

# **The Textbook Controversies in Japan: What History is Taught?**

**Aaron Cooley**  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## Abstract

The controversies surrounding the content and perspective of several Japanese textbooks are examined and the impact on geo-political relations analyzed. The ways in which these battles affect perceptions of history are discussed in a regional and global context. Extrapolating from this example, a position of inclusiveness is advanced for the content of textbooks that address controversial historical issues in Japan and elsewhere.

Against that positivism which stops before phenomena, saying “there are only *facts*,” I should say: no it is precisely facts that do not exist, only *interpretations*...

(Nietzsche, 1968, p. 458)

## Introduction

This paper is a meditation, in the Cartesian sense, on the difficulties of writing, reading, teaching and interpreting history. From the days of Herodotus (see Toynbee, 1952) to the recent times of Stephen Ambrose and Doris Kearns-Goodwin, history has been troubled by questions of accuracy and objectivity. These questions arise from historians writing from biased perspective, a privileged position, or a hidden political motivation to simple plagiarism. History continues to govern the everyday lives of people worldwide and has been central to many of the ongoing debates in the Academy. The importance of what actions, treaties, motivations, intents, great leaders, terrible leaders, marginalized populations, and forgotten events are taught to a nation’s young people cannot be understated. Nothing shapes the future more than a society’s impressions of its past. All the historical and cultural knowledge we transmit should, therefore, be paramount in schooling and education.

To raise and discuss these issues of history and its’ meaning I employ an empirical example. I chose the history textbook controversy<sup>1</sup> in Japan, because it is at the

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<sup>1</sup> This study focuses on the history textbook controversies. Another controversy arose concerning the use of a Biology text that leaves out evolution will only be addressed here. As will become clear in the analysis of the history textbook conflict, the impulse to insert conservative attitudes into the schools is growing as this quote demonstrates: “Changes to the curriculum could mean students graduate without learning about the

conjunction of a number of trends, not the least of which are: How a nation state is willing to think about past state actions? What is to be made of recalcitrant acts committed by and against the population of the country? How does the government react when there is opposition from the political right and left on the interpretation of the past?

I will pay particular attention to nationalism<sup>2</sup> (see Anderson, 1991) in Japan, as the discourses of history (and its' teaching) and nationalism are intertwined. Specifically, my attention rests with the decades following the Second World War and more recent debates. The cultural and political events that can be perceived as nationalistic in Japan will be looked at. I will explore this incident in recent history that describes the past, current, and future discourse that are common thread in nationalistic sentiment<sup>3</sup>. An argument will be presented that describes how these specific events are indicative of broader cultural and political trends that have affected education and reform efforts<sup>4</sup>. Further, I will demonstrate how young Japanese citizens begin to think about their country's past, its' geo-political conflicts (see Said, 1995), and interactions with other nations in the region.

Many parts of the example will focus in some way on the 'history' of Japan (for background on educational history in Japan see Yokoi, 1901; Spinks, 1944; Hartford, 1950) and its political, militaristic, and cultural interactions with her neighbors (China, North and South Korea) and her foe, occupier, and eventual ally the United States (see Bailey, 1996; Boyle, 1993; Beauchamp, 1998; Beauchamp, 1998a; Kingston, 2001; Matray, 2001; McCargo, 2000). It is neither profound or original to acknowledge that these conflicts that have arisen since the late 1800s, have shaped politics and everyday life in Japan and the region, but the assertion in this paper is that the ways that these conflicts are discussed, symbolized, represented, and resisted in the historical discourse have shaped what Japan's schoolchildren learn about the past and affect political decisions they make in the future. Further, I feel the teaching of history is a variation on the Foucauldian notion of a 'technology of the self' (see Foucault, 1984) and can in fact be understood similarly as a 'technology of history<sup>5</sup>.'

The rest of the inquiry proceeds as an effort to illustrate the thesis using the example below and I will end the paper by advancing the notion that inclusiveness in

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origins of mankind. . . About half of all students entering high schools from April 2003 may graduate without ever having learned the theory of evolution" (New High School, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this paper nationalism is left loosely defined. That is, an abstract definition removed from the context in which it is used is much less accurate than if the term is left imbedded in the text. Clearly, it is a set of cultural, political and economic forces that seek to put the best light on (and at times glorify) the totality of events of the past and present of a nation with a domineering perspective on the future. It is usually accompanied by a lack of and distaste for the airing of opposite or contradictory opinions.

<sup>3</sup> See Yoshibumi, Wakamiya. (1998). *The PostWar Conservative View of Asia: How the Political Right Has Delayed Japan's Coming to Terms With its History of Aggression in Asia*. Tokyo: LTCB International Library Foundation. For deeper historical roots see Morris, I.I. (1960). *Nationalism and the Right Wing in Japan: A Study of Post-war Trends*. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>4</sup> See Fujita, Hidenori. (2000). Education and Reform and Education Politics in Japan. *American Sociologist*, Vol 31, Issue 3, p. 42-58 for a critical discussion of efforts on reform.

<sup>5</sup> This will be addressed at greater length in the last section.

textbooks is the greatest protection against nationalism. The event should not be seen as only identifying nationalistic positions, as at each turn on this cultural and political landscape there are opposing forces of progress and resistance, of action and capitulation. It is in seeing how these events have played themselves out that we can begin to see where these discourses might be going in the future.

The last section will attempt to draw in the examples that were given and how they are significant to the way political and cultural discourses act with/in education (for a discussion of Japanese education and politics see Curtis, 1999; Ellington, 1992; Fallows, 1990; Hartford, 1950; Hayes, 2001; Hood, 2001; Hoyer, 1999; Johnson, 2000; LeTendre, 1999; McGregor, 1996; Narita, 1999; Okano and Tsuciya, 1999; Shinoda, 2000; Spinks, 1944; Trevor, 2001; Tsuneyoshi, 2001; Wray, 1999; Yokoi, 1901; Yoshiko and Hiromistu, 2000; Yoshima, 1998). It is not as if these spheres of thought develop through time in completely static categories. Quite to the contrary they reinvigorate, intersect, and interact constantly on different levels. It is with this understanding that I will attempt to finalize the discussion on how history can be accepted and taught by a nation-state through the development of policy and implementation in schools. Further, how resistance from the right and the left can be overcome. In charting this course the danger mostly clearly can be seen from the nationalistic forces and an allegory will be extended to similar, yet obviously discrete, histories of other countries and their pasts—race in America, the holocaust in Germany, colonialism in France, dissidence in Russia.

### What to Teach in History Class and Which Book to Use?

How a society remembers its past and teaches that knowledge to the young can conflict with what the state and those that directly control the apparatuses of power are willing to acknowledge as the events of history. The example of the continuing textbook<sup>6</sup> saga in Japan illustrates the ebb and flow of public sentiment and resistance towards a nationalistic version of Japan's history that neglects past state atrocities and the government's response to these acts. It goes without saying that what is taught in school has a distinct affect in the shaping of children's minds about their region and the world. This is why an understanding of this type of discourse is vital.

The background for these controversies comes from the way textbooks began to be certified during the occupation of Japan by the United States. This certification process involves textbooks gaining approval and then being selected for use by the schools and districts. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology<sup>7</sup> (*Monbukagoakusho* or *Monbusho*) is the agency that has control over this approval process. Even though a text may not be used by any school community the

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<sup>6</sup> See Wray, Harold. (1973). A Study of Contrasts: Japanese School Textbooks of 1903 and 1941-5. *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 28, Issue 1, 69-86 for background on the time before and during the war. For occupation in Japan see Thakur, Yoko. (1998). History of Textbook Reform in Allied Occupied Japan, 1945-52. In Edward R. Beauchamp (Ed.), *Education and Schooling in Japan since 1945* (pp. 21-38). New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.mext.go.jp/english/org/reform/03/htm> for a better understanding of the future of Japanese education and the reforms that are being implemented.

acceptance and certification of textbooks which interpret history in ways that are thought to be nationalistic can be a cause for concern. The focus on accuracy versus censorship in the early years of the battle was over what books would not be approved. In fact, we can imagine that the most recent controversies about content would certainly be moot if the first texts had been approved and used in schools during this period. What follows are the nuts and bolts of the textbook controversy.

### Ienaga's Battles<sup>[8]</sup>

“In 1965 Saburo Ienaga, a prominent historian, filed the first of his three lawsuits against the Ministry of Education charging the process was unconstitutional and illegal. The Ministry had rejected Ienaga's history textbook” (Masalski, 2001, p.2) on the ground that it had “too many illustrations of the ‘dark side of the war, such as an air raid, a city left in ruins by the atomic bomb, and disabled veterans” (Yoshiko & Hiromitsu, 2000, p.108). The way in which Ienaga had been looking at the events evidently was not considered accurate or the way in which the government of Japan wanted to teach its' collective past to schoolchildren. This impulse makes sense, for the basis of a national identity would seem to develop better in remembering positive events. Yet, the glossing over of history's less than spectacular parts and not giving them enough attention could foster the antipathy to current and future recalcitrant events. In affect the lessons of history could be forgotten.

Ienaga first “sued for 1 million yen, claiming that approval by the Ministry of Education before the textbook is officially recognized constitutes censorship, and is therefore unconstitutional under the terms of Article 21 that guarantees freedom of speech and declares that no censorship shall be maintained” (Caiger, 1998, p.39). This lawsuit and the others he filed would continue to drag on for years. This central issue of censorship<sup>9</sup> (Dore, 1998) will crop up again. Finally, “in 1997- in response to Ienaga's third lawsuit instituted in 1986- the Supreme Court of Japan unanimously upheld the Ministry's right to continue screening textbooks” (Masalski, 2001, p.3). However, the ruling suggested that the Ministry should try to stay out of the process. But times had changed over the years and the accepted versions of certain incidents started to make their way into textbooks. “The most widely used Japanese textbooks in the mid and late 1990s contained references to the Nanjing Massacre, anti-Japanese resistance movements in Korea, forced suicide in Okinawa, comfort women, and Unit 731 (responsible for conducting medical experiments on prisoners of war)—all issues raised in Ienaga's suits” (Masalski, 2001, p.3).

The production and distribution of this historical information throughout the school system through the use of these types of texts provides for a more rounded picture of the past. Along with popular cultural images and familial histories that were affected

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<sup>8</sup> See Ienaga, Saburo. (1965). *Kyokaso Kentei*. Nihon Hyontonsha.  
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New York. Littlefield Publishers.

<sup>9</sup> Censorship in the most recent controversies was now on the opposite side. That is, fighting for the freedom to express the euphemistic history of Japan

by these circumstances, we can hope to see the tides of nationalism wane in the future. As for the present we seem to still be stuck with textbooks that are offensive to the neighboring countries and a *Monbusho* that now has decided to approve these controversial texts. So, we can see an apparent shift of increasingly letting textbooks be approved even if their content is offensive to either the right or the left. The issue of censorship is one that has swung from preventing the issues raised and presented in texts like Ienaga's from being presented to the permission to print texts from the opposite side of the ideological spectrum. The next example displays how important the teaching of history can be.

Over the last decade there has been a resurgence of conservative political opinion and nationalism in the debates around history curriculum. This is not particularly surprising as response from the right was to be expected considering the increased acceptance of Ienaga and his cohort's work. As such this opposition has become increasingly vocal in popular media and public affairs. It seems that these voices are determined not to be excised from the discourse and are therefore making their presence known.

One of the strongest proponents of this conservative view is that of University of Tokyo Professor Fujioka Nobukatsu. He is influential in the Liberal View of History Study Group and the Society to Make a New History Textbook, both of these can be seen as the backlash to the above-mentioned trends and Ienaga's work. "He has called the contents of the Japanese history taught in schools since the end of the World War II 'masochistic' and 'anti-Japanese' suggesting that what is being presented is the 'Comintern view' or the 'Tokyo War Crimes Trial view' of Japan's past; 'dark history' is another term he has used in describing the current curriculum" (Yoshimasa, 1998, p.66). Further, his goal is "set out to 'correct history' by emphasizing a 'positive view' of Japan's past" (Masalski, 2001, p.3). This project is very different from the one advocated by Ienaga and his lawsuits. As stated previously this coagulation of nationalistic sentiment can be seen as a response to the success of Ienaga's lawsuits.

Another key player in this political arena is Nishio Kanji who led the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform and merged with Fujioka Nobukatsu and his followers. The Society published *The New History Textbook*<sup>10</sup> which "aims to restore common sense to the teaching of the subject [history]" (Masalski, 2001, p.4). This release made quite a stir and is reopening wounds with Japan's neighbors. Some of the "complaints centered on the text's presentation of Japan's foundation myths as historical fact and its characterization of wars launched by modern Japan as wars to liberate Asia" (Masalski, 2001, p.4). One can immediately see that the pendulum of what is appropriate in textbooks has evolved. Perversely, the fights of Ienaga went through expanded the debate and dialogue on Japan's past opened the door for conservative and nationalistic views to remain and reenter textbooks to the exclusion of more inclusive texts. It is a peculiar, but not surprising change in the way nationalism was making its way into schools and the public sphere. Whereas the approved textbooks after the Second World

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<sup>10</sup> This history textbook is the one that caused so much of the trouble. They also published a civics text as well. References in the paper refer to these if not otherwise specified.

War would not allow Ienaga's version of history to be taught, now we can see the tacit acceptance that many views of the past are possible, even ones that gloss over or forget essential formative events and motivations of recalcitrant actions.

### Recent Conflicts

The continuation of the textbook controversy moved away from Ienaga's concerns of telling a less nationalistic history to the approval of a text with nationalistic sentiment. These most recent approvals have disturbed relations in the region. According to the Kyodo News Service and Japan Economic Newswire (2001) the South Koreans were distressed even before the book was finally approved. At a meeting of senior officials the South Koreans' statement "expressed deep concern over Japan's attempt to issue such a history textbook for fear that such a move is likely to seriously impair friendly and cooperative ties between (South) Korea and Japan that have steadily developed in recent years" (Kyodo News Service, 2001). Korean Trade Minister Lee Joung Binn went on to say that "Japan's correct understanding of its history is a prerequisite for building a future-oriented relationship between (South) Korea and Japan" (Kyodo News Service, 2001). Further, the South Korean National Assembly took legislative action condemning the book and contemplated possible economic sanctions against Japan if they did not change the texts. The South Korean populace had their collective voice heard through rallies in Seoul against the textbook. What is instructive about this anecdote of the debate is that at this point the book had yet to receive *Monbusho's* approval, yet there was an uproar from the South Korean government and people. It must be realized that the writers of the textbook knew or at least assumed that there would be such a response, but they went ahead with their limited and nationalistic view of the past. We should also not forget that a nationalistic agenda<sup>11</sup> would surely not be confined to textbooks and confined to how Japan's history is taught<sup>12</sup>.

This initial dispute had some practical consequences for students as fallout from the governmental squabble. The ill-will stemming from the conflict "dooms [a] pair of exchange programs" that had been scheduled (Textbook dispute, 2001). A brief excerpt relays the tension of the region and how it affects young people:

The South Korean city of Anyang told Komaki City in Aichi Prefecture on Saturday that it will not accept 17 Komaki children for a five-day home stay. . . The officials quoted the chief of international cooperation section at Anyang as saying negative sentiment generated by the issue in South Korea is much stronger than people in Japan imagine. . . a South Korean musical performance scheduled for next Sunday in Okinawa Prefecture was also canceled. . . The move came after Japan earlier this month rejected 33 of Seoul's 35 requests for revisions to eight textbooks. . . Seoul claims the textbooks. . . gloss over wartime atrocities committed by the Japanese Imperial Army (Textbook dispute, 2001).

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<sup>11</sup> The institutionalization of the national anthem and the flag as national symbols can be included in this package.

<sup>12</sup> It could be argued that these inciting texts have the purpose of provoking conflict in the region and then using such conflict as political justification for changes in Japan's constitution and other measures.

These instances illustrate how this large problem of what goes into a textbook begins to affect schoolchildren. These two examples demonstrate the cost of allowing nationalistic history into the discourse without anything to refute it. Here groups of schoolchildren were prohibited from experiencing a cultural exchange and learning from another culture, one which they have been historically at odds with. Having fewer of these experiences available must begin to affect Japanese schoolchildren's thoughts about their country and its relation to the rest of the world.

The issue of how textbooks can affect children is not far from the minds of those who are against these texts. The opposition to the book also came from inside Japan:

Textbook Japan Network 21- an umbrella group of academic and other organisations that are opposed to the revised textbooks- does not mince its words. The intention of those behind the revision 'is to mobilize Japanese people and children to future wars', the group declared in a protest statement issued on April 3. 'We cannot permit such a dangerous textbook that denies the Japanese Constitution and treads the path to international isolation to be handed over to Japanese children' (Rowley, 2001, p.10.)

So, clearly the concerns about the educational value and possible harm that might be done by using these books are at the forefront of the minds of the opposition to this nationalistic agenda. It is instructive to see that the Network 21 is acutely aware of the need to resist these new texts as these statements attests: "[the textbook] particularly stresses the formation of state-centered national consciousness' and 'the formation of nationalism in times of national crisis'" (Rowley, 2001, p.10).

Finally, we see that Network 21's objections are predicting the ends that the groups behind these textbooks are using as a means. The "'movement for a revision of the Constitution (in Japan) is growing noticeably'. The group adds that 'here lies a serious issue that will have a tremendous impact on Japan in the 21<sup>st</sup> century'" (Rowley, 2001, p.10). It is not difficult to see here that the emphasis on changing perceptions of events of the past can lay the foundation for tremendous fundamental changes in the political arena. Constitutional changes that would be impossible to accomplish with a populace that has read and been taught Ienaga's history would be much more plausible when schooled in a nationalistic and euphemistic version of the past.

But in the spirit of presenting both sides of the argument, I would be remiss not to include the comments of the previously mentioned Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform:

'We confirm that now we may finally end the vicious circle of giving in to repeated political pressure from China and South Korea. The consequences will affect not only school textbooks but also act as a catalyst to reaffirm common sense in Japanese society. . .we will portray Japan and the Japanese with dignity and balance in the context of world history. Our textbooks will contain vivid,

spirited descriptions of Japan and the Japanese people. Through them, we hope to communicate our pride in the achievements of our ancestors and enable our schoolchildren to relive their joys and sorrows while at the same time addressing errors that have been committed during the course of history’ (Rowley, 2001, p.10).

But one must be leery of this seemingly innocuous rhetoric. This last quote emphasizes the need to remain critical towards this movement: “balanced tone of such passages does not accord with general tenor of the society’s presentation, however, which tends to suggest that instilling a sense of patriotism and pride in Japanese schoolchildren is a higher priority than historical accuracy” (Rowley, 2001, p.10).

In the face of these criticisms there was a small amount of capitulation from the authors of the textbook. Again a short excerpt from the *Daily Yomiuri* is instructive:

The publisher of a controversial middle school history textbook notified the Education, Science and Technology Ministry on Monday that it will rewrite nine sections of text, including several that describe prewar history in Asian countries neighboring Japan. . . The parts including five passages that South Korea demanded be revised are being rewritten ‘voluntarily’ by the authors, the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform said (Publisher to, 2001).

But this amount of change did not satisfy all the detractors from continuing to air their grievances. As mentioned previously, just because the textbook was approved and even changed does not mean that it must be used. Actually, there was quite a large amount of resistance to the acceptance from towns weighing which books to use. Here a quote from the *Asashi Shimbun* is helpful:

On by one, towns and cities in this rural prefecture are rejecting a controversial history textbook after secret lobbying campaign to force widespread use of a book that has incensed governments in Seoul and Beijing. . .the Oyama board of education rejected a recommendation by a regional textbook council to use a history textbook written by the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform and published by Fuso-sha. . . The latest rejection is a serious blow to the text’s chances of widespread adoption in the region (Another city, 2001.)

But even with this rejection we can see, by way of the secret lobbying campaign, that there are those that would like to see this nationalistic version of history implemented.

All of this continued media blitz from both sides made the textbooks skyrocket in sales. This quote relays the next piece of the puzzle:

The latest bestseller, oddly enough is a junior high school textbook. . .By order of the Minister of Education, 137 places were corrected in the history text, but critics contend it still presents a nationalistic and militaristic view of Japanese history, and South Korea and China have complained about the glossing over of wartime

atrocities. . .textbook publishers are upset by Fushoa's unusual step of publishing editions for the general public, since they are bound by restrictions on the distribution and advertising of textbooks during the period of selection by local school boards this month and next (Ashby, 2001).

Here we see that the publicity received by the texts resulted in many more copies being sold. Although, it was beginning to be clear that the texts were not going to gain widespread use in the schools the ideas in the pages of the books certainly garnered much public attention. We can see that even if works of a nationalistic bent are not being directly used to inculcate certain values into the schoolchildren of Japan, there is seemingly no way to prevent the ideas from making it into the public discourse and getting their foot in the door for future generations.

These controversies over the adoption, publication and use of textbooks continued to occur in the 2001. In the Spring of 2002 another slew of controversy arose over several new textbooks some so disturbing that South Korea even took the matter to the UN (for further description of the continuing geo-political conflicts center on textbooks see Cummings, 2001; Ethnic Korean Leads 2002; Emerges, 2002; Ji-ho, 2002; Nakao, 2002; Seoul to Take Textbook, 2002; South Korean Parliament, 2002; Wenwei, 2002).

Though the resistance to these trends came from teachers, districts, leftist political organizations, and an independent scholars appeal, *Monbusho* continued to approve ones with nationalistic sentiment. With this tacit governmental approval in August of 2002:

The Ehime prefectural education board Thursday adopted a controversial history textbook written by a group of nationalistic scholars for use at three junior high schools opening next spring. . .The board approved the textbook compiled by the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform at a regular committee meeting despite sharp criticism from China and South Korea that the textbook glosses over Japan's wartime atrocities. . . Ehime Gov. Moriyuki Kato, a former high-ranking official of the education ministry is a strong advocate of the controversial textbook. . .After last year's adoption, Kato said, 'I believe (the textbook) is the most appropriate to deepen people's appreciation of the history of the country' (Ehime education, 2002).

Even as the textbook was dismissed in many areas and protested against it was adopted with resistance in this area (see Japan Public, 2002).

In closing this section we must remember that example of what goes into textbooks and is taught to schoolchildren is just one part of how they learn history. I think it is certainly the most formative force in shaping the way they will think about events in the future is dependent on the 'facts' of history they have learned. If these 'facts' are incomplete, de-contextualized, and gloss over the atrocities of the past there is a much greater chance of systemic changes to Japan's constitution, a deepening sense of nationalism in the political atmosphere, and increased isolation from Japan's neighbors (for these perspectives see Beal, Nozaki and Yang, 2001).

The final section attempts to build off the foundation laid by the examples above. The purpose of the last section is to extend the debate beyond the presented context, which the Japanese history textbook controversies were gleaned, and to think about the central questions that made this discourse arise. At its heart it is an exploration of issues that make history relevant to the lives of schoolchildren and at the same time a look at the problematics of teaching history to them.

### How Do We Teach History?: A Call for Inclusiveness

I have attempted to use these cultural events around the Japanese history textbook controversy to illustrate the importance of teaching history to a nation's young people. The deep epistemological questions of *What is History?* (Carr, 1961) and if it can be objective (Meyerhoff, 1959; Walsh, 1951) have given way to the tacit acceptance that there can be no objective history. Much of the foundation of this type of work stresses disjuncture and ruptures detailed in *Marxism and Epistemology: Bachelard, Canguilhem and Foucault* (LeCourt, 1969), among many other post-structuralists.

Beyond these abstract debates on the nature of history is the area of curriculum and texts used in the education of children. In the example, I relay the issues that arise around the teaching of history in Japan. There are no easy answers to what should be taught and what should go into the textbooks. Japan is a democracy and as such people are free to express their views. Keeping that in mind I would again assert, as I did in the introduction, that the exclusion of events of the past is the most dangerous development of the recent trends.

As for the teaching of history in Japan the most prudent track would be to incorporate (at age appropriate levels) the recent controversy into the relevant part of the curriculum. By looking at more aspects of the debates and understanding multiple perspectives the schoolchildren will begin to develop a greater understanding of how the events of the past relate to the present. It seems clear that the answer to what should go into the history curriculum should always focus on the inclusion of material and shy away from exclusion. The more information, documents, and artifacts of the past that children are exposed to the greater chance we have for them to become tolerant adults.

With this said, I used the textbook controversy as an example of one particular situation in which the texts approved to teach history caused a geo-political event. There are assuredly many more incidents of historical editing done by publishing houses and governmental institutions. So, these less publicized examples must be combated by engaged teachers that supplement any text, regardless of its quality, with additional cultural material to promote the fullest picture of any set of events.

As stated in the introduction, I feel that the importance placed on history in other contexts and countries could and should receive similar attention. Although, there are many differences between: race in America, the holocaust in Germany, colonialism in France and dissidence in Russia, there are also many similarities in the ways in which

these events can be taught; with inclusion and not exclusion of historical fragments. I think that it is essential to teach these events in such a way as to foster the types of individuals that all these liberal democratic nation-states should (I guess there could be some debate on this point) want.

I would, momentarily, like to come back to the Foucauldian notion of the ‘technology of the self’ to stress how history helps to shape and individuate people from one another in their present society and also differentiate among ones in which they come into contact with. It is through this teaching of history that schoolchildren continue to construct the ‘other’ in conjunction with how adults treat different populations. We must continue to strive for opportunities for understanding and not retreat from past misdeeds.

Undoubtedly, it is difficult to examine the past critically and especially when it leads to the uncovering and discussion of horrible events, but it seems a far greater tragedy not address these events with the attention they merit. If they are not stressed to the extent they should be, we risk extending history’s dark side far into this new century

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