

THE JAPANESE HISTORY TEXTBOOK CONTROVERSY AMID POST-WAR SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS

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The relations between China and Japan have been strained partly because of China's grievances concerning Japan's actions during World War II and the allegedly deceitful historiographical accounts found in Japanese history textbooks. These history textbooks, used in primary and secondary schools, which are approved by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT),¹ have caused a wave of protest within China and South Korea regarding the claimed glossed-over or whitewashed accounts of World War II atrocities. The most contested atrocity affecting the history textbook dispute is the highly controversial Nanjing Massacre (also known as the "Rape of Nanking," a title made famous by the late author Iris Chang),² where a debated number (ranging from an estimated 40,000 to 300,000) of Nanjing residents were killed on December 13, 1937 and up to six weeks after the city, located south of Beijing, fell to the Japanese Imperial Army. Other allegedly deceitful accounts of atrocities within history textbooks include the invasion of China, the military skirmish at the Marco Polo Bridge in Beijing on July 7, 1937, and the use of comfort women or non-Japanese Asian women in sex stations for Japanese Imperial troops.

Significance of Study

According to Ming, in the book *Sino-Japanese Relations: Interaction, Logic and Transformation*, the issues found in Sino-Japanese relations are all related to history and status:

¹ In 2001, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry for Science and Technology merged to form Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

² Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997); an editorial decision was made to use *pinyin* when referencing places in China, such as "Beijing" instead of "Peking" and "Nanjing" instead of "Nanking," except within an author's work. Chinese names will also be given in *pinyin* with the exception of Chiang Kai-Shek and the KMT.

Historical memory cannot escape politics; government and individuals often select or reimage history to advance their political interest. This book has also shown that how Japanese remember their history is a serious diplomatic issue for China. As such, history triggers intergovernmental exchanges and involves compromise by both sides.³

Therefore, my study is significant for several reasons. First, as previously stated, the issue of history is unresolved in Japan and China, causing political disputes, such as the claims to the Senkaku/Daiyou Islands, to continue, which could further harm current relations between these two important nations. Second, as MEXT is the agency that approves history textbooks, it is assumed that the Japanese government has a hand in not only selecting textbooks that whitewash World War II atrocities, but also in editing the textbooks themselves to fulfill a political or historical agenda. Lastly, the Chinese government looks to the Japanese government for a sense of urgency in righting these alleged historical inaccuracies; and, when this does not occur, the Chinese government is quick to publically condemn the Japanese government and attract international attention.

According to Caroline Rose, from *Interpreting History in Sino-Japanese Relations* and *Sino-Japanese Relations: Facing the Past, Looking to the Future?*, the Ministry of Education has given authors and editors of history textbooks instructions to “water down” the descriptions of Japan’s prewar aggressive behavior, to convey the Meiji Constitution as democratic, and to change various words when regarding war-time events. For example, the words “‘invade’ (*shinryaku* 侵略) had been replaced by ‘attack/advance’ (*shinkō* 侵攻), ‘tyranny’ (*kasei* 苛政) by ‘oppression’ (*assei* 压制), ‘oppression’ (*danatsu* 弾圧) by ‘suppression’ ([sic] *chinatsu* 禁压), and ‘rob’ (*shūdatsu* 収奪) by ‘transfer’ ([sic] *jōtō* 譲与).”⁴ She also

³ Ming Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations: Interaction, Logic and Transformation* (Chicago: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 152.

⁴ Caroline Rose, *Interpreting History in Sino-Japanese Relations: A Case Study in Political Decision-Making* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 518; and *Sino-Japanese Relations: Facing the Past, Looking to the Future?* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), p. 18.

describes the foundation for China's involvement in the history textbook controversy and their reaction by stating:

Within Chinese lore, the Nanking Massacre has become one of the most powerful symbols of atrocities committed by the Japanese troops in China....Japan has been slow to acknowledge their role as a victimizer.⁵

Hence, specific World War II atrocities, such as the Nanjing Massacre, are not only seemingly absent in Japanese history textbooks, but they are also absent in Japan's collective memory, which is a stark contrast to China's collective memory.

Methodology

This research will utilize historical analysis, based on a general Western historiographical consensus, of the events leading up to the Nanjing Massacre in December of 1937, including the invasion into China, the Marco Polo Bridge Incident that occurred in July of the same year.⁶ My analysis will introduce and compare the historical account with the portrayal found in the Japanese history textbooks in order to confirm or challenge instances of whitewashing. Next, the research will explore several issues concerning the Japanese history textbook controversy, such as the process and the various theories about MEXT's involvement in the textbook selection, as well as the role of publishers and the involvement of political parties. This study will utilize quantitative data by comparing statistics regarding the adoption rates of past and current Japanese history textbooks within the primary and secondary academic system. Finally, this research will also enclose a syntactical analysis⁷ through my own original translations of key passages that are either included or left out of the 2001 *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* as well as multiple Japanese history textbooks, which, as of 2012, are currently used in the Japanese school curriculum.

⁵ Rose, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, p. 19.

⁶ Although Western portrayals are not entirely neutral, they do not show a prejudice against Japan as opposed to Chinese portrayals of history.

⁷ A syntactical analysis refers to an analysis of the arrangement and usage of words and phrases within the Japanese history textbooks.

MEXT, Tsukurukai, and the 2001 *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*

During the Cold War era, the differences between China and Japan's interpretation of World War II and the Second Sino-Japanese War surfaced as a bilateral political issue that progressed into the twenty-first century. In the 1990s, there was a focus on "the memory boom" through various media such as articles, testimonies, documentaries, museums dedications, and exhibitions that began to question the previous practices of collective memory, as people from both nations actively sought to uncover the truth. According to Vera Zolberg:

The problem of knowing what "really" happened becomes more complex the more we know, the more viewpoints expressed, the thicker the description. Indeed, a nation's "official history" conventionally highlights its glories. But this idea is increasingly being subjected to "readers" who wish to know what really happened.⁸

In order for a history textbook to be used in the Japanese national school curriculum, it must be either approved by MEXT or be published under its copyright.⁹ According to MEXT, the governmental control of the textbooks gives students equal opportunities to education while improving education standards throughout Japan.¹⁰ As a consequence of these high education standards, schools are permitted to select from only five to seven Ministry approved history textbooks for one academic year. Therefore, the approval of alleged whitewashed textbooks has called to question the authority of MEXT and the Japanese government. It is important to note that MEXT not only approves history textbooks for school use but also rectifies historical facts and typographical errors within the textbook, which, as of 1997,¹¹ the

⁸ Rose, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, p. 51.

⁹ The 2001 *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* and the 2012 textbooks are not published under the MEXT's copyright. However, the dates of MEXT examination and authorization are found with the bibliographical information.

¹⁰ "Improving the Textbook Authorization System," Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, November 30, 2011 (accessed December 13, 2012, http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpae199401/hpae199401_2_092.html).

¹¹ The courts deemed at the conclusion of Ienaga Saburō's trial in 1997 that

Japanese courts have held as constitutionally permissible. Therefore, it has been argued that MEXT could be influenced by nationalistic or right-wing organizations to spread nationalism within the Japanese educational system.

Asahi Shimbun reported that the following places within one textbook in particular, *Nihonshi* (*Japanese History* 日本史), were revised by the Ministry of Education:

1. A title, *Japan's Invasion of China* (*Nihon no chūgoku shinryaku* 日本の中国侵略), was changed to *The Manchurian and Shanghai Incidents* (*Manshu Jihen/Shanghai Jihen* 満州事変/上海事変).
2. The phrase 'The fifteen year war that started with the invasion of Manchuria' became simply 'The war....'
3. A caption under a map "Japan's invasion of China" (*Nihon no chūgoku shinryaku* 日本の中国侵略) became 'Japan's encroachment into/invasion of China' (*Nihon no chūgoku shinnyū* 日本の中国侵入).
4. 'Mao Zedong...fought against Japan invasion' (*Mō Takutō wa...Nihon no shinryaku to tatakau* 毛沢は...日本の中国侵略と戦う) was changed to 'Mao Zedong...fought against Japan's attack/advance' (*Mō Takutō wa...Nihon no shinkō to tatakau* 毛沢は...日本の進行と戦う).¹²

In the example above, the Ministry of Education was criticized by left-wing media, such as the *Asahi Shimbun*, for creating a political agenda to eliminate any criticism towards the Japanese Imperial Army in China. Consequently, since the 1980s, it has become routine for *Asahi Shimbun* to report the results of the history textbook authorization, as Chinese media also relied on the press coverage to fuel its campaign.

In 1993, as a consequence of the admission of the use of comfort women during World War II by Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa and later

the textbook authorization system does not interfere with constitutional rights.

¹² Rose, *Interpreting History in Sino-Japanese Relations*, p. 82.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Kano Yohei, in addition to its inclusion in Japanese middle school history textbooks, a committee was formed from the heads of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), such as Hashimoto Ryūtarō, Mori Yoshirō, and Nakayama Tarō, called the Committee on History and Screening (*Rekishi kentō iinkai* 歴史検討委員会), which sought to investigate historical information. Their objective was to give a nationalistic summary of Japan's role during World War II. For example, they produced a summary of Japan's involvement in the war that expressed that Japan was acting in self-defense during the World War II as well as the Second Sino-Japanese War. Moreover, the alleged atrocities were purely fabrications to demean Japan.¹³

These findings by the Committee on History and Screening were published as a book, *Daitōa sensō no sōkatsu* (*Summary of the Greater East Asian War* 大東亜戦争の総括), on August 15, 1995, the 50th year anniversary of Japan's surrender. Within their summary, the Committee on History and Screening stated that a textbook debate was necessary as a result of the exaggerated emphasis on “damage” and “invasion” in recent textbooks and that a national movement was also needed to disseminate the correct historical view that was put forward within the book. The organization also expressed their dissatisfaction with Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi's apology for war atrocities in 1995.¹⁴

Along with the formation of the Committee on History and Screening was the launch of the *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho wo Tsukurukai* (Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform 新しい歴史教科書をつくる会; furthermore known as “Tsukurukai”), by University of Tokyo Professor Fujioka Nobukatsu, whose goal was to give a “healthy,” nationalistic account to schoolchildren while building their sense of dignity in Japanese history, which “plays an important role in the construction of contemporary Japanese national identity.”¹⁵

¹³ Wan, *Sino-Japanese Relations* p. 152.

¹⁴ Rose, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, p. 58.

¹⁵ Alexander Bukh, “Japan's History Textbook Debate: National Identity in Narratives of Victimhood and Victimization,” *Asian Survey* 47/5 (2001), p. 687.

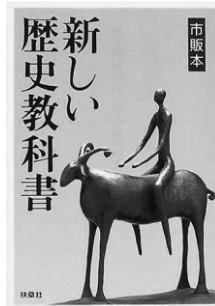


Figure 1. Tsukurukai's first history textbook

As an organization, Tsukurukai created their own history textbook, *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* (*New History Textbook* 新しい歴史教科書), and lobbied influential LDP members, utilized citizens movements and meet with local assemblies, who were concerned with education, to exert pressure on the Ministry of Education to approve their textbook (see Figure 1). In 2000, the manuscripts of several history textbooks, which were sent for approval by the Ministry of Education and assumed to be secret, were uncovered to the public. The uncovering of the manuscripts led to the dismissal of a member of the Textbook Authorization and Research Council as well as a number of “critical reports on the content of the Tsukurukai textbook.”¹⁶ As a result, before its official approval and adoption, *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* gained a lot of attention. During the authorization process, the Committee for Truth and Freedom in Textbooks issued a highly signed petition that asked the Ministry of Education to reject *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*'s manuscript because they claim that the textbook will “pave the way for the revival of chauvinistic history education of pre-war and war-time Japan.”¹⁷

The Ministry of Education required revisions on over 137 points of *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*. The majority of these issues were classified as “simple factual errors,” but there were instances where the issues could be considered “politically motivated” according to the School Course

¹⁶ Mitani Hiroshi, “Japan’s History Textbook System and Its Controversies,” in Daqing Yang, ed., *Towards a History Beyond Borders* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 254.

¹⁷ Rose, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, p. 63.

Guidelines (*Gakushū shidō yōryō* 学習指導要領) and the Regulations for Textbook Authorization (*Kyōkasho kentei kijun* 教科書検定基準).¹⁸ Tsukurukai implemented all of the requested changes and the Ministry of Education authorized *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* to be used in the school system.

Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho, by the publishing company Fusōsha and the nationalist group Tsukurukai, became the most recent controversial history textbook because of a seemingly ambiguous account of the atrocities committed by the Japanese Imperial Army. For example, the passage translated from page 295 of the 2001 edition of *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* states, “Furthermore, doubts have been raised concerning the circumstances of this incident (the Nanjing Incident), and there are various contested opinions so that even today this debate continues.”¹⁹ Although it is true that there are various opinions concerning the events of the Nanjing Massacre, such as the estimated number of casualties, the words, “doubt has been raised concerning the circumstances of this incident,” gives legitimacy to those who believe that the Nanjing Massacre was either greatly exaggerated or altogether false. Others view this attitude as being similar to the denial of the Holocaust.

Within the seven history books that were sent for approval to the Ministry of Education, only one contained a satisfyingly detailed account of war atrocities by the Japanese army. According to critics, the term “invade (*shinryaku* 侵略者 or *shin'nyū* 侵入)” was replaced by “advance (*shinkō* 進行 or *susume* 進め),” the mentioning of comfort women was omitted and the “Nanjing Massacre (*Nankin daigyakusatu* 南京大虐殺)” was toned down by renaming the event as the “Nanjing Incident (*Nankin jiken* 南京事件).” Nevertheless, with the leaked information, Tsukurukai, in an attempt to appeal to the general public and make their textbook official, made the final version of their approved textbook on sale for the masses.

The 2001 edition of *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* gained a lot of media attention in China and South. Japanese officials expressed that the views of Fusōsha and the *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* textbook were not the opinions of the Japanese government or people and stated, “It could not satisfy China’s demand for making further revisions of the history textbook

¹⁸ Hiroshi, “Japan’s History Textbook System and Its Controversies,” p. 257.

¹⁹ *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* (Tokyo: Fusōsha, 2001), p. 295.

because there is no obvious deviation from historical facts in the book.”²⁰ As for this statement and the lack of initiative by the Japanese government, important visits by Chinese officials to Japan and Japanese officials to China were canceled.

In 2005, Fusōsha submitted a newly revised version of *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*, which was also approved by MEXT. The textbook caused another round of public demonstrations in China (and South Korea) against the MEXT and the Japanese government for not revising the previously stated errors within its 2001 version and only correcting typographical errors. However, these historical facts, like the number of citizens and soldiers killed at the Nanjing Massacre have been debated and therefore excluded from textbooks based on the guidelines that prohibits the disclosure of a definitive conclusion to matters that are unresolved.

To counter the lobbying of Tsukurukai, progressive citizens groups networked with liberal organizations, such as Japan’s Teachers’ Union and Children and Textbooks Japan Network 21,²¹ to persuade school boards to reject the selection of *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*.²² A survey of the 583 school districts, conducted by Children and Textbook Japan Network 21, found that the 2001 *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* had a .039 percent adoption rate (around 11 schools throughout Japan) that later increased, minimally, to .046 percent (see Table 1). Administered prefectural schools in Ehime and also a few private schools in Tokyo adopted the textbook, and thus, no public school in cities, towns, or villages adopted the textbook. The adoption rate of the 2005 *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* increased to 0.5 percent, and middle schools in Tokyo’s Sugunami ward became first public middle school ward to adopt *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*.

These adoptions percentages fell short of Tsukurukai’s goal, but their direct cause for the textbook’s unsuccessfulness was the undesired media coverage as well as Fusōsha’s lack of experience in producing a textbook that could compete with those of well-known and accredited publishers. Although there were education officials who supported the

²⁰ Rose, *Sino-Japanese Relations*, p. 25.

²¹ Children and Textbooks Japan Network 21 is an NGO formed in 1998 that protests historical revisionism and fights the removal of material from textbooks that pertain to Japan’s war record.

²² Claudia Schneider, “The Japanese History Textbook Controversy in East Asian Perspective,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 617 (2008), p. 111.

ideals of Tsukurukai and its *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*, these officials had “little reason to risk being the target of so much mass-media coverage by choosing their textbook,”²³ as there were other authorized textbooks and less controversial textbooks that “deleted references to the comfort women and eliminated Marxist-derived narratives.”²⁴

<i>PUBLISHER</i>	<i># OF BOOKS</i>	<i>% OF TOTAL</i>
TOKYO SHOSEKI	676,434	51.241
OSAKA SHOSEKI	185,397	14.044
KYOIKU SHUPPAN	171,533	12.994
TEIKOKU SHOIN	144,215	10.925
NIHON SHOSEKI	77,598	5.878
SHIMIZU SHOIN	33,346	2.526
NIHON BUNKYO	30,968	2.346
FUSŌSHA	601	0.046
TOTAL	1,320,092	100.000

**Table 1. Adoption rates for textbook in 2001
including *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho***

As a response to ease international tension, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made various sections of eight 2005 MEXT-approved textbooks available to the public. These sections included the original Japanese text as well as translations into English, Chinese, and Korean. Prior to this act, foreigners and neighboring countries had suspicions about the depiction of history within the Japanese middle school textbooks but had no direct access to the textbooks' content.

By providing the original text and translation to all of the eight approved textbooks, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took the focus away from the Tsukurukai's *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* and gave foreign and neighboring nations the opportunity to judge the content and middle school history textbooks for themselves. The translation of the textbooks had great meaning in the long run for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²⁵ In addition, many educators came together in order to developed supplementary

²³ Hiroshi, “Japan’s History Textbook System and Its Controversies,” p. 259.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 262.

teaching materials that were translated into Chinese and Korean, which were later sold in each country simultaneously. Through the process, despite critical opinions, these nations became familiar with the teaching and education practices within each nation. Although *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* remains within the selection of textbooks authorized by MEXT, “it will most likely remain a marginal presence on the textbook market.”²⁶ Therefore, it can be argued that it is right-wing organizations’ and not necessarily the Ministry of Education’s agenda to promote nationalism within the Japanese education system.

Controversial 2012 Japanese History Textbooks

The latest Japanese history textbook controversy occurred in 2006, and even though this issue is fairly recent, I found that acquiring the newest MEXT-approved Japanese middle school history textbooks was vital to gain a first-hand knowledge of the controversy. If we look at the 2012 history textbooks, it is argued that there is a dominant narrative and a consistent disparity between the events that isolates knowledge from Japan and its students. According to Christopher Barnard:

In modern Japan, two of the main arguments used by those who deny the occurrence, or at least the scale, of the Rape of Nanking, are: first, it could never have happened, since Japanese people only found out about it after the war; and second it is a fabrication by the Allies, which was part of their administrations of “victors’ justice’ to the Japanese.²⁷

Currently, two textbooks in particular, *Chugaku shakai: Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* (*Middle School Social: New History Textbook* 中学社会: 新しい歴史教科書) by Jiyūsha (Freedom, Inc. 自由社) and *Atarashii Nihon no rekishi* (*New Japanese History* 新しい日本の歴史) by Ikuhōsha (Peng Education Company 育鵬社) are supported by Tsukurukai or former

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Christopher Barnard, “Isolating Knowledge of the Unpleasant: the Rape of Nanking in Japanese high-school textbooks,” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 22/4 (2001), p. 527.

members of Tsukurukai (see Figure 2) and bear a striking resemblance to the controversial 2001 *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*.



Figure 2. “This is [our] new textbook” from Tsukurukai’s website

Three of the six Japanese middle school history textbooks commence with the invasion of China by mentioning Manchuria. The portion within the history textbooks that portrays the invasion of China and the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, which started the Second Sino-Japanese War, usually leads to text referring to the Nanjing Massacre:

In order to secure Manchuria and maintain resources, the Japanese army formed a pro-Japanese administration adjacent to northern China that led to the heightening of tensions with China. Japan stationed 5,000 troops around the vicinity of Beijing due to the treaty Japan and other Great Powers had with China after the Boxer Rebellion.²⁸

A careful reading of the text will show the justification to Japan’s military presence in Manchuria as well as Beijing with the words “in order to secure Manchuria and maintain resources.”²⁹ *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* and *Atarashii Nihon no rekishi* omit the incident at the Southern Manchurian Railway that led to Japan’s invasion into Manchuria and specifically states that, as a consequence of the treaty after the Boxer Rebellion in 1901, Japan had a legal right to station troops within China, which at the time was not unified with Manchuria. Moreover, the statement referring to the Boxer Rebellion found in the *Atarashii Nihon no rekishi* textbook also entirely

²⁸ *Chūgaku shakai: Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* (Tokyo: Jiyūsha, 2012), p. 225.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

omits the invasion into Manchuria by stating, “After the Boxer Rebellion Treaty, Japan stationed 5,000 troops around the outskirts of Beijing.”³⁰ The passage may cause an impression that Japan had already established a legal military presence in China, specifically Beijing, through the Boxer Rebellion Treaty, prior to the Second Sino-Japanese War. However, since China was not a unified nation at the time, as it was engaged in a civil war prior to World War II and the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Boxer Rebellion Treaty might have no longer been recognized.

One issue, which requires a detailed reading of the text, is the lack of perpetrators in the events that led up to the Nanjing Massacre. For example, when referring to the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, both *Chugaku shakai: Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* by Jiyūsha and *Atarashii Nihon no rekishi* by Ikuhōsha describe it as “an incident [that] occurred when someone fired shots at the Japanese army while they were engaged in maneuvers at the Marco Polo Bridge near the outskirts of Beijing.”³¹ The question of concern is: Who is this “someone?” These two textbooks mention that the Japanese Imperial Army was near Beijing; and since Japan had “advance” into China, one can assume, since this “someone” was shooting at the Japanese Imperial Army in Beijing, that this “someone” was a Chinese military personnel. Nevertheless, the wording causes Japan to be viewed as a victim, who was defending against a military assault, instead of a victimizer who invaded a nation. The victim/victimizer portrayal can also be seen in the same two textbooks, which reference the killing of two Japanese officials in Shanghai: “...in Shanghai, an incident occurred where two Japanese officials were shot to death by Chinese troops....Thus, the [Second] Sino-Japanese began and expanded.”³²

On December 13, 1937, after three days of intense battle, the capital city of Nanjing fell to the Japanese Imperial Forces. The weeks following the capture were met with countless atrocities towards prisoners of war and civilians not limited to women and children. Although the Nanjing Massacre is mentioned within all six Japanese middle school history textbooks, there are various instances of glossed over information or tricky wordplay that seems to downplay the atrocities committed by the Japanese Imperial Army:

³⁰ *Atarashii Nihon no rekishi* (Tokyo: Ikuhōsha, 2012), p. 209; and *Chūgaku shakai: Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*, p. 225.

³¹ *Atarashii Nihon no rekishi*, p. 209.

³² *Chūgaku shakai: Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*, p. 225.

Thinking that Chang Kai-shek would surrender with the fall of the Kuomintang government's capital city, the Japanese army occupied Nanjing in December. However, Chang Kai-shek moved the capital to inner Chongqing and the hostilities continued.³³

[Note] During capture of Nanjing, the Japanese army killed or wounded many Chinese soldiers and civilians (the Nanjing Incident).³⁴

The example above, found in *Chūgaku shakai: Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*, gives the illusion that the atrocities committed at Nanjing were justifiable as a consequence of war because the Japanese Imperial Army killed many Chinese soldiers and citizens during the attempt to capture Nanjing and not up to six weeks after its surrender. The justification of the attack on Nanjing is stated as a military strategy to force Chiang Kai-shek to surrender. Within the six Japanese middle school history textbooks, the information regarding the Nanjing Massacre is limited to approximately three to four ambiguous and vague sentences with further explanation reserved in footnotes (located on the sides of the page) that also vary in length. The *Chūgaku shakai: Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* textbook also contained the minimum amount of information regarding the Nanjing Massacre.

Although the 2012 *Chūgaku shakai: Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* and *Atarashii Nihon no rekishi* textbook are the most closely related to the 2001 and 2005 *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*, the publishing company Fusōsha disassociated with Tsukurukai in 2006 but continued to work with former members, such as Yagi Hidetsugu, to publish another textbook edited by Kaizennokai. Fujioka Nobukatsu, who remained with Tsukurukai, found another publisher, Jiyūsha, and declared that they would also be preparing a new textbook. Although both textbooks were approved by MEXT in 2009, a lawsuit erupted due to the similarities in the textbooks' content. The adoption of the textbooks did not spark an international controversy due to the improvements "from the 2001 and 2005 versions [by] making its wording more harmonious with the thinking of other countries."³⁵

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Gilbert Rozman, *U.S. Leadership, History, and Bilateral Relations in Northeast Asia* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 111.

The statement, “Furthermore, doubts have been raised concerning the circumstances of this incident (the Nanjing Incident), and there are various contested opinions so that even today this debate continues”³⁶ no longer appears in the textbook or in any of the six textbooks acquired. The deletion of this statement is a stark contrast from the earlier version of this textbook, and it could also be a factor as to why the history textbook controversy is no longer in the forefront of Sino-Japanese relations. In 2011, Fusōsha sold the rights to the earlier history textbooks (the 2001 and 2005 *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*) to its subsidiary company, Ikushōsha, as Fusōsha no longer publishes textbooks under its name.

Other 2012 Japanese History Textbooks

Although *Chugaku shakai: Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* by Jiyūsha and *Atarashii Nihon no rekishi* by Ikushōsha are supported by nationalist or right-wing groups, the other textbooks do, to some degree, use wording that can be criticized as whitewashing. The main criticism towards Japanese middle school history textbooks is the wording regarding wartime events. For example, the term “invade (*shinryaku* 侵略者 or *shin'nyū* 侵入)” has been replaced by “advance (*shinkō* 進行 or *susume* 進め)” to give a defensive response for the action held accountable by the Japanese Imperial Army. The term “invade” implies that the offending country is the aggressor, while “advance” implies more a neutral military term or a military maneuver. The mentioning of “advance” can be seen in the following example in *Shakaika chūgakusei no rekishi: Nihon no ayumi to sekai no ugoki* (*Social Studies Middle School: History of Japan and the Movement of the World* 社会科中学生の歴史：日本の歩みと世界の動き) by Teikokushoin (Empire Publishing 帝国書院):

Japan was internationally isolated and became close with Germany who similarly withdrew from the League of Nations. This furthered the antagonism with the United States and Great Britain. Additionally, Japan advanced its army into not only “Manchukuo,” but also northern China.³⁷

³⁶ *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*, p. 295.

³⁷ *Shakaika chūgakusai no rekishi: Nihon no ayumi to sekai no ugoki* (Tokyo: Teikokushoin, 2012), p. 209.

Not only does the passage above state that Japan “advance” into Manchuria and Northern China, but the tone of the text can be seen as self-justifying as it claims that Japan was “internationally isolated.” The passage also mentions Japan’s antagonism towards the United States, who was not involved in World War II until 1941; four years after Japan’s invasion of China and two years after Great Britain’s declaration of war on Germany. Nevertheless, two of the six Japanese middle school history textbooks, *Chūgaku shakai rekishi* (*Middle School Social History* 中学社会歴史) by Nihonbun Kyōshuppan (Japan Education Publishing 日本文教出版) and *Chūgaku shakai rekishi: Mirai no hiraku* (*Middle School Social History: Opening the Future* 中学社会歴史：未来のひらく) by Kyōikushuppan (Education Publishing 教育出版) do not mention the invasion of Manchuria, but refer to the political state of China prior to and during Japan’s invasion:

In China, at the time, the Kuomintang government was in the middle of a civil war against the Communist Party, led by Mao Zedong. The Communist Party, which moved its base to Yan’an, sought cooperation with the Kuomintang government in order to resist the Japanese, and in 1936, the civil war came to a standstill.³⁸

The passage gives an accurate portrayal of the situation in China during the 1930s, and also points out that the CCP and the KMT had to temporarily halt the civil war in order to resist the invasion of the Japanese Imperial Forces into China.

There is also a dispute on how criticism of the Nanjing Massacre is portrayed in the Japanese middle school history textbook. Although the textbook refers to the Japanese Imperial Army as having captured Nanjing, the translations of the 2012 Japanese middle school history textbook also portrays the presence of the army at the organization level instead of at an individual or human level. Moreover, the Japanese Imperial Army, as a whole, is not directly criticized; instead, the actions that constitute the event (“acts of brutality”) are criticized in the following example: “In Nanjing, many Chinese including soldiers, women, and children were killed causing

³⁸ *Chūgaku shakai rekishi: Mirai no hiraku*, (Tokyo: Kyōikushuppan 2012), p. 213.

foreign countries to accuse the Japanese Imperial Army for ‘acts of brutality’ (The Nanjing Massacre).³⁹ The passage, found in the *Shakaika chūgakusei no rekishi: Nihon no ayumi to sekai no ugoki* textbook, seemingly shows no introspection from Japan by stating that only foreign countries accused Japan, and therefore suggests that Japan has no guilt or atonement for these actions. As a counterargument, this can also suggest that the event was such a concern that it caused the international community to criticize Japan. The words “acts of brutality” are used in quotes in the original Japanese text. However, the use of the quotation marks remains unclear, as there is no note to suggest that the phrase was said by a specific person.

The event is also indirectly given a name, such as the Nanjing Incident or Nanjing Massacre:

[Note] The incident, the Nanjing Massacre, gained international criticism and was unknown to the Japanese populace until they were informed after the war at the Tokyo Trials. Various investigations and studies were conducted in regards to the number of victims, but the decision has not yet been settled.⁴⁰

Although it is common to give an important historical event a specific name, it has been criticized that calling the Nanjing Massacre the “Nanjing Incident” downplays the scale and significance of the atrocity. Another point, from the previous passage, is that the events of the atrocity was seemingly kept from the Japanese populace, and suggests that the knowledge of the Nanjing Massacre was kept isolated from Japan. The previous example also indicates that the “whole world could know about something, but not Japan—as if Japan was in some way not part of the world.”⁴¹ Similarly, by whom was “this incident” not made know to the Japanese people? A closer reading of the text insinuates that this is in reference to the military and governmental authorities that hid the atrocities that occurred in Nanjing from the Japanese people. However, the text and textbooks change the wording to avoid any direct suggestions or accusation that the information and knowledge of the Nanjing Massacre might have

³⁹ *Shakaika chūgakusai no rekishi*, p. 209.

⁴⁰ *Atarashii shakai rekishi* (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 2012), p. 194.

⁴¹ Barnard, “Isolating Knowledge of the Unpleasant,” p. 256.

been covered up by military and government authorities, while “making conscience efforts to isolate the knowledge of Nanking.”⁴²

Although Japanese middle school history textbooks have been criticized for its glossed over or “whitewashed” portrayal of the Nanjing Massacre, within my research I have found that the most glossed over textbooks are associated with right-wing organizations, such as the textbooks supported by Tsukurukai, while other textbooks give a more detailed account of the World War II atrocities. For example, within the *Chūgaku shakai rekishi* textbook:

Nanjing was the capital city [of China] in December where many prisoners of war, women, and children were detained and many citizens were killed (Nanjing Incident).⁴³

[Note] At the time, the Japanese citizens were not informed of this incident. Investigative documents were presented at the Tokyo Trials. Then, it was revealed, in a later study that examples of various killings were written down in the diaries of military units and officers. However, the extent of the killing is unknown and further research is necessary.⁴⁴

Within this passage, there are several examples of consistency with Western portrayals concerning the Nanjing Massacre. First, the text does not mention the words “during that time” when discussing the Nanjing Massacre, which suggest that the atrocity happened up after its surrender and not during the capture. Second, the text mentions prisoners of war who were killed in Nanjing. The mentioning of prisoners of war solidifies not only the previous statement regarding the timeframe of the Nanjing Massacre, but also shows that the Chinese soldiers had surrendered or were captured and defenseless but were killed nonetheless. The passage also goes into more detail concerning the victims, as it mentions women and children.

Finally, the text mentions the diaries of military personnel, which seemingly erases any notion that the Nanjing Massacre could have been

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ *Chūgaku shakai rekishi: Nihonbun Kyōshuppan*, p. 226.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

fabricated because of the statement that entries were found in the diaries of Japanese military personnel, as opposed to the diaries of Westerners who have been criticized for exaggerating the events of Nanjing as a result of a predisposition of prejudice toward the Japanese. Although an approximate number of those killed in Nanjing is not mentioned, the text highlights that more research on the Nanjing Massacre is necessary. According to the Standards for Authorization of School Textbooks for Use in Compulsory Education, as of 2005 it states:

1. No present definitive conclusion on unsettled current issues.
2. In dealing with events in the modern and contemporary history of relations with neighboring countries of Asia, giving appropriate consideration to viewing them from the standpoint of international understanding and international cooperation.
3. In giving dates for important events in Japanese history, giving the year according to both the Western calendar and the Japanese imperial era system.

Thus, the approximation or estimation of those killed in the Nanjing Massacre cannot be present in any of the Japanese middle school history textbook due to the lack a definitive or official number.

Categorizing the History Textbooks

Through the analysis of the content of the history textbooks, the textbooks were categorized and separated between textbooks that are associated with right-wing organizations, such as Tsukurukai, and those that are not associated with right-wing organizations. The portrayals of Japan's involvement in the Second Sino-Japanese War can vary with the textbooks that are not associated with right-wing organizations, from consistent with Western portrayals to somewhat neutral or divergent with Western portrayals. Figure 10 shows a scale of the six 2012 textbooks and their relationship with the portrayals that are consistent with Western historical consensus.

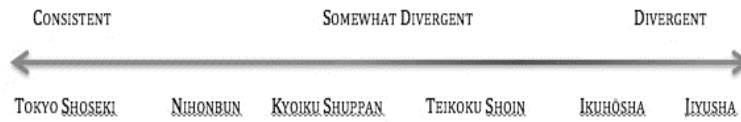


Figure 10. Six 2012 Textbooks in relation to a Western historical consensus

The textbooks that are the most consistent are published by Tokyo Shoseki and Nihonbun and give a detailed account of Japan’s involvement in the war. The textbooks mention the state of China prior to the invasion, use the term “invade” instead of “advance,” specify women, children and prisoners of war, and do not include the words “during this time” when referring to the Nanjing Massacre.

The textbooks issued from Kyōikushuppan and Teikokushoin give a portrayal of Japan’s involvement in the war that diverges somewhat from Western accounts. The textbooks are less detailed than the textbooks by Tokyo Shoseki and Nihonbun and show some instances of ambiguity (such as using the term “advance” or stating that Japan was internationally isolated), but they mention the political state of China before the Second Sino-Japanese War, as well as women, children and prisoners of war, and do not use the words “during this time” when referring to the Nanjing Massacre.

Iiyusha and Ikuhōsha are the textbooks that provide the least amount of information. Neither of the textbooks mention the state of China prior to the war, and both rationalize the invasion into China via Manchuria. Both textbooks state that the military skirmish at the Marco Polo Bridge was due to “someone” who fired shots, refer to the Nanjing Massacre as solely the “Nanjing Incident,” and use the words “during this time” when referring to the timeframe of those who were killed in the Nanjing Massacre. Through the analysis of the content of the history textbooks, there can be a comparison between six 2012 textbooks (and their consistency with Western historical consensus) to the adoption rates within the Japanese educational system.

Adoption Rates

Although there are no official reports of the adoption rates for the new 2012 Japanese middle school history textbooks, the textbook store,

Daiichi kyōkasho (First Textbook 第一教科書), where I purchased the textbooks, posted a list of each schools' (within its district) textbook adoption for elementary, middle, and high school. *Daiichi kyōkasho*, located near the Okubo station in Shinjuku, Tokyo, is responsible for providing textbooks to the fourth district schools in Shinjuku, Shibuya, Nakano, and Suginami. These textbooks are also available for individual purchase, as this is how I acquired the textbooks without any affiliation to a school. Through a PDF provided in *Daiichi kyōkasho*'s website, I was able to obtain some statistics concerning the textbooks that are used for the 2012 academic year. This is shown in Tables 2 and 3.

<i>PUBLISHER</i>	<i>CATEGORY</i>	<i># OF BOOKS</i>	<i>% OF TOTAL</i>
TOKYO SHOSEKI	CONSISTENT	8	28.571
KYOIKU SHUPPAN	NEUTRAL	3	10.714
TEIKOKU SHOIN	NEUTRAL	9	32.142
IKUHŌSHA	DIVERGENT	2	7.142
SHIMIZU SHOIN	NO DATA	3	10.714
NIHON BUNKYO	CONSISTENT	3	10.714
JIYUSHA	DIVERGENT	0	0
	TOTAL	28	100.000

Table 2. Adoption rate for private schools in Shinjuku, Shibuya, Nakano, and Suginamis

<i>TOKYO WARD</i>	<i>TEXTBOOK</i>
SHINJUKU	TOKYO SHOSEKI
SHIBUYA	TOKYO SHOSEKI
NAKANO	TEIKOKUSHOIN
SUGINAMI	KYŌIKUSHUPPAN

Table 3. Textbook adoption for public schools in four of Tokyo's Wards

As seen in the Table 2, both *Atarashii shakai rekishi* by Tokyo Shoseki and *Shakaika chūgakusai no rekishi: Nihon no ayumi to sekai no ugoki* by Teikokushoin have a strong representation within the district (28.5% and 32.1% adoption rate, respectively), while the textbooks

associated with the controversial Tsukurui have a low adoption rate, such as *Atarashii Nihon no rekishi* by Ikuhōsha (7.1% adoption rate), or have not been adopted, such as *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* by Jiyūsha.⁴⁵

Two of the four public middle school wards adopted *Atarashii shakai rekishi* by Tokyo Shoseki, while the other two adopted by *Shakaika chūgakusai no rekishi: Nihon no ayumi to sekai no ugoki* by Teikokushoin and *Chūgaku shakai rekishi: Mirai no hiraku* by Kyōkushuppan (see Table 3). An interesting observation from Table 3 shows that textbook adoptions for these public schools is compatible with the previous information concerning the process of adoptions in towns, cities, prefectures and municipalities. Although the number of the public schools within each ward is not available, it shows that public middle schools adopted the same textbook given that they are within the same ward.

Based on the information provided from *Daiichi kyōkasho*, it can be deduced that the textbook with the least nationalistic portrayal concerning the Second Sino-Japanese War, *Atarashii shakai rekishi* by Tokyo Shoseki, has a strong adoption rate within the fourth district, with a majority of the adoption in private middle schools as well as within two of the four wards. The adoption rate of *Atarashii shakai rekishi*, within the fourth district of Tokyo, is consistent with the 2001 statistic (see Table 1) that shows that the history textbook by Tokyo Shoseki had a 51 percent adoption rate within Japan. Also based on the information provided by *Daiichi kyōkasho*, we can see that a neutral or somewhat nationalistic textbook, *Shakaika chūgakusai no rekishi: Nihon no ayumi to sekai no ugoki* by Teikokushoin, also has a high percent of adoption with nine textbook adoptions within private middle schools and adoptions within one of the four wards. Although, *Shakaika chūgakusai no rekishi* can be criticized for having some whitewashed portrayals, the information provided within the textbook is more harmonious (less whitewashed) and detailed than the textbooks that are associated with right-wing organizations.

Atarashii Nihon no rekishi by Ikuhōsha and *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* by Jiyūsha are textbooks that are associated with right-wing

⁴⁵ “Tokyo First Textbook Supply Co., Ltd.,” Daiichi Kyōkasho 第一教科書 (accessed December 13, 2012, <http://daiichikyokasho.co.jp/price/index.html>); It should be noted that I was not able to acquire the Shimizu textbooks for unknown reasons – this textbook was not available at the store in Tokyo or Kobe.

organizations and have a low to non-existent adoption rate within the fourth district Tokyo schools. The adoption rates for *Atarashii Nihon no rekishi* and *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* are consistent with the low adoption rate of for the 2001 *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*, whose textbook content is associated with both 2012 textbooks. Given these adoption rates in comparison to the statistics for 2001, the middle school history education consists of a liberal (least nationalistic) to neutral portrayal of Japan's involvement in the Second Sino-Japanese War, as the controversial textbooks continue to show low adoption rates. However, it is possible that the adoption of more controversial textbooks is growing, although assumingly marginally, because of the change in their portrayal since 2005, which contains less whitewashing than their earlier 2001 version. Nevertheless, further research is required to deduce the adoption process and rates in a large municipality such as Tokyo, as well as the current adoption rates for history textbooks within Japan as a whole.

Conclusion: The Future of Sino-Japanese Relations and History Textbooks

Within the translations, I have given examples showing that the portrayal of World War II-related atrocities can vary between different publishing companies. However, the majority of the textbooks adjust the wording to defend the actions of the Japanese Imperial Army during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Conversely, some history textbooks portray a satisfyingly detailed (based on the size of the textbooks) and accurate account of the atrocities, by mentioning the situation in China prior to Japan's invasion and stating that more research is needed to have a definitive answer for the number of civilians that were killed during the Nanjing Massacre. The implication of the Japanese middle school history textbook is that the nationalist textbooks whitewash information, and other textbooks that are not supported by right-wing groups provide more detail and give a neutral portrayal of the atrocities.

However, in light of the controversy, even content within the right-wing supported textbooks have changed, as the 2001 *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* differed from the 2012 *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*. Furthermore, the publishing company Fusōsha, which published the 2001 and 2005 *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*, has dropped out of the textbook publishing industry all together. Therefore, although MEXT has an important role in the textbook screening process and have also been criticized for association

with right-wing groups, the portrayals within the textbooks, in general, were not as divergent as what has been lead to believe.

While there have been frequent talks about the need to settle the past and come to a mutual understanding, a series of diplomatic incidents, such as the prime ministerial visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine, disagreements over the wording of apologies and the claims to uninhabited islands in the East China Sea, have continued to disrupt the relationship and highlight how far both sides still have to go to achieve reconciliation. The future stability of East Asia lies in the hands of China, Japan and South Korea. However, recent territorial disputes and statements by Japanese officials continue to strain relations between these neighboring nations and have pushed the Japanese middle school history textbook controversy into the background.