo Bridge on the outskirts of Peking (Beijing), without any declaration of war being issued. The fighting spread from northern China into central China, and at the end of the year the Japanese Army occupied the capital Nanking (Nanjing). In the process it killed an estimated 200,000 people, including women and children (the Great Nanking Massacre). (Japan Echo)

Many of the controversies surrounding textbooks revolve around the phrasing of events. Two controversies over phrasing have including whether to use the term ‘invasion’ or ‘advance’ into china and also whether to use Nanking ‘massacre’ or ‘incident’. This text uses the phrasing “advance into northern China” rather than ‘invaded’ northern China, but does use the term massacre when discussing the Nanking Massacre. The second text below phrases the opening war in a different way as it states the army “extended” the battle into northern China.

Chugaku shakai: Rekishiteki bunya (Middle School Social Studies: The Field of History). Osaka: Osaka Shoseki, 1998. Used by 19% of middle schools. From the section “The Sino – Japanese War” (pp. 252-53):

On July 7, 1937 (Showa 12), Japanese troops clashed with Chinese troops near Peking (Beijing) at the Marco Polo Bridge. Acting while the attitude of the government was still ambivalent, the Japanese Army extended the battle into Shanghai. In this way an all-out war between Japan and China began in the absence of a declaration of war. China’s Nationalist

government formed an anti-Japanese national front with the Communist Party and fought to repel Japan's invasion.

The Japanese Army encountered fierce resistance everywhere. It is said to have killed 200,000 people after occupying Nanking (Nanjing), and it was censured by various foreign governments. But the Japanese people were not informed of these facts.

Footnote 1. This is known as the Great Nanking Massacre Incident, and the Chinese authorities assert that more than 300,000 people were slaughtered. In addition, from around 1940 on, a three pronged campaign to burn, kill, and plunder was set in motion against anti-Japanese strongholds in northern China, and it had a devastating impact on the lives and the livelihoods of the Chinese masses. (Japan Echo)

High School Textbooks have the same issue regarding wording and as shown below often contain radically different viewpoints on events. The first a more conservative view on the war and the second containing both the words 'invasion; and 'massacre' providing the liberal viewpoint.

Shosetsu: Nihonshi kaiteiban (A Detailed Exposition of Japanese History, Revised Edition). Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1998. Used by 38% of high schools. From the section "The Sino – Japanese War" (pp. 323-24).

On July 7, 1937 (Showa 12), shortly after the installation of Konoe Fumimaro's first cabinet, Japanese and Chinese forces clashed at the Marco Polo Bridge on the outskirts of Peking (Beijing) – the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. A local cease fire agreement was reached, but

because of factors including pressure from military hard-liners, the Konoe cabinet revised its policy line of no expansion and determined on an increase of troops. Military action escalated, the battle spread from the north to the south and, over time, throughout China.¹ In order to offer the maximum resistance, the Nationalist government engaged in its second joint operation with the Communist Party in late September, and an anti-Japanese national front was established. The Sino – Japanese War escalated in this way without any declaration of war. Japan sent in one big army after another. But while it managed at the end of the year to occupy the capital Nanking (Nanjing) the Nationalist Army continued to put up resistance even as it retreated to Wuhan and then to Chungking (Chongqing) in the interior. As a result, peace efforts had no effect, and a long war seemed in the offing.

Footnote 1: Initially known as the "North China Incident," it was later renamed the "China Incident." While neither side had declared war, it developed into what was in fact an all-out war.

Footnote 2: On this occasion the Japanese forces killed many Chinese, including noncombatants, and after Japan's defeat this (the Nanking Incident) became a major issue at the Tokyo Trial. (Japan Echo)

Nihonshi B (Japanese History B). Tokyo: Jikkyo Shuppan, 1998. Used by 7% of high schools. From the section "The Widening Spread of the Sino – Japanese War" (pp. 318-19):

Just after that, on July 7 [1937], fighting broke out between Japanese and Chinese forces at the Marco Polo Bridge outside of Peking

(Beijing) – the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. A temporary cease-fire was reached on the scene, but the Kono cabinet determined to send in troops with the idea of giving China a punch, suppressing the anti-Japanese movement, and securing northern Chinese resources and markets; this was called the “North China Incident.” The fighting spread to Shanghai in August (the Second Shanghai Incident), and the affair was renamed the “China Incident” in September. Without declaring war, Japan embarked on an all-out invasion of China – the Sino – Japanese War.

Contrary to Japanese expectations that the country could be subdued with a single big thrust, China, which had forged an anti-Japanese national front, resisted fiercely. Japan sent in massive forces, and in December they occupied Nanking (Nanjing), the capital of the Nationalist government. On that occasion the Japanese troops killed many Chinese, including soldiers who had surrendered or been captured, and went on a rampage of looting, burning, and raping. This was internationally censured as the Great Nanking Massacre. In the few weeks before and after the occupation the number of deaths, including combatants, is estimated to have been at least one hundred and several tens of thousands. (Japan Echo)

Not just phrasing in textbooks but visuals in textbooks as well have a large impact on the learning of students. “When textbook visuals are well integrated with the written information... students’ learning can be significantly enhanced.” (Eisner, *Cognition*, pg.87) I did a short pictorial analysis of history textbooks from two cities involving three high schools. From Quincy High school in Quincy, Massachusetts I looked at three world history textbook and from Kawachinagano, Osaka, I looked at the history textbook used by

the city’s public school, Nagano High school, and a private school in the same city, Seikyo Gakuin.

In the American textbooks there were no pictures of Japanese victimization during the war. Two of the texts contained pictures of the attack on Pearl Harbor and two contained pictures of the devastated city of Hiroshima showing only destroyed buildings and no people. One of the texts showed the picture of the mushroom cloud over Hiroshima. Just looking at the pictures, as many students do, almost suggests a cause and effect relationship between the pictures presented.

In the Japanese texts, both showed victimization of the Japanese during the war in different ways. However, the public school book, *Shin Nihonshi A*, was much more liberal. It showed people suffering the effects of the atomic bomb, but it also used the terms ‘invasion’ of China as well as Nanking ‘Massacre’. The private school text, *Syosetsu Nihonshi*, used neither of these terms.

What does all this mean? High school history textbooks are the tools a government uses to provide a national narrative and transmit the values of society. These values are different from country to country. The Japanese government has tried to resist change in the presentation of its values which developed with the help of the occupation. The freedom provided during the occupation and the position of Japan during the cold war has allowed the rise of conservative and nationalistic forces in Japan which have resisted change and also attempted to go forward in resisting liberal change but still working within the structure as established by SCAP.

The Japanese government attempts to control its presentation of history by the textbook authorization process mainly, but also by legislation, and its actions such as ceremonies on Aug. 15 each year. As much as some groups (Ienaga Saburo and the JIU) try to encourage

change, many other groups (The Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform and the Japan War Bereaved Family Association) work to resist this change and even work for change in the opposite direction. Given this situation it is not surprising that change has come slowly and with controversy. This slow progress will continue but only within the framework established by the occupation authorities almost fifty years ago.

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