

政治的対立をこえて：

日本の歴史教科書問題と教科書の内容に関する国際間の比較研究の現状

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要 旨

今年度の中・高等学校の教科書検定が終わって、再度日本の歴史教科書問題に世界の注目が集まり、再び日本の近隣諸国から苦情が公に提出され、教科書の内容に異議が申し立てられている。

日本の歴史教科書問題は極めて複雑である。世界のマスコミが日本に焦点をあわせて注目していることを考えると、多くの日本人が、攻撃の対象として日本が選出された、と感じていることは明かである。しかし、歴史教科書の内容は全世界にわたる問題である。この論文の目的は、あらゆる国の人々が教えられてきた歴史を再検討するなかで、歴史教科書を国際的に比較しようという、最近顕著になってきた傾向を、日本の読者に紹介することにある。歴史の教師や教師たらしとする人の注意を喚起したい。何故、日本だけがこれほどまでも綿密に詮索されるのか。何を、何故、教えているのか。教える予定の内容について、長所と短所を熟知して、その教え方についても、注意深く考えて頂きたい。

Beyond the Politics: Japan's History Textbook Issue and the Current Research into International Comparison of Textbook Content

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All would agree that the legislator should make the education of the young his chief and foremost concern. (The politics of Aristotle)⁽¹⁾

The front cover of the October 31, 2005 issue of Newsweek has a picture of Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro praying at Yasukuni Shrine and bears the title, 'Why Japan Has No Friends: The Long-Running Battle Over Its Past Now Threatens the Country's Future.' In the follow-up article, Caryl (2005) quotes the conclusion to German ex-chancellor Helmut Schmidt's speech given in Tokyo just a month previously (which Caryl states was mostly ignored by the Japanese press.) Schmidt stated the reason for this lack of "genuine friends in the world outside" that Japan has is

“the ambiguity of the Japanese public when it comes to acknowledging the conquests, the start of the Pacific war and the crimes of the past history.” (Caryl, 2005, p. 43)

Caryl (2005) goes on to point out that, until recently, Japan’s money and its connections to the United States have sheltered it from having to come to terms with its past. However, the current growing economic wealth and armaments of Asian nations, combined with the territorial disputes Japan still has with most of its neighbors, the political mileage that Asian leaders now get out of ‘Japan bashing,’ and the attitudes of the new generation of Japanese who did not experience the war, along with a constitution that does not really acknowledge the powerful armed forces Japan does indeed possess, all provide impetus to growing discontent with Japan, and this discontent has had results such as Japan’s dismal failure in its bid for a permanent seat on the U. N. Security Council.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) current homepage states, “The School Education Law provides that the use of textbooks is compulsory, and, as a rule, textbooks must be authorized by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.” This process of top-down authorization has been for decades the focus of debate and legal action, in particular by the scholar Ienaga Saburo, and has drawn widespread condemnation as well as having lead to the common perception outside Japan that the content of the textbooks and curriculum is very carefully controlled by the government through MEXT, despite government claims that the process of authorization is merely a check to prevent undesirable content.

Combining the portrayal of the current political situation portrayed in Newsweek and this perception as to government control of textbooks, it is hardly surprising that the content of Japanese history textbooks has become such a political issue. Bearing in mind the greater base for understanding in Europe with the push for European unity and shared liberal-democratic values that has encouraged Germany to take careful and considerable steps to come to terms with its past, (Vickers, 2002b) it is also evident why the content of Japanese textbooks is so often criticized in comparisons of these two defeated powers of the last World War.

Nozaki (2002) states that this debate and, “discussion [by the media and academia of the representation of Japan’s wartime past in its history textbooks] has tended to revolve primarily around a number of symbolic issues, such as government censorship of the term ‘aggression.’” (p. 603) Cave (2002) points out that in debating whether coverage of Japan’s imperial past by “curricula, textbooks and teachers” is “full enough” or not in the English literature on the subject, it is often “discussed as if the answer is rather obvious (no, it is not full enough) and as if the reasons for neglect are also obvious (a desire to forget the unpleasant past).” (p. 637) In addition, it often seems that the answer to this is automatically the adoption of ‘Western’ style skills and topic based classes. Anyone familiar with the debate would find comments such as the following, which come from a text

concerning the textbook debate, not unusual:

- The teaching of history, more than any other discipline, is dominated by textbooks.
- Textbooks exclude conflict or real suspense. They leave out anything that might reflect badly upon our national character.
- Textbook authors portray a heroic state, and like their other heroes, this one is pretty much without blemish.
- Why are textbooks so bad? Nationalism is one of the culprits.
- Startling errors of omission and distortion mar Japanese histories.
- History books are clones of each other. The first thing editors do when recruiting new authors is to send them a half-dozen examples of the competition.
- Textbooks also keep students in the dark about the nature of history.
- The omniscient narrator's voice of history textbooks insulates students from the raw materials of history [primary sources].
- Textbooks encourage students to believe that history is facts to be learned.
- None of the facts is remembered, because they are presented simply as one damn thing after another.
- Even though the courses are busy they rarely reach the war.
- Two textbook taboos: no textbook ever shows anyone naked and none shows such suffering [speaking of the picture of the maimed soldier Ienaga tried to include in his history textbook], even in time of war. (source indicated later)

However, what Japanese who believe that they, and they alone, are being singled out for criticism should bear in mind is that comments like these are not only being made about Japanese textbooks. The history textbook issue, if it can be labeled as such, is in fact a struggle in many countries around the world. The comments above were actually not made about Japanese textbooks at all - they are all comments made about American textbooks by Loewen (1995, p. 13-17, 216, 243) in his book *Lies my teacher told me: Everything your American history textbook got wrong* - I just took the liberty of changing only three things in the comments.⁽²⁾ The following list of titles also shows that concern with textbooks and their content is by no means limited to the United States and Japan either:

- The Use and Abuse of Australian History (Davison, 2000)
- Image, Ideology and Inequality: Cultural Domination, Hegemony and Schooling in India (Scrase, 1993)

- Another Vacuum Opens Up: What sort of history, if any, will Iraqi children now have to learn? (Anon (The Economist), 2003)
- ‘Our history syllabus has us gasping’: History in Canadian Schools - Past, Present, and Future. (Osborne, 2000)
- Russia Revisits History In Its School Textbooks (Matloff, 2000)
- The Spirit of our times embodied in the Chinese History Textbook for Junior’ high schools in the nine-year mandatory education (People’s education publishing house edition) (Zhibin, 1999)
- History and Memory in the Israeli Education System (Podeh, 2000)

In fact, as Foster and Nicholls (2005) point out, “all nations, to some degree, appear to be guilty of using history textbooks as a means to promote a particular view of the past, to enhance the collective memories of a nation, and, more often than not, to appease social and political agendas in the present.” (p. 214-5) This fact inevitably leads to disagreement and debate over textbook content.

What does set the debate about the history textbook issue in Japan apart is that it has attracted such international criticism over the last twenty years or so. Despite the political situation outlined in Newsweek by Caryl (2005), this seems particularly odd at a time when the textbooks of the only superpower in the world, the United States of America, and former colonial powers, such as Great Britain, seem to evoke so little international interest.

Few will argue with the belief that the history textbook is vital in shaping a nation’s self-image. As it has been said, “Getting its history wrong is part of being a nation.” (Ernest Renan, in Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 12) The textbook is, after all, in this age of compulsory education, the first (and sometimes last) ‘official’ document that students read and study, (Apple and Christian-Smith, 1991) and thus the information contained and how it is presented becomes a vital pillar of the national image; a symbol of, container for, and pedagogical base for the official narrative of the nation - both domestically and, when the textbooks of a nation present a relatively united story (as it can be argued they do to a certain extent in Japan), internationally. National image means nationalism and that is a concept of belief that raises passions, and so we see more clearly how the textbook has become the centre of political debate.

However, one should never assume that what is in the textbook is what is actually taught - nor should one assume that it has been learnt as is. Textbooks often are performing a range of roles at any one time (including covering or being the base for a mandated curriculum and providing a base for standardized testing) as well as being used in a variety of ways (such as as the principal source of teacher information, support for teachers, or to criticize certain viewpoints). (Foster and

Nicholls, 2005) As Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) state:

We cannot assume that what is “in” the textbook is actually taught. Nor can we assume that what is taught is actually learned. Teachers have a strong history of mediating and transforming text material when they employ it in classrooms. Students bring their own classed, raced, gendered and sexed biographies with them as well. They, too, selectively accept, reinterpret, and reject what counts as legitimate knowledge. (Apple and Christian-Smith, 1991, p. 14)

It is only very recently that research has begun on “how students actually interpret the history they learn in school and how their understanding is affected by a range of personal factors, along with the influence of other sources of historical knowledge, like parents, television, and the Internet.” (Moreau, 2003, p. 24)

There is, however, a veritable flood of research on the actual content of the textbooks, both within Japan and internationally. One would presume, then, that if international researchers were truly concerned about how history was portrayed to Japanese youth, there would be an equally large body of research assessing how those history textbooks are used in the classroom and how much young Japanese were learning. This is not, in fact, the case.⁽³⁾ However, there is a growing literature based on the international comparison of textbook content and it is here that the Japanese reader may find consolation.

The international comparison of how textbooks from different countries handle certain subjects, such as the Second World War, is only very recent, despite the existence of and attention of such agencies as the Council of Europe, the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, and UNESCO. (Foster and Nicholls, 2005) The major works that attempt to place the debate in a more international context (outside of Europe and Israel) are very limited in number.

In 2002, Vickers (2002b) described Hein and Selden (2000) as, “the only major comparative study to date of national history curricula and textbooks.” (p. 539) In this text, labeled, ‘Censoring History; Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany and the United States,’ Hein and Selden indicate that, “The American example [*that is, examination of American textbooks and their coverage of the Vietnam war in particular*], unlike the German one [*as the Germans have made considerable effort in this regard, although debate is far from over*], suggests that Japanese nationalists have a point when they complain that other nations gloss over their own dark chapters while Japan is singled out for attack.” (p. 23)

Hein and Selden (2000) go on to conclude that (and it seems appropriate to quote at length here):

Narratives of the nation, in textbooks as elsewhere, must change over time to accommodate both global shifts of power and domestic social transformations. In the service of that task, past actions are continually reinterpreted, making old justifications obsolete. One key issue is how to imagine peaceful, cooperative links with former enemy nations. A second involves representing the relationship between citizen and state. . . . Americans are insulated from foreign criticism to a degree unimaginable in either Germany or Japan. This luxury - actually an obstacle to engaging history - will not last forever. The ferocity of textbook and curricular debates in Japan can instruct the rest of us: the issues they wrestle with - nationalism, citizenship, regional and global cooperation, and social change - confront citizens of all nations in the contemporary world. Education is one of the key fronts where those battles will be fought. Indeed, they are already under way. (p. 43-44)

The second important work on such comparative study is issue 37 (2002) of the *International Journal of Education Research*, which follows on from and models itself on Hein and Selden's work, and attempts to place the topic in Asia - although its focus goes far beyond the textbook to look at a wide range of related issues including curriculum.

Vickers (2002a) begins the issue by pointing out that while the growing strength in nationalism in East Asia (in the case of this text being the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan) in recent years has drawn a great deal of academic and media attention, apart from the case of Japan, "little attention has been devoted to the subject of history education. As a result, the ways in which history education across the region both influences and is influenced by the politics of nationalism and identity is poorly understood." (p. 537) He points out that articles in this issue illustrate that, in East Asia, "playing politics with school history textbooks is [*not*] a peculiarly Japanese pastime," (p. 539) and so here too we see that claims that Japan is being singled out for attack, while other countries ignore their own problems, has some ground in Asia as well.

In this issue, Cave's (2002) comparison of the teaching of 'the history of empire in Japan and England' finds that, "Despite their significant differences, both these curricular schemes effectively limit the teaching time available for the history of empire." (p. 639) Cave also states that this limitation on lesson time, "in both Japan and England can probably be attributed in part to a widespread, and sometimes unconscious or unacknowledged, desire in both countries to avoid the difficult issues that must be faced if this area of history is taught at length." (p. 638) This wish to avoid difficult issues could possibly be applied to almost any country's history textbooks' content.

The most recent comparison of textbook content is Foster and Nicholls (2005), which sets out to analyze how history textbooks treat the involvement of the United States in World War II from

the following nations; the United States itself, “Sweden (a neutral nation), England (a close ally), and Japan (a wartime enemy).” (p. 216)

In this study, it was found that American texts portray American intervention as decisive and, for the most part, fail to mention such things the involvement of the forces of other countries in the Pacific theatre. British texts tend to place contributions to victory equally amongst the British Empire, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. and spend a considerable amount of time on the period Britain stood alone against Nazi Germany. Swedish texts, by comparison, have a much more euro-centric view than the others, with the Pacific war being very much a secondary affair. In comparison, it was found that the war in Europe was treated only very superficially in Japanese textbooks, which focus on the Pacific War and are very careful to illustrate how Japan was all but forced to go to war. “Significantly, according to Japanese textbooks, the eventual military success of U.S. military forces resulted from America’s overwhelming material, not military, superiority.” (Foster and Nicholls, 2005, p. 231)

Foster and Nicholls (2005) thus demonstrate clearly how the textbook representations of each of the nations, “appear to be influenced by particular nationalistic bias, differing cultural and geopolitical perspectives, and the sociopolitical agendas” (p. 232) of each nation. Cave (2002) concludes, “the controversial nature of the subject makes it inevitable that they will continue to be the centre of passionate debate. . . in a democratic society, what history is to be taught (and how) is never fixed forever, but is always subject to negotiation as history and its participants, its makers, move on.” (Cave, 2002, p. 639) Foster and Nicholls (2005) state textbooks are never neutral sources and that examination of how common themes or topics are depicted:

... enables the development of broader cross-cultural and international understandings of approaches to teaching about the past and implications for the present day. In addition, textbook studies not only offer a window into the perspectives of others, but also provide invaluable opportunities to reflect critically on practices in one’s own educational system.” (2003, p. 215)

Setting aside the debate on the lack of sincerity in Japanese attempts to reconcile the past, and the current political situation and tensions, how do Japanese textbooks stand up to international comparison? That has only just begun to be examined, but the answer seems to be quite reasonably when one bears in mind the nature of a history textbook in any country. How is, in fact, the textbook used in the Japanese classroom? Surprisingly little has actually been researched about this. How do, in fact, the Japanese people think of the actions of their country in the last war? Most outside of Japan do not know and what their imaginations tell them scares them as the memory of the last war

is more carefully maintained (often in history textbooks) in other Asian nations. How much does history education dictate or affect the beliefs of the Japanese people? That we also do not know. But what we do know is that there are many controversial international issues and tensions caused, directly or indirectly, by the content of Japanese textbooks and that the future peace and prosperity of Asia relies on the resolution of these conflicts. The attention to textbook content is probably heightened by the conflicting or vague messages from the Japanese government on this subject, and this vagueness makes history education in Japan that much more important.

While it is true that Europe and America have not yet apologized for their own imperialism, colonialism, and slavery, as (Field, 1997) goes on to point out, by doing so now Japan would gain the 'moral high ground.' The fact that most of the more prominent figures involved in the textbook debate, not only in Japan but also in neighbors such as Korea, are not historians only goes further to emphasize the realization by a significant part of society that textbooks are vital for creating and teaching "ideas of citizenship and both the idealized past and the promised future" of the concerned nation-states. (Chunghee, 2003, p. 149-50)

History teachers and teachers-to-be need to gain and maintain an awareness of what constraints and influences there are on their own curriculum and textbooks and the best way to do that is to examine the constraints, influences, approaches and methodology in other countries. Media hype will always work to take advantage of delicate issues such as this, but Japanese history teachers need also to be aware that international academia is beginning to make use of the Japanese example to examine their own countries' shortcomings, misrepresentations, teaching methodology and history education as a whole. Without disparaging the ongoing efforts such as the joint Korean-Japanese history projects, I only hope that somehow history education in Japan through similar methods can come to contribute more positively to reconciliation with Japan's neighbors, and thus regional peace.

notes

- (1) Translated by Ernest Baker, 1948, p. 390.
- (2) 'The war' should read '1960,' 'Japanese' should read 'American' and the 'maimed soldier Ienaga tried to include in his history textbook' replaced with the 'naked girl running down the road from the accidental napalm strike on her village.'
- (3) Rohlen (1983) provides a lot of material on this, but recent studies are fairly limited in number - the three studies by Larsson et al. (Booth et al. 1995, Larsson et al., 1998 and Llarson et al., 2004) and Cave (2002) are the primary sources, while many other more general sources contain only occasional references.

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