

# DIVIDED MEMORIES AND RECONCILIATION: A PROGRESS REPORT

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THE WALTER H. SHORENSTEIN  
ASIA-PACIFIC RESEARCH CENTER

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# DIVIDED MEMORIES AND RECONCILIATION: A PROGRESS REPORT

**Daniel C. Sneider**

*Associate Director for Research  
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In February 2008, an international conference was convened at Stanford University at the Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center to examine the role of high school history textbooks in the formation of historical memory regarding the events of the Sino-Japanese and Pacific wars and their outcome. “Divided Memories: History Textbooks and the War in Asia,” as the conference was titled, was a remarkable gathering of historians and textbook writers, along with other scholars, from China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the United States.

The conference marked the culmination of the first year of Shorenstein APARC’s three-year research project on the formation of historical memory. The project flows from the understanding that unresolved historical issues continue to bedevil present relations in the region. We have seen this most recently in a revived clash between South Korea and Japan over rival claims to a group of islets, an issue left unresolved by the peace treaty that concluded the war in Asia. The United States was drawn directly into this dispute when its geographical name bureau was perceived as offering support for Japan’s territorial claim.

Beyond governments, these disputes over past wrongs continue to occupy the pages of newspapers throughout the region, show up on the screens of movie houses and shape the curriculum of school children. The question of history taps into sensitive and deeply rooted issues of national identity. And rising nationalism feeds on the unresolved problems of the past, undermining the efforts of governments to restore damaged relations.

There is recognition of the need for reconciliation and the resolution of long-standing historical injustices. But the barrier to reconciliation lies, in the view of the scholars of Shorenstein APARC, in the existence of divided, and often conflicting, historical memories. Attempts to create common histories, both through the non-government efforts of historians and through official committees formed between Japan and China and between Japan and South Korea, have had limited success, at best. The Divided Memories project aims to further reconciliation through a comparative study of how the main actors in Northeast Asia—China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan—along with the United States, form their view of the past. Recognizing how each society selectively creates its own, divided memory can lead to mutual understanding.

During the first phase of this project, we carried out a comparative examination of the high school history textbooks in those five societies, focusing on the period from the beginning of the Sino-Japanese war in 1931 until the formal conclusion of the Pacific war with the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951. The research team used the most widely circulated national and world history textbooks in use in each school system, along with textbooks used for college-preparatory classes (with the aim of focusing on the formation of elite opinion). Translations of those textbooks were prepared and the research team presented comparative excerpts of the treatment of 8 key historical issues, such as the Marco Polo Bridge incident and the atomic bombing of Japan. This allows scholars, experts, the media and others, for the first time, to actually compare how historical memory is shaped in those school systems. It broadens the context for understanding the role of textbooks beyond those used only in Japan.

The conference at Stanford brought together prominent historians of the wartime period, including Stanford's Peter Duus and Mark Peattie, as well as Japan's Tohmatsu Haruo and South Korea's Chung Jae-Jung. It also invited textbook authors, among them the directors of the Peoples Education Press, China's main textbook publisher, to discuss the process of textbook writing and authorization in each society. For example, Japanese historian and textbook writer Mitani Hiroshi, provided a vibrant account of his own personal experience in the debates over Japan's controversial textbooks.

The conference had three main goals: to ask historians to comment and analyze the treatment of history in those textbooks, comparing it to accepted historical understanding. Second, to look at the process of textbook writing and revision—in some cases (China and Taiwan particularly), textbooks have undergone significant revision recently and our data set included the old and new versions of history textbooks in use in schools. Third, the conference examined how the formation of divided memories impacts international relations in East Asia and between the United States and Asia and how this effort to understand this process may aid the goal of reconciliation.

The conference participants engaged in a lively discussion of the textbooks, the views of history they reflected and what that told us all about the main path to reconciliation that has been pursued till now—the attempt to agree on a common view of historical events. As Stanford's eminent historian Peter Duus put it:

“After reading American, Chinese and Japanese high school history textbooks side by side, it is difficult to imagine that educational authorities in those countries, and in the two Koreas as well, could easily agree on a common textbook treatment of the war. The problem is not so much the “facts,” on which there seems to be rough kind of agreement, but the “words” and “stories.” The narratives that determine what events are covered in each country's textbooks, and the words that are used to describe them, are difficult to reconcile. Can one imagine that Chinese authorities would agree to calling the “Nanking massacre” the “Nanking Incident”, or that the Japanese would be comfortable naming the



conflict the “Anti-Japanese War” rather than the “Asia-Pacific War”, or that the Americans would accept a narrative that left out the attack on Pearl Harbor or the dropping of the atomic bombs? As long as the definition of national identity remains at the center remains at the center of textbook writing, the possibilities for the production of joint histories remains limited. In short, the debate over history textbooks is the symptom of a larger problem: the persistence of divisive nationalisms in East Asia that deploy “war stories” to stir domestic patriotism at the cost of regional peace and cooperation.”

The conference participants saw great potential in offering this comparative perspective to students in all the five societies. The Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education (SPICE), which along with the Center for East Asian Studies at Stanford collaborated in the Divided Memories Project, is preparing a teaching supplement based on the research for use by high school teachers in the United States. This kind of supplement could be valuable elsewhere, some of the participants argued.

The conference proceedings will also yield an edited volume, including the publication of the comparative excerpts from the textbooks. This will make the project findings known to a much wider audience. Before that, however, Shorenstein APARC is co-sponsoring a series of workshops in Asia to present and discuss the project results on textbooks. In September and October, workshops are planned in Taiwan, in association with the Center for Asia-Pacific Area Studies (CAPAS) at Academia Sinica; in Seoul, in association with the Northeast Asia History Foundation; and in Tokyo, at the Center for Pacific and American Studies at the University of Tokyo.

The Divided Memories and Reconciliation project meanwhile has already embarked on the second year of its research agenda, a comparative study of the impact of popular culture, and specifically film, on the formation of historical memory about the war. In June, 2008 a workshop was held at Shorenstein APARC with prominent film historians to discuss the cinematic treatment of the 1931-1951 period in the films of China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the United States. In early December, a larger international academic conference will be convened at Stanford to examine this subject in depth, preceded by a film series organized by the Center for East Asian Studies. In 2009, Shorenstein APARC will launch the third phase of this project, a cross-national opinion survey of elite opinion on these historical issues.

The Divided Memories and Reconciliation project continues to enjoy the ongoing support of important donors, including the Northeast Asia History Foundation of Korea, the U.S.-Japan Foundation, and the Taiwan Democracy Foundation.



# HISTORY TEXTBOOKS, DIVIDED MEMORIES, AND RECONCILIATION

**Gi-Wook Shin**

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Over the past fifteen years Northeast Asia has witnessed growing intra-regional exchanges and interactions, especially in the realms of culture and economy. China has become South Korea's top trading partner, and Chinese products constitute the largest share of Japanese imports. Reflecting such increased economic exchanges, there has been marked increase in intra-regional travel in Northeast Asia. Growing numbers of Chinese are studying in Japan, and Korean films and dramas have become popular in China and Japan. China, Japan, and South Korea are all active participants in regional fora such as ASEAN Plus Three and the East Asian Summit, neither of which includes the United States. There has also been considerable discussion about establishing an East Asian community.<sup>2</sup>

Yet wounds from past wrongs—committed in times of colonialism and war—are not fully healed. Indeed, they have become highly contentious diplomatic issues. Every nation in the region feels some sense of victimization. Anti-Japanese sentiments seem undiminished especially in China and Korea, even among the younger generation with no experience of colonialism or war. According to surveys jointly conducted in 2005 by Dong-a Ilbo of Korea and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of Sociology, only 7.8 percent of Koreans and Chinese have “favorable” views of Japan.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, the Japanese suffer from “apology fatigue,” questioning why they must continue to repent for events that took place more than six decades ago. Ironically, increased regional interaction seems not to have diminished but to have intensified disputes and contention over the past.

As with many other cases around the world, reconciliation in Northeast Asia first occurred between governments. With the exception of only North Korea, Japan normalized diplomatic relations with all of the countries it had once invaded or colonized: with the Republic of China in 1952, the Republic of Korea in 1965, and the People's Republic of China in 1972. The ROK also normalized relations with former enemies, the PRC and the USSR, in the early 1990s, and even inter-Korean relations improved significantly in the past decade.

Such reconciliation in Northeast Asia has nevertheless been “thin,” to use Croker's term,<sup>4</sup> because these societies have failed to come to terms with the past. Japan paid no “reparations” to its former colonies—though it gave

“grants and aid” to South Korea for normalizing relations and provided major economic assistance to the PRC—and China and Korea were not included in the San Francisco Treaty that settled the Pacific War. Historical issues such as war responsibilities, disputed territories, and Japan’s colonial rule and atrocities were largely swept under the rug as the Cold War began and intensified.

The question of history has now become a central one across Northeast Asia. Relations between Japan and China have been conflict-ridden due in no small measure to the failure of both countries to reconcile their differing views of the past. Similarly, friction between Japan and South Korea about Japan’s colonial past remains salient.<sup>5</sup> Even South Korea and China are sparring over the status of the ancient kingdom of Koguryo.<sup>6</sup> Taiwan as well is immersed in a re-examination of the historical past. Nor are outside powers—the United States primarily but also Russia—immune from controversy over their historical role in Northeast Asia.

These are not simply factual questions about what happened in the past but touch upon the most sensitive issues of national identity—and the formation of historical memories and national myths that play a powerful role to this day. Whether it be Japanese atrocities in China or the U.S. decision to drop atomic bombs on Japan, no nation is immune from the charge that it has formed a less than complete view of the past. All share a reluctance to confront fully the complexity of their own past actions while readily tending to blame others.

To be sure, there is widespread recognition in Northeast Asia of the need for reconciliation and a final resolution of historical issues, both for the sake of justice and to remove a major obstacle to enhanced cooperation among nations. In fact, many Asians have sought to achieve these goals through diverse tactics, including apology politics, litigation, joint history writing, and regional communication.<sup>7</sup> But there is a fundamental obstacle to reconciliation—the existence of divided, even conflicting, historical memories. All of the nations involved are both bound together and separated by distinct, often contradictory, historical accounts and perceptions. These are deeply imbedded in the public consciousness, and transmitted to succeeding generations formally by education and informally through the arts, popular culture, and mass media.

Ultimately, Northeast Asian societies need to come to a reconciled, if not a shared, view of history to achieve “thick” reconciliation. However, as Peter Duus points out in Chapter xxx, writing a “common history” may be feasible intellectually but not politically, because “the teaching of history in many East Asian countries is clearly tied to building and strengthening national identity.” In fact, as discussed below, recognition of this difficulty is a major lesson from past attempts to create a common history.<sup>8</sup> Previous experiences (e.g., the Franco-German case) show that successful reconciliation via history education requires a particular political environment, one that is lacking in Northeast Asia today.<sup>9</sup> It would thus be more fruitful to try to recognize and understand how each society has developed its own distinctive memory of the past and how that has

affected its national identity and relations with others. To illustrate the merits of this approach, I first examine past attempts to create a common history.

### **Creating Common History?**

Northeast Asian nations have engaged in numerous efforts to address historical issues and even to create a common history. The frequent clashes over history textbooks in Northeast Asia, in 1982, 2002, and 2005, demonstrate that history is not simply about the past but also about the present and the future. The situation attests to the central importance of a reconciled view of history in achieving overall regional reconciliation. One approach to solving this problem has been to form both official and unofficial joint committees to study history and create jointly written textbooks and supplementary materials. Such efforts, which involve a complex, long-term process, are still ongoing, and it is too early to make a final judgment about their efficacy. It is already evident, however, that this approach is fraught with difficulty and far from achieving reconciliation, though it has offered many good lessons for those nations involved.

The first official attempt to deal jointly with history textbooks was undertaken by South Korea and Japan. In October 2001, Prime Minister Koizumi visited South Korea and agreed with President Kim Dae-Jung to establish the Japan–ROK Joint History Research Committee. The committee was formed in May 2002, a gesture of commitment to a state-sponsored effort toward a reconciled view of history and the placing of their common past in a new regional history framework.

The committee, while not a failure, has not yet achieved much success. Adopting the UNESCO model of writing “parallel history,” it finished its first phase in May 2005 with the publication of research papers. The Japanese, however, reportedly resisted Korean demands that their findings be incorporated into the textbooks of the two nations. Apparently, there was significant disagreement, particularly over how to interpret Japan’s colonial rule, including whether Japan had contributed to Korea’s modernization. While consensus was reached in some areas, disagreements appeared in many others and were relegated to footnotes.<sup>10</sup>

In the controversy that ensued after Koizumi’s visits to Yasukuni shrine, the work of the joint committee was put on hold. In October 2006, a meeting between Prime Minister Abe and President Roh Moo Hyun yielded agreement to re-launch the joint committee. Finally, after nearly two years, the committee met on April 27, 2007, in Seoul. Members reached an agreement to form a new subgroup—in addition to the three existing groups studying ancient, medieval and contemporary history—to study history textbooks. The idea reportedly was to try to narrow differences between the textbooks of the two nations. A second round of meetings was held in the summer of 2008, in Tokyo.

A similar effort was launched by Japan and China, also as part of the thaw in relations that followed the leadership transition in Japan from Koizumi to

Abe. During Abe's October 2006 visit to Beijing, the two countries announced an agreement to form a "China-Japan Joint History Research Committee" to put the history issue in the hands of historians rather than politicians. Like the Japan-ROK Joint Committee on which it was modeled, the China-Japan committee aimed to write parallel histories.

The committee of 20 leading historians from both countries met in Beijing on December 26, 2006. The Chinese were led by Bu Ping, director of the Institute of Modern History at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; the Japanese by Tokyo University Professor Shin'ichi Kitaoka. They agreed to conduct a joint study and produce an account of 2,000 years of Sino-Japanese interaction by 2008, in time to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Japan-China Peace and Friendship Treaty.

From that first meeting, however, it became clear that the committee members had set themselves a daunting task. The initial gathering was characterized by lengthy speeches, and agreement was reached only on a vague set of areas for future discussion. Three broad themes for joint study were set: the 2000 years of exchanges between the two countries; the "unfortunate" history of the modern era; and the 60 years of "progress" in relations since the war. The Japanese wanted to focus on the postwar era, while the Chinese, not surprisingly, were more interested in taking stock of the colonial and wartime periods.<sup>11</sup>

The committee held its second meeting in Tokyo on March 19–21, 2007. Members agreed that each side would separately write its own version of bilateral history texts ("parallel history") and exchange written comments on controversial issues. They agreed on a list of major historical events that must be discussed, including the Nanjing massacre and Japan's 21 demands on China—the issue of "comfort women" was not included. They met again in December 2007 after each side had finished its draft and are expected to produce a report after the Beijing Olympics.<sup>12</sup>

These efforts at an official level, though useful, are unlikely to produce a common history. As we have already seen with the joint Korea-Japan and China-Japan efforts, it is almost impossible to arrive at a common rendition of historical events, particularly regarding the most controversial period of history. As Kitaoka points out, perceptions of history among Northeast Asian nations will never be identical. Thus, efforts should be aimed at "ascertaining precisely where the two sides' perceptions differ and where they are in agreement."<sup>13</sup> Moreover, it is a serious challenge to insulate the involved historians from the political pressures generated by their governments and publics so that they can devote themselves to a careful investigation of historical facts.<sup>14</sup> As the Korean historian Chung Jae-Jeong, a member of the Joint Japan-ROK Committee, points out, "it requires a lot of courage, effort, patience and sincerity to publish a history textbook for common use via a joint project spanning countries which had once been antagonistic toward each other."<sup>15</sup>

In contrast to such difficulties encountered by official efforts to compile joint history textbooks, scholars of Korea and Japan have worked together privately

to move toward a mutual understanding of regional history. **The first of such efforts** was the Japan-South Korea Joint Study Group on History Textbooks, which was organized in the late 1980s, long before the official efforts. The group was organized without the direct involvement of either the Korean or the Japanese government and met four times from spring 1991 to fall 1992. Similarly, in November 2004, **Hanil yōndae 21 (Korea–Japan Solidarity 21) was formed to promote self-criticism and reflection and to build regional solidarity between the two nations for the twenty-first century.** Also, after several years of collaborative work, a regional NGO consisting of historians from China, Japan, and South Korea produced the first-ever East Asian common history guidebook, *A History That Opens to the Future: The Contemporary and Modern History of Three East Asian Countries* (*Mirai o hiraku rekishi* or *Miraerül Yōnūn Yōksa*) in early 2005.<sup>16</sup> In the spring of 2007, after 10 years of work, another group of 40 historians and experts from Japan and Korea published a history of Korea-Japan relations. This book, entitled *A History of Korea-Japan Relations* (*Han'il kyoryu ūi Yōksa*), covers relations between the two nations from ancient times to the present. In addition, a number of teaching materials for history education have been jointly published by Korea and Japan.<sup>17</sup> It remains to be seen how these “unofficial” history books will be incorporated into the teaching of history in schools. It is hoped, however, that they will help to achieve one of the **most challenging, long-term goals of regional reconciliation: the teaching of a reconciled past to the young people of Japan, Korea, and China.**

## Divided Memories and Identity Politics

Despite these official and unofficial efforts to overcome differences over history, we have not yet seen the emergence of a shared view of the past or regional identity among Northeast Asian nations. The official projects to produce joint history texts generated “a certain bond of mutual trust” between the scholars of the different countries and promoted a sense of “a common intellectual community,”<sup>18</sup> but the participants came to the painful if not unexpected conclusion that writing a common official history textbook is all but impossible. At best, the historians could discuss issues on the basis of open inquiry into the facts of history and narrow the gap in views among the nations of the region. Meanwhile, as noted above, the private efforts did result in the publication of common history books, but it remains to be seen what impact they will have on the formation of a shared historical memory among the peoples of Northeast Asia.

If anything, the experience of the past two decades underlines how profoundly the writing of histories and especially of history texts are affected by the politics of nationalism. In particular, an obsession with national history based on a single historical memory, embodied in history textbooks, has exacerbated Asia’s history problem. Why?

As is well known, modern history in Northeast Asia has been written as “national” history. As the first modernizing Asian country but still a late developer vis-à-vis the West, Japan felt a need to catch up through “defensive modernization.” In this process, nationalism, including the notion of a racially distinctive and ethnically homogeneous Japanese nation (*minzoku*), emerged and was promoted as a force for reform and social change. The myth of a *tan’itsu minzoku* constituted the core of Japanese national history (*kokushi*) and remains so even today in the form of *nihonjinron*.<sup>19</sup>

Korea’s history writing also evolved from dynastic to ethno-national history in the process of modern nation-building, but largely as a response to Japanese colonialism and its colonialist historiography. Korean nationalist historiography thus developed during the colonial period and continued after 1945, when each of the two Koreas promoted its own nationalist master narrative as it competed with the other side to be the sole legitimate representative of the Korean ethnic nation.<sup>20</sup>

China was not much different. The PRC prided itself on its victory over colonialism and imperialism; its historical narrative rested on the themes of national resistance and liberation, a focus which remains today (see Duus’s chapter). In Qi Chen’s words, “the ultimate goal of history education in the People’s Republic of China is to stimulate patriotic feeling and consolidate the national identity of the students.”<sup>21</sup>

History education plays a powerful role in shaping national identity. As Prasenjit Duara points out, states create “master narratives” in which a nation or nation’s story is privileged over others and excludes or even represses other important discourse or narratives of history.<sup>22</sup> History textbooks are produced to teach youth the “master narrative” that defines a nation’s identity. As Peter Duus points out in Chapter xxx, since the invention of history textbooks in the nineteenth century, they have been “organized around the narrative or story of a nation or people rather than around a transnational theme,” which remains the case today. As textbooks have been written specifically to promote a sense of national identity, the politics of nationalism invariably affect their writing. This is especially so in Northeast Asia, where nationalism has been the guiding principle of history writing and governments have been directly or indirectly involved in the writing of history texts and their adoption. In fact, according to the surveys in 2005 mentioned above, 41.9 percent of Chinese and 31.8 percent of Koreans said that “school education” was the most influential factor in shaping their historical perspective.<sup>23</sup>

In Northeast Asia, government still has considerable influence over the people’s understanding of history, especially through history textbooks. South Korea’s only “national” history textbook is written by the Ministry of Education, while Japan’s Ministry of Education puts all textbooks through a strict screening process before approving their adoption by schools.<sup>24</sup> In China, too, the Ministry of Education directly shapes the process of history textbook writing and publishing. As Qi Chen points out, “historical narration and points



of view [in history textbooks] must accord with fundamental policies of the government” (p. 20).<sup>25</sup> In Taiwan, a recent revision of history textbooks to emphasize Taiwanese identity had much to do with the broader efforts by the DPP government toward “Taiwanization.”

With such heavy state involvement, the resulting history textbooks can easily turn into issues of diplomacy and international relations. Clearly, the texts represent official or semi-official versions of national history. Government oversight, as Daniel Sneider points out in Chapter xxx, makes textbooks a natural and legitimate subject for debate among competing forces within a nation and among nations. It is no coincidence that textbooks have become a nexus for significant international tension in the region, especially between Japan and China and between Japan and the two Koreas.<sup>26</sup>

At the Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center at Stanford University, we have embarked on a project—Divided Memories and Reconciliation—that attempts to address the history issue from a comparative perspective. Our project flows from the belief that the greatest obstacle to reconciliation and a resolution of historical injustices and contention in Northeast Asia lies in the existence of divided, often conflicting, historical memories. Rather than try to forge a common historical account or to reach a consensus among scholars about specific events, we believe that a more fruitful approach, at least for now, lies in understanding how historical memory has been shaped in each country and reflected in a master narrative. We hope that, by making clear the existence of different master narratives of national history and their official promotion by government, citizens will develop a more self-critical approach to their own history, laying the basis for greater self- and mutual understanding and thus eventual historical reconciliation in the region.

Like many other scholars and experts in the field, we see reconciliation as a process, not an endpoint, which involves “a search for a way to engage and manage difference rather than for harmony or consensus.” In the words of Lily Gardner Feldman, the concept of reconciliation “does not infuse peace with a vision of harmony and tension-free coexistence but integrates differences. Productive contention in a shared and cooperative framework for identifying and softening (but not eliminating) divergence is a more realistic goal than perfect peace.”<sup>27</sup> In this context, our comparative project can be seen as an effort to create such a cooperative framework to integrate divided historical memories in Northeast Asia.

To be clear, we are not denying the importance of historical facts. Historians must present “accurate” historical facts and revise history writing based on them. We are not claiming that history is only memory or a matter of interpretation, even in this age of post-modernism. Still, historical facts inevitably are subject to varying interpretations. Therefore, our focus lies on examining how historical facts are recorded and remembered in a given nation and how that, in turn, affects national identity and so also international relations.

More specifically, our project examines the formation of historical memory in four Northeast Asian societies, China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, plus the United States.<sup>28</sup> The first part is a comparative study of high school history textbooks in these five regimes, focusing on the period from the beginning of the Sino-Japanese war in 1931 until the formal conclusion of the Pacific War with the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951. Similar projects have been confined to two countries, such as Japan and South Korea. As far as I know, there exists no such study comparing five societies in the region, especially one that includes the United States. (I explain below why the United States should be included in the comparative study of historical issues in Northeast Asia.)

The textbook analysis will be followed by a second comparative study. It will cover popular cinema dealing with historical subjects during roughly the same period.<sup>29</sup> Film, along with television and literature, plays a crucial role in shaping historical memory, and thus provides another means of comparing how historical memory has been formed in the five societies under study. This analysis of films has particular importance, since in recent years there has been a significant increase in exchanges of films and other manifestations of popular culture among Northeast Asian nations, in part intended specifically to promote regional reconciliation. We will be able to compare the shaping of historical memories not only through education (textbooks) but also popular culture (films).

In parallel with these two comparative studies, Shorestein APARC will design and carry out a comprehensive study of the views of elite opinion-makers in all five societies on contentious historical issues. How elites in politics, the media, academia, and business view the past is clearly crucial to the formation of public policy in Northeast Asia and the United States, but very little scholarly research has been conducted on elite understanding of historical issues. For example, does elite opinion and perception differ significantly from that of the general public? How does the elite view of the past influence their stance on current policy matters? Have elite views undergone major changes over time? If so, why? Are there significant generational differences within each elite?

This book is the outcome of the first year of research in the project. Specifically, we have analyzed how high school history textbooks deal with the events from 1931 to 1951 in the five societies. The scope of the period under examination could have been stretched back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, for the sake of constructing a manageable comparative study, we have limited the period to the wartime events that began with the opening of the Sino-Japanese conflict in 1931, continued with the widening of that conflict into the Sino-Japanese war and later the Pacific War between the Japanese Empire and the Allies, and concluded with the peace process culminating in the signing of the San Francisco Treaty in 1951. This period encompasses Japanese colonial rule in Korea, Taiwan, and northern China, as well as the decisions at the close of the Pacific War, including the division of Korea. Subjects studied include general

issues, China-Japan issues, Taiwan-Korea-Japan issues, U.S.-Japan issues, and postwar settlement issues (see the Excerpts included in this book).

Our research team has translated in full all writing and graphic materials used in the textbooks to cover this time period. Where multiple textbooks are in use, we compare the most widely used texts, along with those used for advanced or college-bound students. In this volume, we first analyze the treatment of history in those textbooks, comparing it to broadly accepted historical understanding. We then examine how the formation of divided memories, as reflected in the texts, impacts international relations in Northeast Asia and between the United States and Northeast Asia and how our effort to understand the processes of national memory formation may contribute to the ultimate goal of reconciliation.<sup>30</sup>

For the first issue—the treatment of history—we ask a number of questions. Do the textbooks reflect the mainstream views of historians in their own society? Are there alternative points of view? If so, what are they and why are they not reflected in the textbooks? Are there significant differences in the textbooks’ treatment of key events in this historical period (1931–1951)? Why do such differences exist? Do textbooks from other places provide a more balanced treatment of history and, if so, why? How much impact do textbooks have on the shaping of historical memory compared to other sources? These questions are addressed in Chapters xxx.

As the second issue, we examine the policy implications of the Divided Memories and Reconciliation project. How does the problem of divided memories affect international relations in Northeast Asia and U.S.-Asian relations? Will efforts such as ours to enhance mutual understanding actually promote better relations? In addressing these questions, we look closely at the recent efforts of Korean, Japanese and Chinese scholars to write a “common history” of Northeast Asia. What motivated their efforts and what have they achieved? What are the main obstacles to such efforts, and how can they promote shared memory and reconciliation in the region? Does the European experience offer models for cross-national cooperation on textbook production and for historical reconciliation? These questions are addressed in Chapters xxx.

## **The United States in Northeast Asian Reconciliation**

Unlike other research projects dealing with Asian history issues, we include the United States. The history issue is not entirely an Asian issue; indeed, it is highly relevant to the United States. The United States has been deeply involved in Northeast Asian affairs since 1941, and even before. Although the occupation of Japan and the Tokyo Tribunal were conducted under the auspices of the Allied Powers, the United States was the undisputed leader of both. Many Asians feel that the United States bears responsibility for what they regard as the tribunal’s failure fully to address Japanese war crimes and for the occupation’s inadequate measures to “re-educate” the Japanese about the history of their country’s

colonial and wartime actions. We have several specific reasons for including the United States in this comparative study.

First, the United States did play a crucial role, albeit not always intended, in dealing with historical issues in the immediate aftermath of the Pacific War. Unlike the Nuremberg trials, the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal) focused on the Japanese actions that had most directly affected the Western allies—the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and the mistreatment of Allied prisoners of war. The proceedings paid only cursory attention to steps against Asians, such as Japan’s invasion of Manchuria in 1931, the Nanjing massacre, and the use of forced Korean labor in Japanese mines and factories.<sup>31</sup> In one Korean scholar’s view, this neglect of crimes against Asians is “one of the most serious defects of the Tokyo trial...[since] many of the victims of these crimes were left helpless by the injuries they suffered, and they have been left without redress to this day.”<sup>32</sup> Only three of the eleven judges at the trial represented Asian countries, and there was no representative from Korea. The U.S.-led tribunal failed to appreciate—or at least to acknowledge—the massive suffering of Chinese and Koreans at the hands of Japanese invaders and colonizers and the need to dry up the deep well of anger left behind. The United States provided immunity even to those Japanese who tested biological weapons on live prisoners of war and civilians, in exchange for information obtained from the experiments.<sup>33</sup> An international symposium held in 1983 to reassess the Tokyo war crimes trial concluded that it was “marked by Eurocentrism in its legal ideas, its personnel, and its historical thinking,” a situation for which the United States must bear some responsibility.<sup>34</sup>

Second, and perhaps most significant, was the U.S. decision to preserve the Showa Emperor in the belief that doing so would facilitate the occupation and reconstruction of postwar Japan. There is still no consensus over the extent of the emperor’s responsibility for Japanese militarism and war crimes,<sup>35</sup> although the Japanese people fought and died in his name. Even in the tribunal, there were disputes over the emperor’s responsibility. The Australian judge and chair of the tribunal, Sir William Webb, opposed the idea of keeping the imperial institution intact, calling the emperor “the leader in the crime.”<sup>36</sup> However, his was a minority view in the U.S.-dominated court, and thus the opportunity to address the personal and institutional role of the emperor in the historical injustices was lost. Of course, the Japanese elite also sought to “protect the throne, its occupant, and their own rule” by linking Hirohito to “the idea of peace,” but U.S. influence was decisive.<sup>37</sup> According to Arnold Brackman, a correspondent for United Press who covered the Tokyo war crimes trials, “Keenan (the Allied chief prosecutor) and his staff argued that in both theory and practice the evidence showed that ‘the Emperor’s role [was] that of a figurehead,’ “following the line laid down by MacArthur and the Truman administration.”<sup>38</sup> In fact, the *Tokyo Shoseki Japanese History B* states that the decision to exclude the emperor from the trials was “determined by the global policy of the United States” (see the Excerpts on “Tokyo war crimes tribunal”).

The failure to confront and address this issue of Hirohito's war responsibility greatly shaped the ways in which Japanese would remember the war years and address reconciliation issues with their Asian neighbors. The campaign to promote the myth of the emperor's innocence or victim of the militarists only strengthened Japanese victim consciousness and impeded the search for historical truth. As Bix acutely notes, "as long as Hirohito remained on the throne, unaccountable to anyone for his official actions, most Japanese had little reason to question their support of him or feel responsibility for the war, let alone look beyond the narrow boundaries of victim consciousness."<sup>39</sup> A recent study on historical disputes in Northeast Asia by the International Crisis Group reached a similar conclusion, saying that "the absolution of the Emperor left the country without anyone to blame."<sup>40</sup>

Third, as Japan's importance as a bulwark against communism in the region increased with the intensification of the Cold War, the United States sought to quickly put aside issues of historical responsibility. The United States did not press Japan to reconcile with its neighbors as it had Germany (see Chapter xx by Daniel Chirot). The San Francisco Treaty of 1951 formally ended the war, settling Japan's obligations to pay reparations for its wartime acts. But neither China nor Korea was a signatory, and Japan's responsibility toward those nations was not settled. By then, China had become an enemy of the United States and Korea was weak and divided. Nevertheless, the 1951 Treaty became a major basis of later court rulings on wartime atrocities and crimes. For instance, in April 2007, Japan's Supreme Court foreclosed all pending and future lawsuits arising from actions taken by Japan in the course of colonialism and war. The court cited as a main ground the relevant provisions of the San Francisco Treaty. In other words, the Japanese Supreme Court regarded the treaty, drafted at the height of the Cold War largely by the United States and without the participation of China and Korea, as having stripped China and Korea and other countries of legal means to obtain redress.

In 1965, under heavy pressure from a United States anxious to solidify its Cold War security alliance system and to bolster the South Korean economy, the Republic of Korea agreed to normalized relations with Japan in the midst of strong domestic protests. For many years thereafter, Korea benefited from substantial Japanese economic assistance but Japan refused to term this "reparations." Issues such as disputed territories and Japan's colonial rule were again swept under the rug. Unlike in Western Europe, where the United States established a multilateral security arrangement (i.e., NATO) and pushed for Franco-German reconciliation, in Northeast Asia the United States established a bilateral "hub and spoke" alliance system with Japan and the ROK and did not press for a fundamental historical reconciliation between the two U.S. allies.<sup>41</sup> As a result, "normalization" occurred at the governmental level but without addressing popular demands for the redress of historical injustices. As one former U.S. senior diplomat points out, "for American policy makers,

strategic considerations have consistently trumped issues of equity in historic disputes involving Japan since World War II.”<sup>42</sup>

There has been some debate in U.S. policymaking circles about the role the United States might play in helping to resolve these historical disputes. A predominant view has been that this is primarily a matter for Asians and better left to their historians. By taking a specific position, its proponents fear, the United States would be pulled into the Sino-Japanese rivalry and forced to take sides in matters involving its Japanese ally.<sup>43</sup> The other view, one we share, is that the United States can hardly afford to stand outside these disputes, particularly when it was a participant in their creation. In G. John Ikenberry’s view, Japan’s history problem is an American problem as well, and “Washington should encourage Japan to pursue [a] German path, tying ‘normalization’ to redoubled commitments to regional security cooperation.”<sup>44</sup>

Then-Deputy U.S. Secretary of State Robert Zoellick, speaking in Japan in 2006, suggested that one way to defuse tensions would be a nongovernmental effort by historians and scholars in China, Japan, and the United States to examine the history of World War II and perhaps other periods as well. He pointed to a dialogue initiated by Harvard University’s Ezra Vogel on the Sino-Japanese war and to a conference convened at Stanford by the Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center focusing on Korea’s past.<sup>45</sup> “A more open, dispassionate, transparent view can benefit all parties, not only dealing with the World War II history,” Zoellick suggested. Gilbert Rozman went a step further by calling for “US efforts to narrow historical differences and to set in motion a process of joint study of historical materials and increased mutual understanding [between Japan and Korea].” He urged the United States to “explicitly challenge revived nationalist interpretations in Japan while also trying to calm historical grievances in South Korea and China.”<sup>46</sup>

Unlike the U.S. executive branch, the U.S. House of Representatives took up Asian history issues by passing a resolution, H. Res. 121, criticizing the Japanese handling of the “comfort women” issue. Introduced by Representative Mike Honda, a Japanese American legislator, it called on the Japanese government to “formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Forces’ coercion of young women into sexual slavery, known to the world as ‘comfort women’, during its colonial and wartime occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands from the 1930s through the duration of World War II.” The resolution urged that Japan “should educate current and future generations about this horrible crime while following the recommendation of the international community with respect to the ‘comfort women.’”<sup>47</sup>

Although passage of the resolution encouraged those interested in achieving reconciliation based on addressing past injustices, a reckoning with the past is not simply a matter of passing judgment on Japan’s actions. Japan was undoubtedly a major aggressor in the region and it needs to acknowledge more fully its historical role. At the same time, others need to recognize that Japan has its

own sense of historical injustice and victim consciousness and that American actions such as the atomic bombings and the conventional bombings of Japanese civilians have never been officially addressed by the United States. According to a survey conducted by the Asahi Shimbun on April 2006, only 17 percent of Japanese said that “the trials justly judged those who were responsible for the war,” while 34 percent said they believed that “the trials were an unjust and unilateral judgment of the defeated nations by the victor nations.”<sup>48</sup>

Ultimately, the United States needs to confront its own “crimes against humanity” in Japan. Besides the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that killed about 140,000 and 70,000 civilians, respectively, the United States killed far more civilians through massive firebombing of Japanese cities. For instance, the firebombing of Tokyo alone on March 9–10, 1945, led to the death of about 100,000 people and the destruction of one million homes. At the time, the targeting for destruction of entire cities with conventional weapons (known as “area” or “carpet” bombing) was still controversial; the U.S. military later used it as a standard tactic against North Korea during the Korean [War].<sup>49</sup> Although American leaders maintained that these bombings were necessary to defeat the Japanese military while minimizing American casualties, these American actions without question constituted war atrocities. Justice Pal of India even argued during the Tokyo trial that “in the war in Asia the only act comparable to Nazi atrocities was perpetrated by the leaders of the United States”<sup>50</sup> and this dissenting view is indeed noted in the *Yamakawa Japanese History B* (see the Excerpts on “Tokyo war crimes tribunal”). Nevertheless, no discussion of American war crimes was ever allowed at the Tokyo Tribunal and to this day the United States has made no apology, much less reparation, for its firebombings or atomic bombings of Japan and the *Tokyo Shoseki Japanese History B* attributes noted that (see the Excerpts on “Tokyo war crimes tribunal”).<sup>51</sup> This double standard or victor’s justice, in the view of John Dower, “provided fertile soil for the growth of a postwar neonationalism” in Japan.<sup>52</sup>

It is encouraging to see US school children being exposed to disputes over the decision to drop the bomb. The US textbooks do include arguments pro and con, with the con including the revisionist view that Japan was about to surrender anyway and the bomb was dropped mainly to scare the Soviets. They also mention “misgivings and remorse about the atomic conclusion of World War II” and alleged racism in the decision to drop the bomb on Japan, not on Germany. Still, the main narrative in the books supports the standard line, i.e., the bombs were dropped to save lives and avoid the cost of an invasion of Japan. *The Americans* sums up this view as follows: “Japan still had a huge army that would defend every inch of homeland. President Truman saw only one way to avoid an invasion of Japan...the atomic bomb.” (See excerpts on “Atomic Bombing of Japanese Cities”).

It is time for Americans to take seriously issues of historical responsibility and injustice in Northeast Asia, including their own. To be sure, any reexamination of the U.S. “national myth” insofar as wartime atrocities were concerned is likely

to promote spirited rebuttals in the United States and some may even regard that as opening up “Pandora’s Box.” Yet, the United States has a clear interest in ensuring that the peace and prosperity of a region so vital to its future is not undermined by the past, and needs to reconsider its “hands-off” posture to be more proactive. That would also encourage the Japanese to explore with greater sincerity and depth their own record and motivations and might even open up the new process of reconciliation in the region that is badly needed.<sup>53</sup>

## Challenges for Northeast Asia

The renewal of the history problem between Japan and China/Korea, the emergence of history disputes between Korea and China, and continued territorial disputes between Russia/China/Korea and Japan clearly illustrate that memories and reconciliation in the Northeast Asian region are rooted not only in the colonial and Pacific War injustices, but also in much deeper, more complex, historical, cultural, and political relations. Once again, increased interaction among these nations in recent years, in terms of trade and cultural and social exchanges, offers some hope for enhanced Asian regional cooperation, but until they come to terms with the past, there will be clear limits to progress.<sup>54</sup>

According to a 2006 survey, Chinese respondents rated Japan as their least favored country (1.83 for the general public and 1.76 for elites, on a four-point scale with 4 representing “highly favorable”) among a group that included North and South Korea, the United States, India, and Russia. Furthermore, it is important to note that the top four reasons they gave for such an unfavorable view of Japan all had to do with history issues: the first being the Nanjing massacre at 42.19 percent, followed by unspecified historical issues (19.76 percent), denial of historical crimes (15.62 percent), and visits to Yasukuni shrine (10.19 percent). Over half of the respondents (54.78 percent) said that the difficulties in Sino-Japanese relations should be resolved by addressing “historical issues first.”<sup>55</sup> Similarly, surveys in 2005 reveal that 36.7 percent of Koreans and 36 percent of Japanese said that “territorial disputes” would “threaten peace and stability in East Asia.”<sup>56</sup> These results clearly show that history and territorial issues remain central to improving relations among Northeast Asian nations.

Fostering a reconciled view of the past, however, will not be easy. Past efforts, if not a failure, have nevertheless resulted in only slow and protracted progress. That was to be expected because, as argued above, the region is bound by divided, even conflicting, historical memories and identities. Therefore, understanding how each nation has created its own memory and identity would be an important first step. Koreans and Chinese, for instance, need to understand the duality of the victim/aggressor identity of conservative Japanese elites (**unlike their German counterparts**) and how this has been the chief obstacle to Japan’s reconciliation with its Asian neighbors. Likewise, Japanese need to understand how central the historical legacy of Japanese aggression has been in shaping the



collective identities of Chinese and Koreans. For instance, in Japanese history textbooks, only 4 percent of the coverage of Japan's modern history (1868–1945) is devoted to Korea. In contrast, in Korean history textbooks, Japan occupies almost a quarter (about 23 percent) of its coverage of Korea's modern history (late 1800s–1945). In other words, Japan figures far more prominently in the historical memory and identity of Koreans than does Korea in those of Japan. The joint efforts by Japan and Korea and by Japan and China to (re)examine historical issues and textbooks have increased the mutual understanding of the participants. Such efforts should continue to be encouraged, though they are unlikely to produce a common history of Northeast Asia in the foreseeable future. Our project reported here, builds on these efforts, and expands them by including the United States and other nations.

Understanding better each other's experiences in the modern era can also be a good step toward achieving a reconciled view of the past. While China, Japan, and Korea often argue over history, it is nonetheless true that elements in their shared past may also contribute to historical reconciliation. Coping with Western influence since the nineteenth century is but one area of common ground. Their experience with building modern nation-states and economies is another example. It could be argued that the Meiji model of modernization has been influential to the development not only of modern Japan but also postwar Korea and even China today. In addition, Northeast Asia nations need to look at the positive side of their historical relationships. As Chung points out, in the long history of Japanese-Korean relations, antagonistic periods of invasion and resistance were quite brief when compared with the periods of peace and exchange.<sup>57</sup>

Northeast Asia needs to promote "thick" reconciliation that will foster a shared vision for the region transcending victimhood and narrow, exclusive notions of **national identity**. **However politically convenient and psychologically satisfying** it may be to blame others, such an approach will neither heal past wounds nor provide a foundation for the future. Cultivating a redefined, shared view of the region's future rests on the shoulders of visionary political leaders and members of civil society, including the mass media. "Thick" reconciliation must be based on democratic values and respect for human rights, and both state and society will have to be actively involved. As was the case in Japan-ROK normalization—when an authoritarian state in Korea suppressed civil society's attempts to raise historical issues—the resulting reconciliation was "thin" and historical issues were not resolved. They reemerged later, in even more contentious form. Despite this, there is reason to be more optimistic about Japanese-Korean reconciliation now, because both are democratic and their civil societies are active in addressing history issues. In addition, a vastly improved Japanese-Korean relationship would almost certainly create a climate supporting Sino-Japanese reconciliation.

Achieving thick reconciliation also requires educating younger generations to look at the past in a new way and to reach beyond national borders. Otherwise,

there is no promise that the younger generation will be more receptive to reconciled views of the past. As noted above, history education plays a crucial role in shaping their perspectives on the past. That explains why the young people of Northeast Asia remain highly nationalistic and why their emotions in regard to history issues are often more intense and bitter than those of their elders. Therefore, how we educate young Northeast Asians with diverse and balanced views based on critical and independent thinking about their own past, and how we cultivate mutually acceptable, new national histories of each country, resituated in a larger regional perspective, is an extremely important task for the future. To achieve this, history education in Northeast Asia must encourage diverse views and discussions about their own history rather than just convey a particular, usually nationalistic, master narrative to their students. In particular, the current systems of textbook censorship and college entrance exams that mandate one and only one “correct” answer to complex questions and issues must be changed. Teachers should be allowed, indeed encouraged, to address contested issues without fear of retribution. Revisions in methodology, as well as contents, are also needed.<sup>58</sup>

In this regard, recent developments in educational reform in Northeast Asia are encouraging. In South Korea, for instance, starting in 2009 “national history,” a mandatory subject for junior and senior high school students, will be changed into “history” and treated as an independent subject. In the new curricula, national and world history, which appeared in separate textbooks, will be integrated to teach “South Korean history within the context of world history.” “East Asian history,” for the first time, will be added as an elective subject in senior high school so that students can learn that “the people of East Asia have created a common cultural heritage through close exchanges” (see Chapter xx by Soon-Won Park). In Taiwan, “national history” has recently been divided into “Taiwanese history” and “Chinese history” to offer more diversity in historical views.<sup>59</sup> Also, like Japan, both China and South Korea plan to adopt a textbook screening system, allowing schools to choose among multiple texts, rather than authorizing only one set of government-designated textbooks.<sup>60</sup>

Still, it will require enlightened and committed political leadership for these education reforms to have a substantial impact in achieving “reconciliation via history education” in Northeast Asia. After all, history education is an indispensable element in creating national identity through a selective memory of the past and thus cannot be separated from politics. Taiwan’s educational reform to promote Taiwanese identity is a clear case in point. In PRC, patriotism will remain at the heart of its history education. Politicians have also found history useful as leverage in dealing with domestic opponents as well as with neighboring countries. Thus, history issues cannot and will not simply be left in the hands of professional historians.

It is a critical time for a new Northeast Asia. Intra-regional relationships are at stake, as are also the United States’ ties with Japan, Korea, and China.

All these relationships are evolving as China continues to develop and extend its influence and as Japan, in response, seeks to strengthen its alliance with the United States. The multiple layers of disputes among Northeast Asian nations over history and territorial issues, especially the Sino-Japanese rivalry, clearly should give rise to concern among American policymakers. Increased regional interaction in recent years has not diminished the importance of the past. On the contrary, the past has become even more contentious as nations vie for regional leadership in Northeast Asia. In fact, as Daniel Sneider points out in Chapter xxx, the emergence of history textbooks as an international issue in the early 1980s was a response to Japan's bid for regional leadership, propelled by its economic success. Now, as China rises as an economic power and as a competitor with Japan for leadership in an integrating Northeast Asia, the past is taking on ever more importance.

International society must understand the complex layers of Northeast Asian history and reconciliation. In this regard, it is misleading to mechanically compare, as many casual observers do, the ways that Northeast Asia and Western Europe have dealt with the past. It cannot and should not be expected that Northeast Asia will simply repeat or emulate the experiences of Western Europe. The regions have distinctive histories, experiences, and memories, and perhaps even different cultural modes of reconciliation.<sup>61</sup> In fact, as Daniel Chirot notes in Ch. Xx, the German model was probably historically unique.<sup>62</sup> Accordingly, we must continue to search for a Northeast Asian model of reconciliation, while using the European experiences as a reference (see Chapter xx by Soon-Won Park). This would include reassessing the U.S. role in facilitating the reconciliation process; it is my hope and expectation that our project, initiated by an American university and supported by multiple Asian institutions, can contribute in that regard. We also need to be patient with the rather slow progress in Northeast Asian efforts for reconciliation—even in Europe it took a long time to achieve significant progress. Reconciliation is inherently a multilayered, complex, long-term process involving multiple actors, including the state, civil society, and international organizations.

In the final analysis, overcoming the historical grievances that divide the nations of Northeast Asia is not just a necessary condition to avoid conflict and enhance cooperation; it is a prerequisite for building a new regional community and has important policy implications for the United States as well. As the great American writer William Faulkner famously wrote, “the past is not dead. In fact, it's not even past.” Nowhere is that truer today than in Northeast Asia. We must not allow the future of that strategic region to be determined by a failure to deal wisely and courageously with the past.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This is a paper still in progress. Comments and suggestions are welcome but do NOT cite or quote any part of this paper without author's permission.

I would like to acknowledge insightful comments and suggestions that I have received from Donald Keyser, David Straub, Daniel Chirot, Soon-Won Park, and Daniel C. Sneider on earlier versions of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> See chapters at Gi-Wook Shin and Daniel C. Sneider, eds, *Cross-Currents: Regionalism and Nationalism in Northeast Asia* (Stanford, CA: Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center and the Brookings Institution Press, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-05-2.htm> and <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-05-3.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> He distinguishes reconciliation into varieties of “thin”—formerly hostile parties continue to co-exist without taking active revenge—and “thick,” which entails “forgiveness, mercy, a shared comprehensive vision, mutual healing, or harmony.” See David Croker, “Reckoning with Past Wrongs: A Normative Framework,” *Ethics and International Affairs* 13 (1999): 43–64.

<sup>5</sup> According to surveys conducted in 2005, 93 percent of Koreans said that “unresolved historical issues” are important to Korea-Japan relations and 91.9 percent of Chinese said so regarding China-Japan relations. Somewhat fewer but still the overwhelming majority of Japanese (75.9 percent) said that “historical issues such as the colonial legacies and Sino-Japanese War are [important] to Japan-China-Korea relations.” See <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-05-2.htm>, <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-05-3>, and <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-05-4.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> Koreans see the kingdom as the forerunner of their nation, while Chinese take the position that it was merely a Chinese vassal state. See James Brooke, “China Fears Once and Future Kingdom,” *The New York Times* (August 25, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> See Gi-Wook Shin, Soon-Won Park, and Daqing Yang, eds, *Rethinking Historical Injustice in Northeast Asia: The Korean Experience*. (London: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> See also Shin’ichi Kitaoka, “Japan-China Joint History Research Gets under Way,” *Gaiko Forum* 3 (Fall 2007): 3–13; Kimijima Kazuhiko, “The Continuing Legacy of Japanese Colonialism: The Japan-South Korea Joint Study Group on History Textbooks,” pp. 203–25 in Laura Hein and Mark Selden eds., *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany and the United States* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> Wolfgang Höpken notes three conditions for such a political environment: “a general favorable political environment of détente... after basic disputes had been settled or lost their significance,” “a broad consensus within the society about the need and the benefit of reconciliation,” and “political elites [to view it] as a matter for increasing their legitimacy and thus find their support or at least acceptance.” In Northeast Asia, these conditions do not yet exist. See Wolfgang Höpken, “Reconciliation through Textbooks: Experiences, Achievements, Problems,” paper presented at a conference on “Memory, Reconciliation and

Security in the Asian-Pacific Region: Implications for Japan-U.S. Relations,” held at George Washington University, January 31–February 1, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> “*North East Asia’s Undercurrents of Conflict*,” report of the International Crisis Group (December 15, 2005), p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> In his opening speech, Bu Ping proclaimed that: “In Japan, speeches and activities not admitting the responsibility for the war of aggression and denying the historical facts of the war have existed until now. Those irresponsible words and actions going against the common interests of the two countries have constantly hurt the public sentiment of a war victim nation.” See reports in *Mainichi Shimbun* (December 27, 2006) and *The Financial Times* (February 16, 2007).

<sup>12</sup> See *The Japan Times* (March 21, 2007) and *Xinhua* (March 21, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> Kitaoka, “Japan-China Joint History Research,” p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> Still, these joint efforts are useful as a kind of public history education. Through media coverage and public discussion of history textbook issues, many learned and thought about the Nanjing massacre, the “comfort women” system, wartime forced labor, and the mistreatment of POWs, as part of the regional wartime experience, and re-examined them with new sensitivity, in light of universal human rights. Both elites and the public in Korea, Japan and China have widened their scope of understanding of the Asian regional history problems that cross their own national borders. In addition, by acknowledging mutual ignorance, both societies have learned more about each other’s problems.

<sup>15</sup> Chung, Jae-Jeong, “Recognition of History and the Dialogue Between South Korea and Japan: Toward Memories of Reconciliation and Coexistence,” unpublished paper, p. 20.

<sup>16</sup> Even in this book, complete agreement is not possible to achieve. According to a key participant in this project, all three nations are producing a slightly different version of this common history book. For instance, when referring to “comfort women,” the Korean version uses “sex slaves” while the Japanese one uses “ianfu” (Japanese for “comfort women”). See also Chapter xxx in this book.

<sup>17</sup> They include *Korea-Japan Common History Teaching Materials; History of Korea-Japan Relations from Prehistory to Present* (March 2007); *Korea-Japan Common History Teaching Materials: From Hideyoshi Toyotomi’s Choson Invasion to the Royal Envoy from the Choson Dynasty* (April 2005); *Korea-Japan History: Regarding One Another Face to Face* (2006); *Modern and Contemporary History of Three East Asian Countries Looking to the Future* (May 2005). See Chung, “Recognition of History.”

<sup>18</sup> Kitaoka, “Japan-China Joint History Research,” p. 11. Chung mentions a number of achievements from the joint efforts. They include enhanced understanding of the historical views and textbook censorship systems of each other, development of human networks among historians and history educators of both nations, and improved descriptions of modern Korean history in Japanese history textbooks. See Chung, “Recognition of History.”

<sup>19</sup> See Kosaku Yoshino, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan* (London, Routledge, 1992).

<sup>20</sup> See Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson, eds., *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University's Asia Center, 1999).

<sup>21</sup> Qi Chen, "Curriculum Reform and the Writing of High School History Textbook in the People's Republic of China since 1990," paper presented at a conference on "Divided Memories: History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia" (February 11–12, Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, Stanford University).

<sup>22</sup> Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995).

<sup>23</sup> School education has even more influence in the formation of historical views among younger people. See <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-05-2.htm> and <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-05-3.htm>.

<sup>24</sup> Chung, "Recognition of History," manuscript, p. 16.

<sup>25</sup> Chen, "Curriculum Reform."

<sup>26</sup> While Europe grappled with this issue from the earliest days of the postwar period as an international relations issue, history textbooks did not emerge as an international battlefield in Northeast Asia until the early 1980s. Before then, textbooks were almost purely a domestic issue, mainly within Japan. The "history problem" between Japan and its Asian neighbors is generally considered to have begun in the early 1980s, triggered by the so-called textbook controversy of 1982. The timing can best be explained by domestic as well as international conditions. To varying degrees, each of the three societies underwent profound changes in the 1980s. The role of emerging civil society in Japan's neighboring countries was particularly important. Issues of historical injustice was no longer monopolized or controlled by governments. Instead, civil society and transnational NGO groups became increasingly involved in the issues of historical injustice and reconciliation. While the state's role cannot be denied, it was, quite possibly, the increasing freedom of speech in both Korea and China that brought to the fore some of the pent-up dissatisfaction with earlier settlements with Japan. The shifts in geopolitics and the winding down of the Cold War allowed governments to reassess external priorities and, at times, to allow the history issue to dominate state-to-state relations. The end of the Cold War ideological confrontation was also influenced by the rise of national "identity politics" that appeared in many parts of the world. Growing global attention to national identity, human rights, and historical injustice has certainly contributed to the rise of the "history problems" in Northeast Asia.

<sup>27</sup> Lily Gardner Feldman, "The Principle and Practice of 'Reconciliation' in German Foreign Policy: Relations with France, Israel, Poland and the Czech Republic," *International Affairs* 75(2), p. 337.

<sup>28</sup> Most studies do not include Taiwan or the United States as done here. We could have included Russia and North Korea but did not do so primarily for practical reasons.

<sup>29</sup> We held a workshop about history films on June 6, 2008, and plan to convene a larger conference on December 5, 2008. The conference papers will be published as an edited volume.

<sup>30</sup> At the conference, we also discussed the process of textbook writing and revision. In some cases (particularly of China and Taiwan), the main textbooks have undergone significant revision recently and so our data set includes both the old and new versions of history textbooks in use in schools.

<sup>31</sup> In Dower's view, the Tokyo trials focused on "crimes against peace" but ignored "crimes against humanity," including "murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed before or during the war, or persecutions on political or racial grounds in execution of or in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal, whether or not in violation of the domestic law of the country where perpetrated." Many war crimes against Asians such as forced labor, "comfort women," and mass killings of civilians belong to the second category. John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: Norton and Co., 2000), pp. 473–74, p. 456.

<sup>32</sup> This Korean scholar (Paik Choong-Hyun) contended that "historical evidence demonstrates that there was a larger number of cases of crimes against humanity: murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed by the then existing Japanese government, or with the acquiescence of that government, against minority populations in Japan, Korea, Manchuria, China, the Philippines, and the other Asian regions under Japanese control. But the victorious Allied powers paid very little attention to crimes committed against these colonial peoples, perhaps because the victims of these crimes were not nationals of the victorious nations." Chihiro Hosoya, Andō Nisuke, Ōnuma Yasuaki, and Richard H. Minear, eds., *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial: An International Symposium* (Tokyo 1986, Kodansha Ltd), p. 54.

<sup>33</sup> A former judge at the Tokyo trial, B. V. A. Röling, recalled in 1983: "The prestige of the trial has also been severely damaged by the revelation of the existence in Manchuria of a Japanese laboratory for research into bacteriological weapons. These weapons were tested on prisoners of war and cost thousands of lives. This incident would have provided a case, rare at the Tokyo trial, of centrally organized war criminality. But everything connected with it was kept from the tribunal. The American military authorities wanted to avail themselves of the results of these experiments, criminally obtained by Japan, and at the same time to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Soviet Union. The judges in Tokyo remained ignorant. The Japanese involved in these crimes were promised immunity from prosecution in exchanges for divulging the information obtained from the experiments." See his "Introduction" in Hosoya et al., *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial*, p. 18.

<sup>34</sup> Hosoya et al., *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial*, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> An April 2006 survey by the Asahi Shimbun shows 16 percent of the respondents believing that the emperor bears "extremely heavy responsibility"

for the war, while 15 percent say that he has “no responsibility.” Another 22 percent think that the emperor bears “heavy responsibility” and 42 percent say that he has “some degree of responsibility.” See <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-06-3.htm> (accessed on April 27, 2008). For excellent accounts of the Japanese emperor Hirohito’s war responsibility, see Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (HarperCollins Perennial Edition, 2001) and “War Responsibility and Historical Memory: Hirohito’s Apparition,” *Japan Focus* (May 2008) <http://japanfocus.org/products/details/2741> (accessed on May 12, 2008).

<sup>36</sup> Hosoya et al., *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial*, p. xx.

<sup>37</sup> Bix, “War Responsibility and Historical Memory,” p. 12.

<sup>38</sup> Arnold C. Brackman, *The Other Nuremberg: The Untold Story of the Tokyo War Crimes Trials* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc, 1987), p. 86. He also noted that “to his credit, Keenan admitted after the trial that ‘we gave a good deal of thought’ to indicting him and that ‘strictly legally Emperor Hirohito could have been tried and convicted because under the Constitution of Japan he did have the power to make war and stop it.’ That, of course, was the Australian argument.”

<sup>39</sup> Bix, “War Responsibility and Historical Memory,” p. 17.

<sup>40</sup> International Crisis Group, “Northeast Asia’s Undercurrents of Conflict,” December 2005. The report can be accessed online at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3834>.

<sup>41</sup> Another example is the contrasting role of the United States in dealing with foreign forced labor. As David Palmer points out, “the U.S. pressed hard to force the reluctant German government and corporations to admit their role, make a public apology to the aggrieved, and provide compensation. Toward the Japanese government, by contrast, the U.S. position was precisely opposite, protecting it against claims at every step, even before the San Francisco Treaty.” David Palmer, “Korean Hibakusha, Japan’s Supreme Court and the International Community: Can the U.S. and Japan Confront Forced Labor and Atomic Bombing?” *Japan Focus* (February 2008), p. 6 in <http://japanfocus.org/products/details/2670> (accessed on May 12, 2008).

<sup>42</sup> David Straub, “The United States and Reconciliation in East Asia,” in Tsuyoshi Hasegawa and Kazuhiko Togo, eds, *East Asia’s Haunted Present: Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), p. 215.

<sup>43</sup> See Straub, “The United States and Reconciliation in East Asia.”

<sup>44</sup> G. John Ikenberry, “Japan’s History Problem,” *The Washington Post* (August 17, 2006). See also Gi-Wook Shin, “Beyond Apology, Moral Clarity,” published in *Christian Science Monitor* (April 2, 2007)—<http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0402/p09s02-coop.html>.

<sup>45</sup> The Stanford conference led to the publication of a book entitled *Rethinking Historical Injustice in Northeast Asia: The Korean Experiences*,



edited by Gi-Wook Shin, Soon-Won Park, and Daqing Yang (London: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>46</sup> Gilbert Rozman, "Japan and Korea: Should the US be Worried about Their New Spat in 2001?" *The Pacific Review* 15.1 (2002):1–28.

<sup>47</sup> See <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:HRes121> (accessed on May 10, 2008).

<sup>48</sup> The remaining 48 percent answered that "the trials had problems, but were necessary to bring closure." See <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-06-3.htm> (accessed on April 27, 2008).

<sup>49</sup> Mark Selden, "Japanese and American War Atrocities, Historical Memory and Reconciliation: World War II to Today," *Japan Focus* (April 15, 2008). See <http://japanfocus.org/products/topdf/2724> (accessed on July 21, 2008).

<sup>50</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, pp. 473–74.

<sup>51</sup> President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which offered apologies and reparations to survivors among the 110,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans who had been interned by the US government in the years 1942–45. In this case, however, as Mark Selden noted, "the victims' descendants are American citizens and apologies proved to be good politics for the incumbent." See Selden, "Japanese and American War Atrocities," p. 14.

<sup>52</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, p. 444

<sup>53</sup> Writing on August 2005 on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Japan's World War II defeat, Fumio Matsuo, a former Japanese journalist, suggested that President Bush visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial followed by a similar visit by Japan's prime minister to Pearl Harbor. After facing up to its unfortunate past with the U.S., he added, Japan would have to reach out to its Asian neighbors to admit its own wrongdoings of the past. See Fumio Matsuo, "Tokyo Needs Its Dresden Moment," *The Wall Street Journal* (August 16, 2005).

<sup>54</sup> According to the 2005 surveys cited above, only 15.7 percent of Koreans said that they "have become friendlier toward Japan after the introduction of Japanese popular culture," while the overwhelming majority (83.7 percent) said no. For Japanese, 40.1 percent said that they "have become friendlier towards Korea after [their] exposure to Korean popular culture" but still the majority (52.6 percent) said no.

<sup>55</sup> See <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-06-19.htm> (accessed on April 27, 2008).

<sup>56</sup> See <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-05-2.htm> and <http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/polls/poll-05-4.htm>

<sup>57</sup> Chung, "Recognition of History."

<sup>58</sup> Based on the results of our research project, the Stanford Program on International and Cross-cultural Education (SPICE) will develop a supplementary curriculum unit for U.S. high school students entitled "Divided Memories: Examining High School History Textbooks in China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the United States." It is designed to encourage students to explore and analyze diverse perspectives on key events in the history between

China, Japan, North and South Korea, and the United States, and will be made available to Asians.

<sup>59</sup>This new development may slow down with the election of Ma Ying-Jeou to President of Taiwan and the return to power of the Kuomintang (KMT).

<sup>60</sup> See “Changing History Education,” *Asahi Shimbun* (June 18, 2007) at <http://www.asahi.com/english/Herald-asahi/TKY200706150138.html>.

<sup>61</sup> For instance, Christian groups, imagery, and language played an important role in the Franco-German reconciliation, and the concept of reconciliation has Christian overtones (i.e., forgiveness). It is hard to expect the same experiences in Northeast Asia, which does not have the same degree of presence of transnational Christian groups. For a discussion of the problem of Christian overtones in the reconciliation process, see Elizabeth A. Cole, “Introduction: Reconciliation and History Education,” pp. 1–28 in her edited book *Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation* (Boulder, CO: Roman and Littlefield, 2007).

<sup>62</sup> See also John Torpey, “Dynamics of Denial: Responses to Past Atrocities in Germany, Turkey, and Japan,” pp. 173–91 in Gi-Wook Shin et al, *Rethinking Historical Injustice*.

# WAR STORIES

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Since their invention two centuries ago history textbooks—like historical museums, public monuments, statues of national heroes, national anthems and military cemeteries—have been fashioned to nurture a sense of national identity. A popular 1830 textbook for students in American common schools proclaimed that the study of history “nourishes love of country, and directs to the best means of its improvement; it illustrates equally the blessings of political union, and the miseries of faction; the danger . . . of anarchy and the . . . debasing influence of despotic power.” By articulating a particular view of national identity—a “republican” one in the quoted passage—the textbook aims at turning the young into “good citizens” (or “national subjects” to use the language of cultural studies) by instilling values or lessons “learned” from the study of an often idealized past.

Shaping national identity remains the goal of history textbooks today, especially in countries where the national state is directly involved in their writing, production and/or approval. Textbooks are organized around the story of a nation or people, and curriculum guides explicitly stipulate the building of national identity as a primary goal of the history curriculum. The current Korean current guideline for first year high school history courses, for example, asserts that “The mission of Korean history is, through a revealing of the real nature of our national spirit and life, to establish our nation’s true character. In other words, through the study of history, a student is able to affirm our nation’s traditions, and they can pro-actively participate in the spreading of the proper understanding of our national history.” These goals are echoed in other East Asian countries, with the possible exception of Japan, where emphasis is also placed on efforts to “develop friendly and cooperative relations with neighboring countries and to contribute to the peace and stability of Asia, and, in turn, of the world.”

It is unreasonable to expect that history textbooks be written with “historical objectivity” if by that is meant something like “scientific objectivity.” It is nearly impossible for human beings to observe the actions of other human beings with complete dispassion. Like it or not, the historian has subjective reactions toward the events and people he studies in a way that a physicist presumably does not as he contemplates a quark. History textbooks can never be “objective” if by that is meant a complete absence of subjective judgment. The level of subjectivity rises substantially when the writing of history is put at

the service of building national pride. It is not helpful to criticize a textbook as “nationalistic” if it has been produced under the auspices of a national state. That simply states the obvious.

While we can not expect textbooks to be “objective” we should insist that they be factually “accurate.” Events—an old-fashioned term, to be sure—are the raw material of history, and historians have ways of determining when, whether and how they happened. For example, we can *know* with certainty that an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on a particular day at a particular time, detonated at a certain altitude, and created a massive fireball. There is ample testimony to that effect. Using various kinds of evidence, we can also *estimate* with less certainty how many people died as a result. But when we assess the motives behind the dropping of the bomb or the meaning of the event we move from observable fact to interpretation and/or speculation. Complex motivations lie behind any collective event, and simple “accuracy” is no longer the issue. That is why historical “revisionism” challenges not only the “facts” but their interpretation as well.

“Facts” per se are not the most important element in shaping a sense of national identity. More significant is the vocabulary textbooks use to describe or characterize events. The importance of vocabulary hardly needs elaboration. One has only to recall the international protest that erupted in 1982 when the Japanese press reported that the Ministry of Education intended to substitute the word *shinkō* (“advance”) for the word *shinryaku* (“invasion”) in textbook accounts of the war in China. This was probably the first (and maybe the only) time the PRC, the ROC, the ROK and the DROC spoke with the same voice on an international issue. It was this episode that persuaded the Japanese government to include sensitivity toward neighboring countries as an element in curricular guidelines for history instruction. Clearly words count.

Consider, for example, the many names given to the war(s) fought in East Asia during the 1930s and 1940s: the Manchurian Incident; the China Incident; the Sino-Japanese War; the Great East Asia War; the Fifteen Years War; the Anti-Japanese War; the Chinese People’s Anti-Japanese War; the China War; World War II; the Pacific War; the Asia-Pacific War; the Anti-Fascist War; and so forth. Each emphasizes a particular geographical perspective on the conflict, and each makes an implicit statement about its nature or meaning. When an American history textbook uses the term “World War II” it suggests that the war the United States fought between 1941-1945 was global one and that it was the continuation of a conflict that began with World War I. A Chinese textbook that speaks of an “Anti-Japanese Patriotic War,” on the other hand, offers a more parochial focus, presenting the war as one defined by local events and resolved by local forces. If only from its naming Chinese students will understand the war quite differently from American students.

It is the *story* embedded in the history textbook, implicitly or explicitly, that may have the most profound influence on subjective judgments about the events described. Without an overarching story the history textbook is a formless

chronicle unlikely to shape a clear sense of national identity; it can serve as a source of information but not of knowledge. A narrative structure gives order and shape to historical interpretation by reading political meaning out of—or perhaps more precisely, into—the “facts.” It determines which “facts” are included, and which are left out. The narrative may reflect a universal metanarrative such as the Enlightenment view of history as mankind’s moral progress, the Marxist view of history as class struggle, or the ethnic nationalist view of history as the emergence as a people. Or it may simply be a localized narrative attuned to specific national educational mandates. Or it may include both. Whatever form it takes, the *story* guides the student toward interpretation.

This essay considers stories (narratives) about the war in the national history high school textbooks of the three main belligerents: the United States, China and Japan.<sup>1</sup> My intent is to suggest that the difficulty of writing a transnational or multinational “common history” of modern East Asia lies as much in finding agreement over the “story” as in finding agreement over the “facts.” A “common history” may be possible but writing one will mean abandoning local nationalistic narratives for a more comprehensive or universal one. While that may be intellectually feasible, it may not be politically feasible given that the teaching of history in most East Asian countries is still tied to building and strengthening national identity.

### U. S Textbooks: A National *Bildungsroman*

The narrative of war presented in *The American Pageant* reminds one of those eighteenth century novels in which a naïve young hero, after making many mistakes and encountering many disappointments, finally achieves wisdom. It is a story of “awakening” or “enlightenment” —the story of a country maturing to its responsibilities as a world power. The narrative begins in the 1930s with a naive America that recoils from engagement with the outside world, and it ends in the 1940s with an America that is challenged by a world full of new dangers but willing to face up to them. The war itself, the middle chapter of the story, provides the experience that catalyzes the change. The ultimate lesson to be learned from this history is that Americans must remain vigilant toward threats from the outside world and that they must react to them in a timely fashion.

In the first chapter of this story the American people turn “their backs on the world’s problems.” (806) Isolationist sentiments dominate public opinion even as “international gangsterism” surges in both Europe and Asia. Disillusioned by the failure of World War I to make the world safe for democracy, and angered by the default on American loans to former allies and former enemies, with strong public support Congress pursues what the textbook calls “storm cellar

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<sup>1</sup> Coverage of the war is quite limited in Korean textbooks, which focus primarily on the anti-Japanese resistance movements. No mention is made of the war in Europe, reference to the war in China is limited, and no mention is made of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

isolationism” (809) or a “head-in-the-sand” foreign policy (811) by passing laws to assure that the country will not become involved in overseas wars overseas. Naively the Americans believe that “encircling seas conveyed a kind of mystic immunity on them.” (818)

While not appeasing “international gangsterism” the Americans make no attempt to check its spread. The villains of the drama—the Japanese militarist and the European dictators—remain largely off stage, pursuing “fascism,” “imperialism,” and “aggression,” for reasons not fully explained in the text. The motives of enemies are rarely analyzed in national history textbooks; it is the national response to their hostility, whatever its motivation, that is central to the story of the nation.<sup>2</sup> Like other “peaceful peoples” the American public deplores the Japanese military incursion into China in 1931 but the government takes no action except to express righteous indignation. The national priority is not to uphold the system of collective security established at the Paris Peace Conference but to lift the country out of the Depression. Ultimately isolationism, the textbook argues, rested on the false assumption that the decision for war or peace lay in America’s own hands.

In the second chapter of the story, the American people, led by President Roosevelt, the hero of the narrative, come to realize that “no nation was safe in an era of international anarchy, and [that] the world could not remain half-enchained and half-free.” (806) Once the war breaks out in Europe, and the Americans contemplate the prospect of Europe, especially England under Nazi control, a steady retreat from isolation begins, and so do preparations for war. These preparations, however, all anticipate war in Europe, not in Asia. The event that finally propels the country toward maturity is Japan’s “hara-kiri gamble in Hawaii”—the attack on Pearl Harbor. This event instantly forges national unity behind a declaration of war even though most Americans have no idea why the attack took place. (The textbook does not explain it either.)

In a sense *The American Pageant*, like much American popular culture, portrays World War II as a “good war” fought by America’s “greatest generation.” It describes the drooping American economy as it “snapped to attention”; workers and farmers “rolled up their sleeves”; women, African Americans and Mexican immigrants flooded into the factories and workshops as American men went off to war. With the country geared for war production, victory was assured. “[The] America way of war was simply more—more men, more weapons, more machines, more technology, and more money than the enemy could hope to match.” (854) Such was the power of a democratic people galvanized by foreign attack.

The final chapter finds America emerging from the war as the most powerful country in the world—like “oiled and muscled like a prize bull standing astride the world’s ruined landscape.” (One wonders how urban American teenagers

<sup>2</sup> If the goal of the history textbook was to understand why wars happen rather to affirm national identity a fuller explanation of the motives of both the attackers and the attacked would be essential.

react to that metaphor.) Having concluded that “appeasement” can not halt the march of anti-democratic dictatorships or expansionist aggressors, the American people and their government at first commit themselves to maintaining world peace and world order through the new United Nations Organization. But as the Soviet Union attempts to establish a “sphere of influence” in Eastern and Central Europe, and Soviet leaders call for “world revolution” the country adopts a containment policy to check a “Soviet imperialism” that threatens “American democracy and its capitalist economy.” The war has taught Americans that they must respond to aggression with firmness, and if necessary with force. The American government merely gave a “slap the wrist” to Japanese aggression in China in 1932 but in the postwar years it becomes fully engaged in countering against Soviet-backed Communism in East Asia by supporting the Nationalist (GMD) government in its civil war with the Chinese Communists (CCP) and by intervening in the conflict between North and South to block Communist expansion on the Korean Peninsula.

The story told in *The American Pageant* appears is a standard narrative found in many American history textbooks. It is a story that reflects both the liberal internationalism and the conservative interventionism that dominated American policy in the decades following the war. The dangers of isolation and appeasement were a standard (and usually unquestioned) element in national political discourse shared by leaders from Truman and Acheson to Nixon and Kissinger. (And to judge from both the rhetoric and actions of the Bush administration it remains a powerful narrative even today.) For at least a generation this story of World War II’s causes and its consequences for America not only sustained a bipartisan approach to a foreign policy it also justified American attempts to create a global hegemony. While *The American Pageant* is no way an official or government-endorsed version of history, its narrative is clearly supportive of America’s Cold War foreign policy.

Since the Korean War, and more especially since the Vietnam War, it has become apparent to many Americans that the costs of intervention in the outside world often exceed its benefits. It is interesting to note that *The American Pageant* gives a nod to this shift in public discourse by including several side-bars that encourage students to consider whether the United States had substantial interests in going to war in 1941, whether it was complicit in initiating the post-1945 Cold War, and whether the “lessons of the 1930s” apply at all to American relations with the outside world in the 1970s and beyond. Raising such questions about the standard story of the war suggests that in the United States, where textbook production and textbook markets are not regulated by the central government, the politics of history textbook publishing are different from China, Japan or Korea. Authors and publishers are less committed to reproducing an official version of national history than to responding to shifts in public opinion. To put it another way, perhaps crudely, “civil society” plays a greater role in the production of history textbooks than the national state does.

## Chinese Textbooks: Narratives of Resistance and Liberation

War stories in Chinese textbooks are not about “awakening” or “maturing” ; they are about “struggle,” “resistance,” and “liberation.” They tell a tale of two wars: the national resistance against Japanese aggression and the internal conflict between the GMD and the CCP. Inevitably the two wars are linked, not only because they occur simultaneously, but because the outcome of the anti-Japanese war is seen as a major influence on the outcome of the civil war. Chinese war stories also come in two versions, one written in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the other in the Republic of China (ROC). Both agree that the defeat of the Japanese ended a century of national humiliation and established China as an international power, but the path to victory is described differently and so is the outcome. Finally, to complicate matters, both the PRC and the ROC textbooks have undergone significant revisions in the past decade—with significant changes in emphasis.

The common element in all Chinese textbooks is the long-term historical significance of the war. Indeed, the language used to describe the outcome of victory, though not identical, is similar. The 2007 ROC text observes: “China endured eight years of the anti-Japanese war and finally became a victorious state in the second world war. This greatly compensated for the loss of national dignity from the second half of the nineteenth century onward. Not only did nationalism swell, China’s position in the international arena was also significantly elevated.” (189) Similarly the 2003 PRC textbook observes: “The Chinese victory in the anti-Japanese war was at the time the first complete success that the Chinese people achieved in fighting against foreign invaders in more than 100 years. It greatly strengthened Chinese national pride and confidence among people all over the country . . . The Chinese people’s resistance against the Japanese made a great contribution to the victory of the world anti-fascist war. The international status of China was raised.” (46) In the broadest sense, all the Chinese history textbooks offer a triumphal narrative that celebrates the return of China to the position of a major world power.

Interestingly, both the ROC and the PRC textbooks suggest that the Chinese achieved victory against the Japanese without much outside help, or at least without much help in the early days of the conflict. The “old” ROC textbook, for example, points out that Chinese fought the Japanese alone until the attack on Pearl Harbor brought the Americans into the war. However, it does make clear that after 1941 the Allies fought alongside the Chinese and that the Americans provided the GMD government with military assistance. It also suggests that the atomic bomb led to Japan’s unconditional surrender. By contrast, the PRC textbooks attach no importance to the role played by the Allies, especially the United States, in defeating Japan nor do they place significance on the role of the atomic bomb in ending the war. The 2003 PRC textbook describes the Japanese decision to surrender as a response to the Soviet declaration of war and Mao’s call for an all-out attack on Japanese forces. The 2007 version is likewise silent



about any Allied participation in the war aside from the cooperation of British, American and Chinese forces in Burma in early 1945.

To be sure, American textbooks usually do not mention the role of the Chinese resistance in tying down Japanese troops that might have reinforced forces fighting in the Pacific but the absence of the Western allies from the PRC narrative is linked to the view that the struggle in China was part of an “anti-fascist” war that pitted one set of capitalist nations against another. Indeed, the 2003 PRC textbook explains the origins of the war as the result of the imperialist economic rivalry between Japan and the United States. It suggests that the Americans at first adopted an “appeasement” policy toward Japanese aggression in China and that they only opposed Japanese expansion after it threatened American power and interests in the late 1920s and 1930s. Given this view of American policy it is not difficult to understand why PRC textbooks pay so little attention to the American role in defeating Japan.

The PRC texts associate victory in the “anti-fascist” war with a new era in world history in which China plays a vanguard role: the consolidation of socialism in the Soviet Union and the emergence of “people’s democracies in Asia and Europe.” Once the “fascists” have been defeated, the Chinese people under CCP leadership turn to resistance against the United States, the largest economic and military power in the world, whose global strategy includes “controlling China.” After American support for Chiang Kai-shek in his “anti-communist and anti-people” civil war ends in failure, the Chinese continue their anti-American struggle when American intervention in Korea “severely threatens China’s security” and attempts to “intervene in China’s internal politics.” (88) Like the CCP’s victory over the Japanese, the PRC’s victory over American aggression in Korea again brings “China’s international prestige to an all-time high” and creates a “relatively peaceful and stable environment for China’s economic construction and social reform.” (90)

The PRC textbooks also dwell on the brutality of the Japanese military in more detail than the ROC textbooks. The 2003 PRC textbook, for example, describes the “wanton and indiscriminate bombing” of Chinese cities, the “massacre at Nanjing . . . that reached the peak of cruelty in the human world,” and the harsh Japanese military campaigns against the guerilla base areas. (PRC 2003, 31) PRC textbooks also stress the “brutal economic looting” of the country—the seizure of land, the purchase of agricultural goods at confiscatory prices, the establishment of control over manufacturing, the increase in taxes, the looting of banks, and the issue of an inflationary fiat currency. “Enslaved by the Japanese invaders, people in the occupied areas lost personal freedom and led a life as slaves without a country.” (PRC 2003, 37) In the revised 2007 PRC textbook the “monstrous crimes of the Japanese military” proportionally occupy more space than in the 2003 version, and the description of the atrocities is more graphic. The ROC textbooks, however, refer to the killing of civilians at Nanjing only briefly.

The deepest disagreements between the PRC and ROC textbooks are about the nature and effectiveness of Chinese resistance to the Japanese. According to the 2003 PRC textbook the CCP not only denounces the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1931, it also urges the formation of a “united front.” In 1937 it again calls for the “solidarity of people all over the country” to drive the Japanese out; CCP troops under Lin Biao win the first victory against the Japanese to at Pingxingguan; and the CCP establishes anti-Japanese guerilla bases with the support from the 8<sup>th</sup> Route and 4<sup>th</sup> Route armies. The guerilla strategy, a key element in defeating the Japanese, is attributed to Mao Zedong’s theory of “protracted war” that argued the Japanese lacked the land, resources, population and troops needed to endure “long-term warfare” in the way the Chinese could. The strategy of long-term resistance through stalemate, the textbook suggests, is what led to victory.

Needless to say, the role of the GMD in resisting the Japanese is minimized in the 2003 PRC textbook. While initial victories by GDM military forces are acknowledged, the weight of the narrative suggests that victory over Japan was the result of popular resistance mobilized and led by the CCP. Chiang Kai-shek is portrayed as an appeaser, who discourages Xiang Xueliang from resisting Japan in 1931 and who signs a cease-fire that allows the Japanese to move into north China. Only under pressure from the CCP do the GMD leaders mobilize forces to fight in 1937.

Not surprisingly this is a mirror image of the story told in the ROC textbooks. In the “old” Taiwan textbook, the GMD government does not follow a policy of appeasement but a policy of “internal pacification before external resistance.” In 1935 it begins to build national defenses in anticipation of war, and once the war breaks out in 1937, the GMD becomes the center of resistance under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, an “instant national hero.” “The Nationalist Government led the entire nation during the war.” (148) Little or no mention is made of the CCP guerilla bases—indeed the text suggests that the CCP was subordinate to the GMD Military Affairs Commission. The GMD retreat to Chongqing is portrayed as a GMD version of “protracted war”: it was a “strategy for waging a protected, consuming war to break the enemies’ desire for a speedy resolution.” (147) And the “old” ROC textbook asserts that in the spring of 1945 the GMD army, equipped with American weapons, shifts to the offensive, attacking Japanese forces. “With dauntless national spirits, China won victory against powerful enemies.” (147)

Not surprisingly the PRC and ROC textbooks differ on the origins and outcome of the other war—the civil war. The PRC textbooks blames for GMD for rekindling the conflict in 1940 with attacks on CCP base areas and military units, culminating in the New Fourth Army incident. As a result, the CCP begins receiving support from “middle-of-the road parties and democrats,” and it continues its resistance against Japanese forces, augmenting its military and guerilla operations with land reform to win peasant support and with a “rectification program” to establish the foundation for “success in the anti-

Japanese war” and a “means of a new democratic revolution.” The civil war that the CCP fights, in other words, is a war of liberation against an increasingly oppressive GMD that cracks down ruthlessly on “communist party members, anti-Japanese masses, and democratic people.”

In the ROC textbooks a rather different story is told—namely that the CCP uses the “war of resistance” to expand its own power and influence. The CCP “united front” policy is simply a means to expand its military forces “illegally” and develop bases behind the front lines. In 1940 the New Fourth Army clashes with GMD forces, and the CCP begins to play a double game of collaborating in the resistance against Japan while also engaging in resistance against the GMD. By the time of Japan’s defeat the strengthened CCP has acquired control of a quarter of the country, and despite postwar efforts to achieve reconciliation between the GMD and the CCP after the war’s end, the CCP used its new strength to launch a full-scale civil war.

Interestingly, the old ROC textbook agrees with PRC textbooks that the GMD failed to win the civil war because it “gradually lost the heart of the people” (i.e. popular support.) Conservative elements in the GMD, confident that it had enough military strength to defeat the CCP, blocked the formation of a postwar GMD/CCP coalition, foreclosing peaceable resolution of the internal conflict. Equally important in undermining the GMD were corrupt local officials who pursued “private gain,” runaway inflation that brought widespread economic hardship, and a failure to win over the peasantry. In the end, the CCP “surrounded the cities with countryside.”

The recently revised PRC and ROC textbooks have reduced coverage of the war but they have done so in quite different ways. The PRC 2007 textbook is a truncated version of the 2003 narrative but eliminates detailed discussion of wartime military operations. The role of the GMD in resisting the Japanese after 1937 is no longer mentioned nor is the second “united front”; the only military force mentioned is the “Chinese army” whose heroism is celebrated; comments on the importance of Mao’s “protracted” war theory have been eliminated; and in terms of space an even greater emphasis is given to the “anti-fascist” nature of the war, with mention of the Soviet Union as the only other significant participant in the struggle. The revised textbook also emphasizes more explicitly that the Korean War was a continuation of the “anti-fascist” struggle with America as the new enemy. “During the Korean War, the new China had a three years’ s battle with America, the most powerful country in the world, and broke the myth that American troops were unconquerable.”

If the PRC textbook revision places even greater emphasis on China’s military prowess and military victories, the ROC textbook revision moves in another direction. Coverage of military operations is much briefer. Although the textbook neither demonizes the CCP nor denies the failure of the GMD government to gain popular support, it continues to put the GMD at the center of anti-Japanese resistance, and it also points out that the GMD presided over a decade of construction and development from 1928 to 1937. Commerce

expands, tax revenues increase, railway lines are built, and industrial production (particularly light industry) expands. The revised textbook also underlines the position of colonial Taiwan as a military base for Japan's "southern advance" and the deepening involvement of the Taiwanese population in the war effort through the increase of economic controls, social mobilization, military conscription and other "public service" obligations, and increasing political repression. Clearly the focus of the narrative is being shifted from China to Taiwan.

The treatment of the war in the Chinese textbooks illustrates how the same narrative structure—a story of resistance and liberation that ends with the triumph of the Chinese people/nation—can affirm national identity in quite different political contexts. The intensely triumphalist war story in the PRC textbooks portrays a China victorious not only in the struggle against Japanese aggression but against another would-be hegemon, the United States, as well. Clearly it validates the use of military power as a means of resistance, and it underlines the leadership of the CCP as the sole force behind both victories. And equally clearly, it encourages a patriotism that points to both Japan and the United States as China's historical enemies. The ROC textbooks, on the other hand, can celebrate the victory over Japan but must also address the GMD defeat in the civil war. Their war stories rest on a gingerly balance between national pride and self-criticism. While the PRC textbooks are unambiguous in their promotion of patriotism, the ROC textbooks reveal a polity struggling with an ambivalent identity, asserting itself as an independent national entity yet unable to abandon its roots in "one China."

### **Japanese Textbooks: History Without a Story?**

In contrast to American and Chinese textbooks Japanese history textbooks offer no strong narrative about the war. This is surprising given that many different war stories circulate in Japan's public discourse and popular culture: as a war of aggression that did great damage to the peoples; as a war for the liberation of Asia from Western colonialism; as a war fought by heroic but doomed soldiers; as a war that the Japanese people themselves "victims"; and so forth. None of these stories find their way into the Japanese textbooks in undiluted form. Compared to the American and Chinese history textbooks their tone is muted, neutral, and almost bland. Perhaps it is this affectless neutrality that so infuriates not only the Japanese right-wing but also Chinese and Korean critics. The Japanese history textbooks do not tell the stories that they want to hear—or are used to hearing.

The Japanese textbooks make no attempt to glorify or justify the war, to portray Japan as the "victim" of outside forces, or to offer an apologia for wartime atrocities. Nor do they absolve the Japanese civilian public of supporting the war effort. If there is an overarching narrative in the Japanese textbooks it is almost a Biblical tale of sin, redemption and recovery. Although the Yamakawa

2002 textbook is almost totally bereft of any explicit interpretation, it can be read as the story of how a peaceful, prosperous and democratic Japan emerging in the 1920s is led astray in the 1930s by a military pursuing a policy of aggression that results in national disaster, then emerges chastised by defeat and transformed by postwar reform to become a peaceful member of the world order. This story what Japanese historians on the left used to call the “Kennedy-Reischauer line” or simply “the Reischauer line.” But since the Yamakawa text so egregiously avoids judgment or emotion it would be more accurate to say that its narrative conveys a simple message: the folly and failure of militaristic expansion.

The protagonist of the war story in the 2002 Yamakawa textbook is clearly the Japanese army, which, supported by right wing civilians, embarks on an aggressive policy in China against the background of socio-economic imbalances at home (e.g. the “parasitic landowner system,” the dominance of “monopolistic and financial capital,” the impact of the Depression on rural society). There is no suggestion that aggression is the result of some long-term plan by the Japanese to bring all of Asia under its control. Rather it is seen as a reaction to both the rise of an anti-imperialist nationalist movement in China that threatens Japanese interests there and growing friction with other industrial countries like Great Britain as the world market collapses. The textbook makes clear that the Kwantung Army acted independently of the Japanese home government in 1931, and it also emphasizes that military successes made the press and the public “so delirious with war fever that they sanctioned the actions of the army.” (322)

The army is also the major actor in the events that led to the outbreak of war with Nanjing Government in 1937. The textbook describes the army’s efforts to detach the northern provinces from Nanjing’s control, to promote the 1936 National Defense Plan, and to pressure the home government to expand hostilities in China after the Marco Polo Bridge incident. There is no attempt to justify the army’s actions nor claim for it any noble national motive. On the contrary, the textbook takes the position that these actions led to a “quagmire-like drawn-out war”—although the textbook stresses resistance by the GMD government rather than by the CCP forces.

Needless to say, the army is also at the center of events that led to the attack on Pearl Harbor and war with the United States. It is the army that seeks a military alliance with Nazi Germany, and it is the army that backs a “southern advance” to seize the Western colonial territories in Southeast Asia. Both policies provoke a growing hostility toward Japan in the United States. The textbook indicates that uncompromising American opposition to Japan—the abrogation of the commercial treaty, the embargo on oil and the freezing of Japanese assets, and ultimately the Hull Note—pushed the Japanese government toward a decision for war, but there is no suggestion that the United States deliberately provoked war. On the contrary, the textbook notes that while the military deployed the idea of an “ABCD blockade” to justify war as a “self-defense” measure, the wartime government ultimately came to justify as a war to emancipate Asia from

colonial rule. (339) Once again it notes that “many Japanese were enthused about the successive victories of the Japanese military.”

While the Yamakawa textbook makes no effort to conceal the brutality of the Japanese occupation forces toward the occupied peoples, it does not devote much space to the topic. The “looting,” “violence,” and “slaughter” of civilians and POWs at Nanjing are mentioned in a footnote, and so is the “havoc” wreaked by the army’s search-and-destroy campaigns against the base areas in north China and the activities of Unit 731. By pointing out the enthusiasm of the Japanese public for both the war in China and the war with the United States the narrative suggests their complicity in the aggression that led to these atrocities. On the other hand, the textbook devotes more much space to wartime hardships on the Japanese home front—increased government controls over the economy, the curbing of free speech, the suppression of Marxist and left thought, the scarcity of basic goods, evacuation of children from the cities, and the deaths caused by wartime bombing. It points out that the war brought sacrifices to the Japanese civilian population as well as to the Asian peoples.

The end of the war is dealt with in more detail than in American and Chinese textbooks. The Yamakawa textbook notes that by the middle of 1945, after the German surrender and the American capture of Okinawa, the country was “completely isolated and “Japan’s defeat” was imminent. (343) Although the Japanese government approached the Soviet Union to serve as an intermediary in peace negotiations with the other Allies, the military insisted on a decisive battle to defend the homeland. In early August 1945 the American decision to drop the atomic bombs (described as intended to forestall both an invasion of the home islands and Soviet Union involvement in the war) together with the Soviet declaration of war brings the decision to surrender and the emperor’s “sacred decision” overrules the army’s desire to keep on fighting. The textbook makes no comment on the war’s meaning nor does it underline its long-term impact on Japan’s postwar history. The narrative of defeat is tight-lipped.

The Tokyo shoseki 2007 textbook basically covers the same events as the Yamakawa 2002 textbook but there are also interesting differences. Although discussion of military operations is briefer, more coverage is devoted to the Nanjing atrocities, to the harshness of Japanese rule in the occupied territories, to the army’s “scorched earth” policies in China, and to the plundering of Southeast Asian resources and reference is made to the “comfort women” as well. The 2007 textbook also places slightly greater emphasis on the hard-line position taken by the United States in 1941, referring to the Hull Note as an “ultimatum.” And finally it suggests that the decisive factor in bringing Japanese defeat was the great disparity in the material strength between the United States and Japan, and that the country’s war-making capacity weakened rapidly after the Americans took control of sea lanes in the Pacific.

Why are Japanese textbooks so different in tone from the American and Chinese? And why do they lack a strong overarching narrative giving students interpretive guidance? There are probably several reasons.

First, since Japan lost the war, it is difficult to fashion the same kind of triumphalist narratives that appear in the Chinese and American textbooks. Using national defeat to build national pride requires intellectual legerdemain that seems logically and emotionally impossible.

Second, even after six decades of debate interpretation of the war remains contested territory with little or no public consensus on its meaning. There is no universally accepted story about the war in contemporary Japan. While public opinion polls suggest that a majority of Japanese agree that Japan waged a war of aggression in Asia and that it inflicted great harm on the Asian peoples, there is a powerful and vocal minority that continues to think of it as a “defensive war,” a “war against Western hegemony,” or a “war of liberation from Western colonial rule.” Since the latter position has a considerable constituency in the ruling LDP, those engaged in the production of textbooks may feel it safest to avoid overt interpretations or judgments.

Finally, in contrast to the United States and China, Japan is a country where nationalism (pride in national culture and accomplishments) may be very strong but patriotism (willingness to die for the nation) is very weak. Indeed, a recent international comparative survey found that the willingness of youth to fight for their country is highest in countries like the PRC and ROK and lowest in Japan. The “love of country” found in “normal nations” has not taken root in a Japan that has become (as General Mac Arthur hoped) a “Switzerland of Asia”—peaceful, prosperous, complacent, and armed but passively defensive. Having experienced a disastrous defeat, the Japanese public, much to the consternation of some of their leaders, remains pacifist in orientation. The content of Japanese history textbooks is entirely consistent with that orientation.

After reading American, Chinese and Japanese high school history textbooks side by side, it is difficult to imagine that educational authorities in those countries, and in the two Koreas as well, could easily agree on a common textbook treatment of the war. The problem is not so much the “facts,” on which there seems to be rough kind of agreement, but the “words” and “stories.” The narratives that determine what events are covered in each country’s textbooks, and the words that are used to describe them, are difficult to reconcile. Can one imagine that Chinese authorities would agree to calling the “Nanking massacre” the “Nanking Incident”, or that the Japanese would be comfortable naming the conflict the “Anti-Japanese War” rather than the “Asia-Pacific War”, or that the Americans would accept a narrative that left out the attack on Pearl Harbor or the dropping of the atomic bombs? As long as the definition of national identity remains at the center remains at the center of textbook writing, the possibilities for the production of joint histories remains limited. In short, the debate over history textbooks is the symptom of a larger problem: the persistence of divisive nationalisms in East Asia that deploy “war stories” to stir domestic patriotism at the cost of regional peace and cooperation.

