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History Issues of Japan in Politics and Education

Introduction

As a part of the author's ongoing doctoral dissertation research dealing with the memory politics of the government of Japan between 1982 and 2022 and its influence on textbook writing, this paper aims to introduce how the historical issues of Japan affect Japan's politics and education. Although the most prevailing definition in English-language research is the term "memory politics", the author uses mostly the native Polish term "polityka historyczna", which translates directly as "history politics". Therefore, the two English terms will be used interchangeably in this article. The definition of this phenomenon, as used by the author, has been fleshed out by Polish scholar Rafał Chwedoruk in his 2018 book. To summarise relevant points of the used definition: 1. history politics are actions of different actors, also non-state ones; 2. policy and politics are geared to realise interests; 3. the actors present complex goals, such as legitimisation, mobilisation, creation of identity, compensation, etc.; 4. to realise those goals, actors make use of broadly understood law, education, culture, etc.; 5. and lastly history is a tool². The main hypothesis of the research relevant to this paper is that history politics indirectly influences education policies and textbook writing in Japan.

History Issues of Japan

So far, most of the issues that had been raised by various actors that influenced Japanese historical policy had mostly been addressed by the Japanese

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² R. Chwedoruk, *Polityka historyczna*, Warszawa 2018, p. 327.

government to some degree, therefore influencing its historical policy and shaping it into what it is today. What can be seen as an issue according to the government can be gleaned from what is addressed on the web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (henceforth MOFA). Those issues are connected with repercussions of the Japanese 19th and 20th centuries colonial past and militarism, which ended with Japan's loss in WW2 and subsequent occupation. Among those issues are: the history of relations between the People's Republic of China and Japan, historical issues between South Korea and Japan, reparations, individual claims, Japan's stance on the Military Tribunal for the Far East, the so-called "history textbook controversies", visits to Yasukuni Shrine³ by officials, apologies for the war, the issue of so-called "comfort women" and the issue of so-called "Nanjing Incident"⁴. Many scholars in and outside Japan have described all of these subjects. This research paper attempts to show the indirect connection between government stance, policy and education concerning the Japanese attitude on the last three topics. It is imperative to outline those issues before diving into analysis.

The issue of "comfort women" is arguably the most internationally recognised historical issue in Japan. Since first coming to light internationally in the 1990s, it has been the subject of numerous studies, lawsuits, speeches, and statements. The paragraph on this issue on the MOFA webpage is the longest out of all issues covered there. The government does not deny the issue, although it raises a few concerns, namely the naming of those women as "sex slaves", the claims that their recruitment had been forced and so on. There is also the fact that the victims and their representatives claim a lack of compensation for their suffering. The Japanese government, which organised a foundation called Asia Women's Found that paid reparations in four countries by various means⁵ and also issued letters of apologies signed by the prime minister, claims that the issue had been solved⁶. Nonetheless, continuous efforts of NGOs, especially in South Korea, and international attention garnered

³ Yasukuni Shrine is a shinto shrine where soldiers who fought for Japan since before Meiji era (1868–1912) are enshrined. Among them are war criminals from WW2 and some conscripted soldiers from Korea and Taiwan. The shrine also boasts a museum, which shows a stance of glorifying the imperial and militarist past.

⁴ MOFA, *Rekishi kanren*, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/a_o/rp/page23_000874.html [accessed: 30.09.2022]; MOFA, *Rekishi mondai Q&A*, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/taisen/qa/index.html> [accessed: 30.09.2022].

⁵ For example, in Netherlands the women recognised as eligible received funds directly; in Indonesia, medical and care facilities were built.

⁶ MOFA, *Japan's Efforts on the Issue of Comfort Women*, https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/postwar/page22e_000883.html [accessed: 30.09.2022].

due to the nature of the issue as a violation of women's rights fuels an ongoing debate in scholarly and political circles.

Another such issue, although less internationally and publicly discussed now, is the "Nanjing Incident", whose naming is also disputed by the government. The Incident (事件 *jiken*), as it is known in Japanese, has been referred to internationally as the "Nanjing Massacre" or "Rape of Nanjing". Most aspects are debatable, such as the government's involvement or motives of soldiers, but besides the naming, the government also strongly disagrees with the number of victims brought up by Chinese researchers who claim up to 340 thousand victims of the Incident. In contrast, some Japanese scholars count up to 30 thousand⁷.

Apologies for the suffering caused by the Japanese during the war were deemed insufficient by some actors, which led the Japanese side to include apologies in statements by subsequent prime ministers. Those statements, made on the occasion of full anniversaries of the end of WW2 for Japan, began with the so-called "Murayama statement" from 1995. Made on the 50th anniversary, the statement is considered the first official apology for the war. It is important to note that up to that point, the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (henceforth LDP) had been in power since 1955, only to lose it briefly in 1993. Their return to power was possible by entering a coalition with Murayama's Japanese Socialist Party, making him prime minister between 1994 and 1996. On the 60th anniversary in 2005, the cabinet of Prime Minister Koizumi from LDP upheld the previous statement. LDP lost the majority between 2009 and 2012 but returned to power after the 2012 elections with Abe as prime minister. On the 70th anniversary, he stated and, while upholding previous statements, remarked and maintained in the *Rekishu mondai* Q&A, that "we must not let the future generations, who have nothing to do with that war, be predestined to apologise. It is the current generation's responsibility that is alive at this moment"⁸. While a vehicle of apologies, those statements also serve as an example of the slow birth of a policy built upon past stances and statements.

History Issues in Policy

The historical issues in policy can be seen best in official statements regarding said issues. And indeed, the statement on the anniversaries of war can be seen

⁷ K. Henshall, *Historia Japonii* [A History of Japan, London 2004], Warszawa 2011, p. 145.

⁸ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *Statement by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe*, https://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/statement/201508/0814statement.html [accessed: 30.09.2022]; MOFA, *Rekishu mondai...*, op.cit.

as such. All of the statements, originally in Japanese, have official translations into English, Chinese, and Korean languages, clearly showing to whom those statements are addressed: the Japanese people, international audiences and main actors of historical issues, China and Korea. The author had been able to confirm that English and Japanese versions of each document are as close translations as possible. Nonetheless, by putting those three documents beside each other in Japanese or English, it can be seen that the succeeding statements uphold the previous ones, sometimes even literally. Many phrases and their Japanese versions, such as “deep remorse and heartfelt apology”⁹ and “痛切な反省と心からのお詫びの気持ち *tsūsetsuna hansei to kokoro kara no owabi no kimochi*”¹⁰, are practically the same in all three statements. They also emphasise economic help received after the war and then returning that help as aid for other, less developed states. Also, following the Fukuda Doctrine, statements on the importance of regional cooperation are present in all three. Among other repeated topics is the most curious equating of Japanese victims of war along with victims of Japanese.

Nonetheless, even with all the similarities, the statements are not, in fact, carbon copies of each other. They are, after all, the products of their times. The Murayama statement announces the establishment of the Peace, Friendship, and Exchange Initiative. Which had been created with the purpose of “support for historical research into relations in the modern era between Japan and the neighbouring countries of Asia and elsewhere”¹¹. Koizumi, on the other hand, made his statement in 2005, when the most pressing international issues had been the “progress of the developing countries, alleviation of poverty, conservation of the global environment, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the prevention and eradication of terrorism”¹². Lastly, Abe proclaimed that Japan “will strengthen assistance for developing countries

⁹ MOFA, *Statement of prime minister Murayama “On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the war’s end” (15 August 1995)*, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/pm/murayama/9508.html> [accessed: 30.09.2022]; MOFA, *Statement by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi*, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2005/8/0815.html> [accessed: 30.09.2022]; Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *Statement by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe*, op.cit.

¹⁰ Prime minister’s official residence, *Naikaku Sōri Daijin danwa*, <https://warp.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/11236451/www.kantei.go.jp/jp/koizumispeech/2005/08/15danwa.html> [accessed: 30.09.2022]; Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *Naikaku Sōri Daijin danwa*, https://warp.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/10992693/www.kantei.go.jp/jp/97_abe/discourse/20150814danwa.html [accessed: 30.09.2022]; MOFA, *Sengo 50 shūnen no shūsen-kinenbi ni atatte* [*Iwayuru Murayama danwa*], https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/danwa/07/dmu_0815.html [accessed: 30.09.2022].

¹¹ MOFA, *Statement of Prime Minister Murayama...*, op.cit.

¹² MOFA, *Statement by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi*, op.cit.

and lead the world toward further prosperity”, which is the “very foundation for peace. Japan will make even greater efforts to fight against poverty, which also serves as a hotbed of violence, and to provide opportunities for medical services, education, and self-reliance to all the people in the world”¹³.

The first two statements were quite short compared to Abe’s statement, which is the most developed in length and topics. The assertion of previous statements is also there, but it also gives a detailed stance on why the Japanese colonial actions took place the way they did. What is also expanded upon are the historical issues which this paper focuses on. The “comfort women” issue and, most likely, the “Nanjing Incident” issue covered in board terms were addressed without actually naming them, which is a step up from no mention in previous statements. For the “comfort women”, the phrase is as follows. “We must never forget that there were women behind the battlefields whose honour and dignity were severely injured”¹⁴. As for the “Nanjing Incident”, there is a statement on “Chinese people who underwent all the sufferings of the war”¹⁵.

History Issues in Education

For the chosen history issues, first, the author made comparisons using excerpts from subsequent editions of the same textbooks. Two titles released by Yamakawa Publishing Co., *Shōsetsu Nihonshi B (Detailed Japanese History B)* and *Shōsetsu Sekaishi B (Detailed World History B)*, were chosen. Of those two titles, two subsequent editions of each were selected. Both titles are textbooks for higher secondary schools and are used for elective studies from the civics field, with history being thought as a choice subject between Japanese and World history and then between levels A and B. The levels differ in the range of material mostly, with A level concentrated on modern and contemporary history and B level as a scope of history, from ancient to contemporary.

Japanese Curriculum Guidelines and, accordingly, certified textbooks change approximately in ten-year intervals¹⁶. Guidelines are usually made simultaneously for primary and lower and higher secondary schools and then applied in the same order for five consecutive years. First year for primary

¹³ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *Statement by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe*, op.cit.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ National Institute for Education Policy Research, *Gakushū shidō yōryō no ichiran*, <https://erid.nier.go.jp/guideline.html> [accessed: 30.09.2022].

school, the second for lower secondary school, and the next three years for each year of higher secondary school¹⁷. The certification process starts when the publisher submits their textbook to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (henceforth MEXT) for approval. The body responsible for examining submitted texts, the Textbook Approval Research Council, uses Textbook Examination Standards to check if the textbook fits all the criteria. If the textbook is found to not adhere to the guidelines, publishers are asked to revise them. If the revised manuscript is then approved, the Council recommends it for certification¹⁸. The Textbook Examination Standards stipulate three main areas, which should be checked: 1. “scope and degree of difficulty”; 2. “selection/treatment and organisation/amount”; and 3. “accuracy, orthography, and expression”. The first point, for example, makes it clear that “all items specified in the Courses of Study [Curriculum Guidelines] must be included and no unnecessary items may be included(...) in the main text”. As for the second point, there is, among others, a stipulation that “the treatment of politics and religion should be impartial, and no part of the textbook should support or criticise a specific political party or religious sect or its ideology or beliefs”¹⁹. According to Mitani, “those examination standards demand that textbooks be as objective and balanced as possible”²⁰. Therefore, what can be seen in textbooks is a product of deliberations based on each Curriculum Guideline upon which the textbooks were made. It is worth noting that guidelines are just a broad overview of topics to be included in textbooks.

Textbooks used for comparison in this paper came into being after curriculum change in 1998 with amendments from 2003 for the 2006 certification and 2008 curriculum change for the 2012 certification editions. It is worth noting that the former curriculum was promulgated just three years after the Murayama statement, with amendments made during Koizumi’s reign, but still before his statement. The latter curriculum was made during the LDP reign, shortly before the lost elections of 2009, but it had been upheld until a new curriculum had been created by 2017 – to be used in certification for higher secondary schools since 2020. In the author’s opinion, changes to the cur-

¹⁷ MOFA, *How a Textbook Becomes Part of a School Curriculum*, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/education/textbooks/overview-1.html> [accessed: 30.09.2022].

¹⁸ MOFA, *Japan’s School Textbook Examination Procedure*, https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/rp/page25e_000347.html [accessed: 30.09.2022].

¹⁹ MOFA, *Textbook Examination Standards (Summary)*, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/education/textbooks/overview-3.html> [accessed: 30.09.2022].

²⁰ H. Mitani, *Japan’s History Textbook System: Creation, Screening, and Selection*, <https://www.nippon.com/en/in-depth/a00701/#> [accessed: 30.09.2022].

riculum indicate, to some degree, what had been deemed acceptable by bureaucrats and the government at the time of those changes.

History Issues in the Textbook's Comparison

The issues of “comfort women” and “Nanjing Incident” were only briefly explained at the beginning of this paper, but the information on these issues is even scarcer in Japanese textbooks. In *Shōsetsu Nihonshi B*, either for 2006 or 2012 certification, “comfort women” are mentioned only once, in the footnote for a sentence on the forced labour of Korean and Chinese workers in Japan. The footnote in two separate sentences describes the recruitment of soldiers from Korea, Taiwan, and other colonised territories, and as an addition in the last sentence mentions as follows:

Again, on the front there were placed “comfort stations” [慰安施設 *i'an shisetsu*] where women from Korea, China, Philippines and so on, had been gathered [集められた *atsumerareta*] (the so-called “comfort women”) [いわゆる従軍慰安婦 *ipayuru jūgun ianfu*]²¹.

There is no more description of this matter. Still, the government consistently uses the phrase “*ipayuru jūgun ianfu*” when referring to the issue outright, as can be seen in various formal statements.

Although mentioned in the index, the Nanjing Incident in *Shōsetsu Nihonshi B*, whereas “comfort women” are not, is also described in a footnote. The two sentences, the same in either edition, concisely mention that:

Before and after the fall of Nanjing, the Japanese Army, while repetitively plundering [略奪 *ryakudatsu*] and acting violently/raping [暴行 *bōkō*], murdered [殺害 *satsugai*] many [多数 *tasū*] Chinese citizens (including women and children) and prisoners of war (Nanjing Incident). The situation of Nanjing by diplomatic route had been early on transferred to Central Command of the Army²².

In the *Shōsetsu Sekaishi B* textbooks, the “Nanjing Incident” is referred to in the index and the main text, but the overall description is shorter than in Japanese history textbooks. It is also the same in the 2006 and 2012 editions and reads as follows:

²¹ *Shōsetsu Nihonshi B kaiteiban*, ed. S. Ishi'i, Tokyo 2012, p. 342; *Shōsetsu Nihonshi B*, ed. H. Sasayama, Tokyo 2013, p. 365. These and following transcriptions and translations of excerpts from textbooks were made by the Author.

²² *Shōsetsu Nihonshi B kaiteiban*, op. cit., p. 330; *Shōsetsu Nihonshi B*, op. cit., p. 353.

(...) during the capture of Nanjing large number [多数] of Chinese had been murdered [殺害], which garnered outcry from international public opinion²³.

Only one but profound difference can be found between the two editions in naming the incident. 2006 edition refers to it as “南京虐殺事件” – *Nankin Gyakusatsu Jiken* – which translates to “Nanjing Massacre Incident”. The next certification brings it to the approved the “Nanjing Incident”²⁴.

A broader look at that period is taken in the introductions to part four of the textbook in the case of *Nihonshi B*, and chapter 14 or 15 of *Sekaishi B*, depending on the edition. Those introductions are a general overview of the topics covered in each part or chapter. They can serve as an indicator of the overall attitude on which of them are considered most important. As for *Nihonshi B*, the introduction to Japan’s rise to power before WW2, although conveying similar information, differs greatly between the two curriculum periods. Passages on becoming a world power are at first glance similar in their message, but as the translations show, a nuance changes how those two texts could be perceived. In the 2006 certification textbook, we can read:

Around 19th century Japan due to Western world’s pressure [欧米の圧力によって余儀なくされた日本 *Ōbei no atsuryoku ni yotte yoginaku-sareta Nihon*], had no choice but to modernise in the image of Western European powers, and following WW1, became one of those powers [世界の強国の列するようになった *sekai no kyōkoku no ressuru yō ni natta*]. As for foreign affairs, Japan captured [領有 *ryōyū*] Taiwan, annexed [併合 *heigō*] Korea, and by commencing the Manchurian Incident [事変 *jihen*], war with China and invasion of [侵略 *shinryaku*] East Asia, sided²⁵ with fascist countries [ファシズム国家群にくみして *fashizumu kokka-gun ni kumishite*], fought and lost in WW2²⁶.

On the other hand, the 2012 certification textbook reads as follows:

Japan’s Meiji government, taking an example of world powers [列強に範をとって *rekkyō ni han wo totte*], became a modern country with a constitution, army, parliament and so on (...) in just 20 years. In the

²³ *Shōsetsu Sekaishi B kaiteiban*, ed. T. Satō, Tokyo 2009, p. 326; *Shōsetsu Sekaishi B*, ed. S. Kimura, Tokyo 2013, p. 360.

²⁴ MOFA, *Rekishū mondai...*, op. cit.

²⁵ This phrase could also be translated as “became one of”.

²⁶ *Shōsetsu Nihonshi B kaiteiban*, op.cit., p. 226.

war with China, Japan gained [取得 *shutoku*] Taiwan, in the war with Russia – interests [權益 *ken'eki*] in Southern Manchuria, and by gaining old German colonies it became one of the empires. But to protect its interests in China, it joined WW2 and lost²⁷.

Modernising in the Western way in 2006 was described as “due to Western world’s pressure”, while text from 2012 makes it “taking an example of world powers”. Although the first statement can be taken as pointing out the Western powers as complicit in how Japan turned out, the second version is more neutral, making Japan a student of the Western way, one of many. On the other hand, the strong wording from 2006 on “capturing”, “annexing”, “invading”, and supporting “fascist countries” mellows down to “gains” and “interests” from 2012 on.

In comparison, *Sekaishi B*, less focused on Japan in the first place, also mentions Japan partially and broadly in a similar context. The fragment from the 2006 edition is in chapter 15, titled *Two World Wars*:

Great Depression of 1929 had shaken the capitalist world. And since the United States, Great Britain, and France answered by creating block economy policies, international trade had shrunk even more, weakening the international cooperation trends. Japan, Germany, and Italy, which became capitalistic states late, took upon fascist, totalitarian regimes to face crisis [危機 *kiki*] by invading [侵略] other countries, starting [おこした *okoshita*] WW2²⁸.

In this passage, Japan is considered one of the “fascist” countries that “started WW2” by “invading” other nations. Similar wording was used in *Nihonshi B* in the 2006 edition. The introduction of this topic in the 2012 edition of *Sekaishi B* is in chapter 14, also titled *Two World Wars*. The relevant passage reads as follows:

As the Great Depression occurred, each state’s own interests [利益] became a priority, and international cooperation quickly weakened. Following this situation, Italy, Japan, and Germany brought about fascist-like regimes “relying on” the power of the state [ファシズム的強権体制 *fashizumu-teki kyōken-taisei*] and sought to break the deadlock [打開 *dakai*] by invasion [侵略], and before long started [引きおこした *hikio-koshita*] WW2²⁹.

²⁷ *Shōsetsu Nihonshi B*, op.cit., p. 249.

²⁸ *Shōsetsu Sekaishi B kaiteiban*, op.cit., p. 298.

²⁹ *Shōsetsu Sekaishi B*, op.cit., p. 331.

The wording in the latter edition comes off as slightly mellowed down in some places, especially by using words such as “interests” and “fascist-like”. Still, excerpts from *Sekaishi B* state that Japan started the war, starkly contrasting with *Nihonshi B*.

History Issues in the Textbooks and Statements Comparison

In Murayama’s and Koizumi’s statements on the anniversaries of the end of WW2, small passages on the subject of reasons can also be found. In comparison, Abe statement contains few paragraphs of background information and a clear stance that the previous statements lacked. The similarities can be seen both ways by comparing the textbooks and statements. In Murayama’s statement, it is written that:

During a certain period in the not too distant past, Japan, following a mistaken national policy [国策を誤り *kokusaku wo ayamari*], advanced along the road to war, only to ensnare the Japanese people in a fateful crisis, and, through its colonial rule and aggression [植民地支配と侵略によつて *shokuminchi shihai to shinryaku ni yotte*], caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries [多くの国々 (...)、の人々に対して多大の損害と苦痛を与えました *ōku no kuni-guni no hito-bito ni taishite tadai no songai to kutsū wo ataemashita*], particularly to those of Asian nations³⁰.

In this statement, an allusion to “mistaken national policy” is probably a way of avoiding using the word “fascism” or similar terminology. A fragment on Japan that uses “colonial rule” and “aggression” – another possible translation of 侵略 and used in the official translation of the statement – shows similarity to word usage from the 2006 editions of both titles and the 2012 edition of *Sekaishi B*. The following wording, though the “damage and suffering” part, is absent from all textbooks in considered passages.

The fragment of Koizumi’s statement is a copy of the wording from Murayama’s statement but lacks the part on “mistaken policy”:

In the past, Japan, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly those of Asian nations³¹.

³⁰ MOFA, *Sengo 50...*, op.cit.; MOFA, *Statement of Prime Minister Murayama...*, op.cit.

³¹ Prime Minister’s official..., op.cit.; MOFA, *Statement by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi*, op.cit.

On the other hand, the following fragment of the statement by Abe and its wording echoes in part some of the textbooks. Following a passage about 19th-century Western colonialism, the statement adds:

(...) There is no doubt that the resultant sense of crisis drove Japan forward to achieve modernisation [危機感が (...) 近代化の原動力となった *kiki-kan ga kindai-ka no gendōryoku to natta*]. Japan built a constitutional government earlier than any other nation in Asia. The country preserved its independence [独立を守り抜きました *dokuritsu o mamorinukimashita*] throughout. The Japan-Russia War encouraged many people under the colonial rule [植民地支配のもとにあった、多く (...) の人々を勇気づけました *shokuminchi shihai no moto ni atta, ōku no hito-bitō wo yūkizukemashita*] from Asia to Africa³².

Similarly to the 2006 edition of *Sekaishi B*, Abe's statement uses the word "crisis" to describe Japan's move at modernisation and adds that thanks to it, Japan "preserved its independence", which has not been explicitly stated in any of the previous statements, nor excerpts from textbooks. On the other hand, the only result of the Japanese-Russo War is the "encouragement" of nations subjected to "colonial rule" which also differs from textbook excerpts. After a passage on the creation of the peace-oriented League of Nations, Abe's statement continues:

At the beginning, Japan, too, kept steps with other nations. However, with the Great Depression setting in and the Western countries launching economic blocs by involving colonial economies, Japan's economy suffered a major blow. In such circumstances, Japan's sense of isolation deepened, and it attempted to overcome its diplomatic and economic deadlock through the use of force [孤立感を深め、外交的、経済的な行き詰まりを、力の行使によって解決しようと試みました *dokuritsu-kan wo fukume, gaikō-teki, keizai-teki na ikizumari o, chikara no kōshi ni yotte kaiketsu shiyō to kokoromimashita*]. Its domestic political system could not serve as a brake to stop such attempts [国内の政治システムは、その歯止めたりえなかった *kokunai no seiji shisutemu wa, sono hadometar-ienakatta*]. In this way, Japan lost sight of the overall trends in the world [世界の大勢を見失っていきました *sekai no ōzei wo miushinatteikimashita*]. With the Manchurian Incident, followed by the withdrawal from the League of Nations, Japan gradually transformed itself into a challenger to the new international order [「新しい国際秩序」への「挑戦者」となっていた *atarashi kokusai chitsujo" e no "chōsensha" to natteitta*]

³² Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *Naikaku...*, op. cit.; Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, *Statement...*, op. cit.

that the international community sought to establish after tremendous sacrifices. Japan took the wrong course and advanced along the road to war. And, seventy years ago, Japan was defeated.

(...) Upon the innocent people did our country inflict immeasurable damage and suffering [計り知れない損害と苦痛を、我が国が与えた事実 *hakarishirenai songai to kutsū wo waga kuni ga ataeta jijitsu*]³³.

The phrase that translates to “deadlock” brings to mind the passage from *Sekaishi B* from 2012. On the other hand, a “domestic political system” is similar, though less critical than the phrase “mistaken policy” from Murayama’s statement. The following sentences, on “losing sight of trends” and becoming a “challenger”, do not resemble, in turn, any of the previously analysed excerpts. Again, on the one hand, they can be interpreted as Japan owning to its mistakes, while on the other hand, they could be taken as softening the wording when put side by side with older texts. Lastly, in the remaining cited sentence from the Abe statement, the build-up of policy can once again be seen, as the phrase “damage and suffering” had been repeated throughout all the previous statements.

Conclusions

There are numerous historical issues recognised as such by Japan, but recognition has often been an effect of other actors’ claims. Such are the “comfort women” and the “Nanjing Incident” issues. By taking a stance, by way of official statements, Japanese historical policies had come into being. It seems that while the bare bones of the policy were set, the stance is ever-changing and changes in nuanced ways. The changes between editions of the same textbook are evident in the tuned-down wording in the later versions. As certification aims for textbooks to be as objective and neutral as possible, in the authors’ opinion, the wording changes can be seen as neutral. In contrast, stronger turns of phrase could be interpreted as biased. In the case of “comfort women”, avoidance of the issue in the main text and vague description can be attributed to the fact that the issue was at the time of making the textbooks highly controversial and under international debate. Policy and statements by politicians and overall history politics seem to have at least some correlation with the contents of textbooks. Compared to Abe’s, Murayama’s statement is laconic but expresses Japan’s fault clearly, which can also be seen in editions

³³ Ibidem.

of textbooks from 2006 certification. The lack of any kind of explanation for Japan's behaviour in Koizumi's statement makes it difficult to infer the administration's stance, aside from upholding Murayama's statement. Nonetheless, since the textbooks had been based upon guidelines from years preceding Koizumi's statement, it could mean at least silent approval of the government. As Abe's statement had been made in 2015, but still echoes changes seen in later textbooks while using phrasing similar to earlier editions, it could mean adherence to new guidelines and change in government stance before textbooks from 2012 certification were made. Possibly, further correlation can be seen in new textbooks which had undergone certification in the past few years under the new Curriculum Guideline. Therefore, further research into those connections may bring a fuller understanding of Japan's history politics as a system and how it influences history textbook writing and historical education in Japan.

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History Issues of Japan in Politics and Education

Summary

Many scholars have researched Japan's historical issues, connected to politics and education. Nevertheless, they mostly studied one issue from one perspective, such as international law or human rights. As a part of ongoing doctoral thesis research, this paper aims to discern if and how the historical issues and the Japanese government's stance on those issues changed between 1982 and 2022 and interacted with each other. By comparing official statements with textbook contents on historical issues, the connection between them can bring a fuller understanding of Japan's historical policy as a system. This paper hypothesises that history politics indirectly influences education policies and textbook writing. At this stage of research, it can be concluded that there are numerous historical issues recognised as such by Japan, but recognition has been an effect of other actors' claims. Various actors have made those claims at opportune times, using history as a tool. Nonetheless, policy and statements by politicians and overall discernible history politics, such as counterclaims on particular issues, seem to have at least some correlation with the contents of textbooks. Further research into those connections may better understand Japan's history politics as a system and how they influence history education.

Keywords: memory politics, history politics, Japan, history issues, history textbooks

Вопросы истории Японии в политике и образовании

Резюме

Вопросы истории Японии на протяжении многих лет исследовались многими учеными, в том числе в связи с политикой и образованием. Тем не менее, в основном они исследуются по одному вопросу с одной точки зрения, например, международного права или прав человека. В рамках исследования, проводимого в рамках докторской диссертации, данная статья ставит своей целью выяснить, изменялись ли и как

взаимодействовали между собой исторические проблемы и позиция японского правительства по этим вопросам в период с 1982 по 2022 год. Сопоставление официальных заявлений и содержания учебников по исторической проблематике позволяет установить связь между ними и получить более полное представление об исторической политике Японии как системе. Гипотеза данной работы заключается в том, что историческая политика оказывает косвенное влияние на образовательную политику и на написание учебников. На данном этапе исследования можно сделать вывод о том, что в Японии существует множество исторических проблем, признанных таковыми, но их признание стало следствием претензий других участников. Эти претензии выдвигались различными субъектами в подходящее время, используя историю как инструмент. Тем не менее, политика и заявления политиков, а также общие проявления исторической политики, такие как встречные претензии по тем или иным вопросам, как представляется, имеют, по крайней мере, некоторую связь с содержанием учебников. Дальнейшее изучение этих связей может дать более полное представление об исторической политике Японии как системе и о том, как она влияет на историческое образование.

Ключевые слова: политика памяти, историческая политика, Япония, вопросы истории, учебники истории