

A War of Words: Textbooks, History, and Politics Today – A Joint Presentation by Social Studies Educators from China, Japan, South Korea, and the United States

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Presenters:

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Dr. Lin Lin --	SUNY at Cortland, New York
Dr. Masato Ogawa --	Indiana University at Kokomo
Dr. Yali Zhao --	Georgia State University, Marietta, Georgia

Facilitator – Ronald Levitsky -- Sunset Ridge School, Northfield, IL

Focus Questions –

1. What do American social studies teachers and students know about Japanese actions during World War II and why are many horrors and tragedies in Asia during the war missing from American social studies curriculum?
2. How do history textbooks in China, South Korea, and Japan portray several historical events, such as the Nanjing Massacre, Comfort Women, and the Unit 731 Biochemical Warfare Experiment?
3. Why is there a discrepancy in Chinese / Korean textbooks vs. Japanese in addressing these atrocities?
4. What is the connection between the way nations view their past and current politics and culture?
5. What lessons do we, as educators, want our students to learn regarding Japanese aggression in World War II and the refusal of Japan to come to terms with its past?
6. How can educators accomplish this previous goal and teach students about the war in Asia?
7. How does this presentation support the need for teachers to be aware of bias, both within textbooks and themselves, as well as the need to present multiple perspectives of a particular topic to their students?

Presenters –

Dr. Lin Lin emigrated from China in 2000 and earned her Ph.D in Social Science Education from the University of Georgia in 2004. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Elementary Social Studies at the School of Education, SUNY at Cortland. She can be reached at linlin@cortland.edu

Dr. Bok Young Kim received his Ph.D at the University of Connecticut-Storrs. He is a Senior Researcher at the Korean Educational Development Institute and a Professor in the Department of Education at the University of Incheon. He can be reached at bok@incheon.ac.kr

Dr. Masato Ogawa received his doctorate in 2001 in Social Science Education at the University of Georgia. A former social studies teacher (Ontario, Oregon), he is currently an Assistant Professor of Secondary Education at Indiana University-Kokomo. He can be reached at mogawa@iuk.edu

Dr. Yali Zhao received her doctorate in 2004 in Social Science Education from the University of Georgia. Having been an Associate Professor at Beijing University of Science and Technology, she currently is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Early Education at Georgia State University. She can be reached at yzhao@gsu.edu

Facilitator –

Ronald Levitsky teaches middle school social studies at Sunset Ridge School in Northfield, Illinois. He also serves on the Executive Committee of the National Social Studies Supervisors Association. He can be reached at drakemv@yahoo.com

Agenda

1. Introduction of topic Ron Levitsky

2. Comparative Analysis of textbook selections Audience

3. Presentations
 - a. What American students know / don't know about Japanese atrocities during World War II Dr. Lin Lin
 - b. The Chinese experience during World War II Dr. Yali Zhao
 - c. The Korean experience during World War II Dr. Bok Young Kim
 - d. World War II according to Japanese textbooks Dr. Masato Ogawa

4. Discussion among presenters and audience
 - a. Audience reactions to presenters' comments
 - b. Reflections on focus questions / observations

5. Concluding Remarks Ron Levitsky

Textbooks and World War II

Marco Polo Bridge

“Blood on Marco Polo Bridge” (8th grade **Chinese** history text, p. 75) –

On the night of July 7, the Japanese soldiers were engaged in maneuvers near Marco Polo Bridge (located outside Beijing). Giving the excuse that one Japanese soldier was lost, the Japanese army requested entering Wanning city to search but were rejected by Chinese guards. The Japanese army, who intended to launch the war, ruthlessly attacked against Chinese guards, and guns bombed Wanning city. Chinese soldiers could no longer bear this, and they started resistance. The nationwide anti-Japanese war started.

(Note: A more detailed description and photos about what happened follow this paragraph)

“From the Marco Polo Bridge Incident to War with China (**Japanese** New History Textbook, 2005, p. 49) –

On July 7, 1937, shots were fired at Japanese soldiers while they were engaged in maneuvers near Marco Polo Bridge (located outside Beijing). By the next day, this incident (the **Marco Polo Bridge Incident**) had escalated into hostilities with Chinese troops. The incident was of relatively small magnitude, and efforts were made to resolve it locally. But Japan decided to send a large number of troops to China when the Nationalist government issued an emergency mobilization order. These events marked the beginning of a war that lasted for eight long years.

Nanjing Massacre

Nanjing Massacre (8th grade **Chinese** history text) –

After the “Marco Polo Bridge Incident,” the Japanese launched another attack to capture Shanghai, known as the “August 13th Incident”. Following this incident, they began to invade Nanjing. In December, 1937, they conquered Nanjing. The National Party (Kuomintang) Administration moved to Chongqin, which remained as an interim capital during the wartime.

[Photos and Captions on page 76]:

1. The Japanese knifed a young man in Nanjing.
2. Young men of Nanjing were used for bayonet practice.
3. Civilians of Nanjing were buried alive by the Japanese.
4. A group of unarmed Chinese youth were taken to the outskirts of Nanjing for the Japanese to commit a massacre.

The Japanese invaders committed crimes that have been witnessed by humankind. Their atrocities included arson, slaughter, raping, and looting. During their occupation of Nanjing, the Japanese started the cruelest genocides. Some of the civilians in Nanjing were used for shooting practice. Some others were used for bayonet practice. Still others were buried alive. According to the statistics from the Post-War Far East International Military Tribunal, in the six weeks following their invasion of Nanjing, Japanese soldiers killed more than 300,000 unarmed civilians and disarmed prisoners of war.

[Another page recounts further Japanese massacres, including a contest between two Japanese officers to see who would be the first to kill, by the sword, one hundred people.]

The Nanjing Massacre (**South Korean** text, Society for Middle School by Jinseok Lee et al., Jihaksa Publishing Company, 2001) --

After the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese military, having occupied Nanjing, the then capital city of China, massacred in cold-blooded fashion many hundreds of thousands of Chinese including women and children. [Caption with photo on p. 114]

Other Japanese Atrocities

From **South Korean** middle school text by Jinseok Lee et. al., 2001 –

Japanese Military Human Experiment – This paper includes detailed documentation of how Japanese Military Unit 731 intentionally spread their own cultivated plague bacillus around Nungan and Changchun, villages near the Jilin Province of China, in order to find out the infection route and symptoms with respect to the residents there. The record also makes possible the conjecture that this Japanese human experiment killed hundreds of Chinese. (A Chinese newspaper, October 20, 2000)

From **South Korean** middle school text by Gyungsup Oh, et al., Didimdol Publishing Company, 2001 –

The Life of Military Comfort Women as Lowly Creatures beneath Human Level: The Japanese military comfort women were not humans. Being beaten up by Japanese soldiers or supervisors was part of their daily lives. Looking up towards the moon and muttering to one's self never failed to lead the Japanese to be jealous of their private thoughts or to be suspicious of their loyalty, and hence, constituted a good reason for another bout of beating up. They were not supposed to see or hear what was happening in Japanese military bases that they must try to close their eyes and ears by all means. Attempting to step out of military barracks at all was another excellent cause for their getting kicked that they dared not to come out and see the world outside. So, even now, they do not know the names of the military units or the faces or ranks of the soldiers they served. (from the Old Lady Hwang Gumju's "Testimony on the Life of Military Comfort Women") [Caption for photo on p. 120]

Comparison of Two Japanese History Texts

Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (**Japanese New History Textbook, 2005**, p. 54) –

The war inflicted a huge amount of devastation and suffering on the peoples of Asia, where it was fought. The casualties (both military and civilian) attributable to Japanese invasions were particularly high in China. Each time the Japanese occupied a Southeast Asian nation, they set up a military administration. Leaders of local independence movements cooperated with those military administrations so that they could liberate their countries from the yoke of the Western powers. But when the Japanese insisted that local populations learn the Japanese language and worship at Shinto shrines, they met with resistance. Anti-Japanese elements who aligned themselves with the Allies engaged in guerrilla warfare, which Japanese troops dealt with severely. Many people, civilians included, were killed during these confrontations. When the fortunes of war turned against Japan and food supplies ran short, the Japanese often forced the local population to do back-breaking work. After the war was over, Japan paid reparations to those nations. Then Japan was accused of promoting the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere philosophy to justify the war and occupation of Asia. Later, after Japan was defeated and Japanese troops had withdrawn from Asia, all these former colonies achieved independence through their own efforts during the next dozen years. Some Japanese soldiers remained in Asia and participated in the various struggles for independence. The initial goal of Japan's southward advance was to obtain resources, but it also served to spur on nascent independence movements in Asia.

From **Japanese junior high school history textbook, Tokyo Shoseki, 1983** –

5. Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere:

In 1940, observing the defeat of France to Germany, Japan proclaimed the establishment of Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Japan made an entry into French Indochina and occupied the northern part. Footnote: It was to submit an idea that Asian nations should cooperate with one another and prosper together removing the American and European forces. However, in reality, it was only a pretext for Japan to dominate the rest of Asia.

6. Occupation of Southeast Asia:

In Southeast Asia that the Japanese military occupied, independent governments were established in Burma and the Philippines; however, the real power was held by the Japanese military. In the occupied territories, the life of the people was impoverished because the Japanese military forcibly collected from them rice and resources necessary to wage the war. In addition, the Japanese military killed more than 6,000 Chinese residents who were deemed rebellious in the occupied Singapore, and oppressively ruled the Philippines and the rest of Southeast Asia by severely punishing the people who opposed the policy of the military. As the result of such an occupation policy, resistance movements against the Japanese rule spread throughout.

7. Predicament of Korean and Chinese people:

Many Korean and Chinese people were forced to move to Japan and worked a hard labor job in coal mines under horrible conditions. Footnote: In wartime years the government strengthened the policy to assimilate the Koreans to the Japanese, by forcing them to use the Japanese language, worship Shinto shrine, and adopt Japanese names.

A Sampling of Eighth Grade U.S. History Textbooks

America's Past and Promise, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1995 –

Aggression Begins

In 1931 Japan invaded Manchuria, a coal-rich province of China. The League of Nations did little to stop it. Japan then set up a new government for the areas of China it controlled. This government would do what the Japanese wanted. (p. 697)

Japanese Expansion

Meanwhile, Japan's war against China continued. The Japanese were also threatening to invade European colonies in Asia. Roosevelt tried to warn Japan by cutting back trade with it.

The American Nation, Prentice Hall, 2002 –

The United States Enters the War

To Roosevelt, Japanese aggressions in Asia were as alarming as Germany's advance through Europe. The Japanese had seized much of China. After Germany defeated France in 1940, Japan took control of French colonies in Southeast Asia. (See the map on page 752.) In September 1940, the Japanese signed an alliance with Germany and Italy. (p. 739)

The Story of America, Volume 2, 1965 to the Present, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. / Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1992 –

Japanese Aggression

In 1931 a Japanese army marched into Manchuria, a province in northern China. This action gave Japan control of rich coal, oil, and iron ore deposits and blocked Soviet designs in the region. Although the attack challenged the Open Door policy, President Herbert Hoover refused to take either military or economic measures against Japan. He instead announced that the United States would not recognize Japan's right to any Chinese territory seized by force.

This policy of nonrecognition had no effect on Japan. In 1932 the Japanese navy attacked the port of Shanghai. On March 4, 1933, the same day that Franklin Roosevelt took his oath of office as president, the Japanese marched into Jehol, a province in northern China. (p. 398)

A History of US, War, Peace, and All That Jazz, 1918-1945, (Book 9), Joy Hakim, Oxford University Press, 2003

From Chapter 26 – “Twentieth Century Monsters” –

In Japan, a military dictatorship took control of the nation and began stomping on its neighbors. The Japanese, too, were suffering from economic depression. They thought they needed more room for their growing population.

They began by attacking China with a ferocity that is still hard to believe. In a massive campaign of terror, millions of civilians were tortured and killed. Just as in Germany, the Japanese rulers told the people they were a superior race and destined to rule others. (p. 113-114)

