

# The Japanese History Textbook Controversy and the Legacy of the Textbook Reform of the Allied Occupation

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On April 3, 2001, the Monbukagakushō (Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, and Culture) approved a junior-high history textbook, creating bitter controversy both inside and outside of Japan. The textbook in question, the *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho* (*New History Textbook*), was written by the Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai (Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform) — an organization of nationalist scholars whose sole purpose is to reform and to reconstruct Japanese history education. Even before its official approval, the *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho* had faced stiff opposition during its selection process from China and South Korea as well as from scholars on the Japanese left for its whitewashing of Japanese colonial and wartime atrocities and its emphasis on instilling national pride.<sup>1)</sup> Though the final version of the textbook contained 137 revisions called for by the Ministry of Education, critics have maintained that the textbook continued to glorify Japanese actions during World War II and to gloss over Japanese war crimes.

In the months following the textbook's authorization, China and South Korea issued official statements to the Japanese government demanding specific revisions to the textbook.<sup>2)</sup> The Japanese government, however, largely rejected these demands.<sup>3)</sup> In response, the Chinese Education Ministry stated, "We find this unacceptable ... we express our regrets and strong outrage."<sup>4)</sup> Similarly, South Korea's Foreign Ministry declared, "In light of such an attitude on the part of the Japanese government, we are compelled to question whether Japan values the ties of friendship and goodwill with neighboring countries and is willing to play an active role for global peace and stability."<sup>5)</sup> Along with Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō's visits to honor the Japanese war dead at Yasukuni Shrine, the controversy over the *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho* has remained a major international and domestic problem for Japan today.

Central to the aims and goals of the Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai is a call to reform a "masochistic" historiography of Japanese history that was first put into place by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) during the Allied Occupation. According to the organization:

The root of the problem [with the masochistic slant of Japan's textbooks] lies in the course that postwar Japanese history has taken. After its defeat in World War II, Japan was occupied by U.S. troops. To render it incapable of attacking them a second time, the Americans forced Japan to reorganize all of its institutions, even its

constitution.

Not content to stop there, they attempted to alter the Japanese perception of history. They expunged Japan's history, injecting in its place a history fabricated by the victors. Japan became the source of all evils in accounts of wars subsequent to the Manchurian Incident ... Japan was made to bear sole responsibility for the ravages of war. Japan was never permitted to present its case, to explain its reasons for participation in the war. Instead, brutalities committed by Japanese troops took center stage.<sup>6)</sup>

This paper is an analysis of the legitimacy of this claim; it is an exploration of the background, implementation, and results of the textbook reform of the Allied Occupation in relation to the history textbook controversy of today. Voicing the opinion of the Japanese right wing, the Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai claims that the Occupation reforms had altered the Japanese perception of history to suit American ideals. Though it is difficult to determine exactly how these reforms affected the mindset of the Japanese people, it is certainly true that in the early stages of the Occupation, SCAP attempted to inculcate American democratic values and to eradicate the wartime values of ultranationalism and militarism through its reform of education, specifically of textbooks. This reform, though well-intentioned, depended on the use of existing Japanese bureaucratic machinery as well as methods of censorship and thought control, making it controversial to the Japanese public and especially to the right.

On the other hand, it is certainly not true that Japan "[bore] sole responsibility for the ravages of war." In fact, as the left wing in Japan and the majority of citizens in China, South Korea, and other countries devastated by Japan during World War II have continued to assert, Japan has largely avoided its wartime responsibility. This resulted, in large part, from the latter stages of the Allied Occupation. Fearing the growth of communism in Asia, SCAP "reversed course," allowing the Japanese right wing to regain its former power and influence in the government after it had faced only minimal punishment for its war crimes. Throughout the postwar, the right wing has strengthened its grasp over the government, and has undermined or attempted to undermine many of the early liberalizing reforms of the Allied Occupation. Against the original intentions of the occupational textbook reform, the right has used its power over a centralized textbook authorization system in order to control the content of textbooks and to impart a conservative political and social agenda stressing national pride and moral values. The legacy of the occupational textbook reform has framed the terms of the debate over the *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho*; the controversy over this textbook is deeply intertwined in the actions of the Occupation's educational reformers more than a half-century ago.

*The Allied Occupation and the Ideological Basis of the Textbook Problem*

With a minimum rumination about the legality or propriety of such an undertaking, the Americans set about doing what no other occupation force had done before: remaking the political, social, cultural, and economic fabric of a defeated nation, and in the process changing the very way of thinking of its populace.<sup>7)</sup>

John Dower

The Allied Occupation had one goal in mind regarding Japanese education: to change the ultranationalist political ideology in Japan. According to the “United States Initial Post-Surrender Policy for Japan,” the ultimate objective of American policy was “to foster conditions which will give the greatest possible assurance that Japan will not again become a menace to the peace and security of the world and will permit her eventual admission as a responsible and peaceful member of the family of nations.”<sup>8)</sup> In order to accomplish this goal, the Occupation aimed to abolish militarism and ultranationalism and to introduce liberal and democratic ideas into the government and society. Though the Occupation planners did not intend to replace Japanese culture with American culture, they presupposed that Japan would carry out its reconstruction along American, liberal ideals — ideals the planners deemed universal.<sup>9)</sup>

Based largely on recommendations from the United States First Education Mission to Japan,<sup>10)</sup> a distinguished group of scholars culled from the elite ranks of American education, the centerpiece of Japan’s reeducation was school textbook reform. Since 1903, the Ministry of Education had absolute control over the content and distribution of school textbooks at the elementary, secondary, and vocational school levels. In the late 1930s, amid a climate of increasing nationalist fervor as Japan embarked on its conquest of Asia, the ministry used this power to inculcate militaristic and ultranationalistic values into school children. According to Joseph Trainor, the head of the Education Division of the Civil Information and Educational Section (CI&E) of SCAP:

The most conspicuous characteristic of the school, other than the building and perhaps the teacher, is the textbook ... It occupies a position of unique importance in the educational process and as such the problems of Japanese textbooks were of continual interest to the Occupation and required continual attention ... Textbooks for Japanese schools received the attention of the occupying forces long before the war was over when careful analysis of texts available in the United States indicated the great extent to which objectionable materials had been incorporated in them.<sup>11)</sup>

SCAP believed that Japanese wartime history textbooks were propagandistic tools that promoted the “cult” of State Shinto — a nationalistic “religion” of the State that infused ancient, cultural values with values stressing loyalty and subservience to the Emperor and his government. According to SCAP, this cult was based primarily on the values described in the *Kyōiku Chokugo* (Imperial Rescript on Education) of 1890 and the *Kokutai no Hongi* (*Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*) of 1937 — documents that stated “in clearest terms an ideology of religious nationalism.”<sup>12)</sup>

Promulgated in 1890 by the Meiji Oligarchs as an answer to the decline in morality and family values, which had accompanied Japan’s frenetic pace of modernization, the Imperial Rescript created an aura of a ‘new morality’ centered on the newly formed modern Japanese nation.<sup>13)</sup> The Imperial Rescript set the standard for Japanese education as a means of social control and moral instruction, particularly for the inculcation of nationalism and patriotism. Based on ancient, mythic beliefs in *bansei ikkei* (“a single line of Emperors from time immemorial”) and the idea of *kokutai* (“essential national polity”), the Imperial Rescript fostered a de-facto state religion centered on the emperor as the head of a national family.<sup>14)</sup> *Kokutai* ideology extended the Confucian ideas of loyalty and

filial piety in one's own family to a grander scale with the Japanese nation as one large family and the emperor as its father figure. Under this formulation, the emperor represented "the living manifestation of all the spiritual values and moral tenets directly inherited from his Imperial ancestors."<sup>15)</sup> The Imperial Rescript was the basis of using education as a tool of social indoctrination in Japan throughout the wartime era.<sup>16)</sup> In the words of Carol Gluck, "The origin of the Rescript, or, more properly, of the civil morality it epitomized, was the premise that national education should serve the state."<sup>17)</sup>

In 1937, amid the movement towards war in China and intensified government efforts to control public opinion, the Ministry of Education published *Kokutai no Hongi* and distributed the first printing of 300,000 copies to school staffs throughout the nation, compelling them to form self-study groups in order to discuss *Kokutai no Hongi* and to base their curriculum around it — by 1945, millions of copies had been distributed for public consumption.<sup>18)</sup> Compiled by scholars under the Bureau of Thought Control in the Ministry of Education, largely in response to Professor Minobe Tatsukichi's controversial assertion that the emperor was only an organ of the state,<sup>19)</sup> *Kokutai no Hongi* was a vague manual of proper Japanese patriotism that expounded upon the idea of *kokutai* and repeatedly echoed the Imperial Rescript on Education not only in its content but in its complicated, scholarly language. Although its language made it inaccessible to the general public, *Kokutai no Hongi* was widely incorporated into Japanese wartime society; coupled with its precedent, the Imperial Rescript, it served as scripture.<sup>20)</sup>

Under the ideological framework of the Imperial Rescript on Education and *Kokutai no Hongi*, the Ministry of Education enacted two wartime policies that directly influenced the ultranationalist content of textbooks: the National School Ordinance of March 1, 1941 and the National School Ordinance of March 25, 1943.<sup>21)</sup> These policies coincided with the government's strict censorship and repression of "anti-government" groups and actions (at this time, "anti-government" was often synonymous with communist and leftist). According to Teruhisa Horio, the promulgation of these policies marked "the total ascendancy of the policy of using education for the unabashed instilling of *kokutai* ideology ... in which the educational apparatus was recomposed for total national unity under wartime conditions."<sup>22)</sup> Indeed, the 1941 ordinance declared that, "The National Schools shall conduct primary education in accordance with the teachings of the Imperial Way, and shall provide the fundamental training required for Imperial subjects."<sup>23)</sup> In the 1943 National School Ordinance, the ministry defined the utilitarian nature of this "fundamental training," stating that "students shall be made conscious of the Empire's mission in the Far East and the world, and of the vital importance of national defense; and a spirit and intellect worthy of a great nation shall be cultivated."<sup>24)</sup> As a result of these policies, the lessons in the history, geography, and morals textbooks children used during this time attempted to justify Japan's formation of its Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. According to these lessons, compared to the uncouth and immoral Western imperialist powers, Japan had a moral obligation to occupy and to instruct its fellow Asian neighbors based on its superior virtue, its racial similarity, and because Japan was a "thriving expansive 'sea country' from the thirteenth century through the first decades of the seventeenth, [that] had built up ... an intimate, organic, and mutually beneficial relationship with the rest of Asia."<sup>25)</sup>

As Harry Wray writes, "From 1941 to 1945 ultra-nationalism, the goal of a Greater

East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, and the passions of the war itself ... created some novel and startling images of Japan's past."<sup>26)</sup> In regard to *kokutai* ideology, the textbooks during World War II propounded the myths of Japan's divine origins, making myth into history. One passage from a 1943 textbook states:

The deep green of the pines within the Imperial Palace celebrates the prosperity of our emperor's reign, while the pristine waters of Isuzugawa speak to us clearly of Japan's primeval glory. Long, long ago in the Age of the Gods, the gods Izanagi and Izanami gave birth to these beautiful islands, which we now call the Eight Great Islands. These they arranged like a great floating fortress to be caressed by the warm Black Current. Next they gave birth to a multitude of gods. Finally, the Sun Goddess was born as the rightful ruler of Japan. It is she who laid the foundation of the Japanese state, she from whom our emperor is descended. The virtue of this most august of goddesses knows no bounds. As her name suggests, our country is awash with her blessings, which extend to the very ends of the earth.<sup>27)</sup>

And another perhaps more salient example, especially for Americans:

December 1941, the men of the special attack corps left their base secretly. It is not yet made known to everybody where they were going ... Finally the order was issued to destroy the enemy fleet ... Until dawn of December 8, they remained in a designated portion of the bay. The rise or fall of the nation depends on this battle ... Let each one fulfill his mission smashing his bones if necessary.<sup>28)</sup>

According to SCAP, the use of textbooks for wartime propaganda had its roots in the ideology of the Imperial Rescript and the *Kokutai no Hongi*. The Allied Occupation focused its textbook reform against this ideology.

*The Problem of Pragmatism and the Continuation of Textbook Censorship and Control*  
The GHQ [General Headquarters of SCAP] ... propagandized Japan's war as an unjust thing. In this way, the propaganda followed the Tokyo war crimes trials, cultivating the Japanese people's sense of their war as a crime and influencing the Japanese people's viewpoint of their own history.<sup>29)</sup>

*Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho*

Educational policy continued traditional control through censorship and monopoly rather than a free textbook market. In effect, the educational officers "inherited the censorship plan."<sup>30)</sup>

Herbert Wunderlich

Throughout the Occupation, SCAP's dependence on pre-existing Japanese government machinery hampered its efforts to reform textbooks. Occupation authorities believed that the "regeneration of Japan must come from within, that a new way of life could not be imposed from above",<sup>31)</sup> the problem, however, was the reality of the situation: the lack of time, printing machinery, raw materials, educational expertise, and Americans able to

speak and to read Japanese limited the ability of the Occupation to conduct its textbook reform the way it had originally planned — through a free market textbook system.<sup>32)</sup> As Victor Kobayashi writes, “Although the structure of the government itself, including the educational administration, was hopefully to be transformed later in the interests of democratization, the occupation, partly out of necessity, depended heavily upon the basic institutions that had been created in Japan since the Meiji Restoration of 1868.”<sup>33)</sup> Indeed, almost every position in the Education Division of the CI&E had a counterpart in the Ministry of Education — an organization that attempted to mitigate many of the groundbreaking reforms SCAP had wanted to enact during this period.<sup>34)</sup>

Because of its dependence on the Ministry of Education for its machinery of writers, editors, centralized printing presses, and methods of distribution, SCAP’s reform of textbooks resembled the very same top-down methods of censorship and thought control that the Ministry of Education had used in wartime Japan in order to inculcate nationalistic values into Japanese citizens. This time, however, these methods had the opposite goal of inculcating democracy, pacifism, and a sense of national rebirth. According to Herbert Wunderlich, the member of the Education Division of CI&E who was in charge of textbook reform:

The decision in favor of national textbooks rather than privately written, unsupervised texts was made with full awareness of the situation. Occupational policy directed the employment of the Japanese government whenever such use furthered the aims of the occupation. Availability of the Bureau of Textbooks of the Ministry of Education with its facilities for producing and distributing textbooks paralleled in a smaller way the facilities of the Emperor and the Imperial Government. By inverting the hour-glass, perhaps the concepts and principles of democracy could be poured into the Japanese mind as easily as the concepts of totalitarianism, militarism, and ultra-nationalism.<sup>35)</sup>

In this way, the Occupation attempted to alter Japan’s perception of history through its reform of education, specifically of textbooks; indeed, changing the Japanese way of thinking was the Occupation’s primary goal. This reform, however noble, unintentionally laid the groundwork for the history textbook controversies that happened in later generations, including today’s present controversy.

Even before SCAP could establish a formal reform policy, the ministry attempted to mollify the far-reaching changes that it felt SCAP would eventually decree by promulgating its own reform. On September 15, 1945, almost immediately after Japan’s surrender to the Allied Powers, the Ministry of Education issued the *Shin Nihon Kensetsu no Kyōiku Hōshin* (“The Education Policy for the Construction of a New Japan,” shortened as “New Education Policy”).<sup>36)</sup> Though SCAP officials admitted that the New Education Policy established many of the policies for greater educational freedom that they had wanted to enact, there was a fundamental problem regarding the continued emphasis of State-Shinto and *kokutai* — the very basis of ultranationalism and militarism during the war. According to M. T. Orr of the CI&E:

It is evident from Mr. Maeda’s [the minister of education’s] proposed program that

he had anticipated the intentions of the General Headquarters fairly well. He missed on two counts. In the first place, he wanted to maintain the structure of the Imperial State ... Fundamental changes were made in the organization of the government and, particularly, in the relationship between the Emperor and the government. Furthermore, Mr. Maeda announced that he proposed to construct a new moral Japan through the cultivation of religious sentiments ... The Supreme Commander insisted upon the separation of Church and State.<sup>37)</sup>

On September 20, 1945, the Ministry of Education ordered schools to delete militaristic content in textbooks in an effort to keep such content from the sight of Occupation officials. This was known as *suminuri* (“blackening-out”) because of the black ink commonly used to censor the existing wartime textbooks. Throughout the fall of 1945, teachers began ordering students to blacken out any sections of their textbooks that had any hint of militarism or nationalism. Teachers would spend entire class days ordering students to conceal any questionable materials; some even reprimanded students for using too little ink to cover up objectionable text. Because of the vagueness of the Ministry of Education’s instructions, local officials, schools, and teachers developed different standards for blackening-out; therefore, no two blackened-out textbooks were exactly the same.<sup>38)</sup>

In response to these ministry actions, on October 22, 1945, SCAP formally ordered the elimination of all militaristic and nationalistic content in Japanese textbooks, including sections regarding the divinity of the emperor and the indoctrination of civic morals. SCAP defined ultranationalism to include any mention of the “Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere”; Japanese racial and national superiority; loyalty and obedience to the emperor; and militarism including the glorification of war heroes.<sup>39)</sup> SCAP followed this program of rooting out ultranationalistic content with a directive on December 15, 1945 that abolished State-Shinto and censored texts such as *Kokutai no Hongi and Shinmin no Michi* (“The Path of the Imperial Subject”); a later directive on December 31, 1945 suspended teaching *shūshin* (morals), Japanese history and geography, and also eliminated existing teaching guides.<sup>40)</sup>

While the Ministry of Education ordered the blackening-out of textbooks in the fall of 1945, it once again predicted and preempted SCAP policies by starting an initiative to write new history textbooks. Led by a former normal school teacher, Toyoda Takeshi, the Ministry of Education’s textbook committee sought to examine the content of existing elementary and secondary school textbooks in order to write new ones.<sup>41)</sup> SCAP, however, cancelled this project in May of 1946 and subsequently issued its own directive to write new history textbooks. Once again fearing the inclusion of *kokutai* ideology, SCAP insisted that the ministry commission historians who did not have any previous association with the former wartime Bureau of Textbooks.

It is important to note that one of the historians selected for this task was Ienaga Saburō, the famous postwar litigant against the improper ministry control of textbooks. Ienaga was responsible for the opening chapter on ancient history to the Heian period,<sup>42)</sup> a daunting task considering that nationalistic, emperor-centered myths from early historical texts such as the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* heavily influenced the historiography of this period. Because of the restrictively short time frame SCAP gave to the authors — it

ordered that the manuscript had to be complete within a month — *Kuni no Ayumi* (*The Progress of the Country*) contained many errors at the time of its publication in September of 1946. Members of the left as well as various foreign analysts sharply criticized the textbook's authors for failing to completely eradicate the traces of the prewar Japanese viewpoint of history, particularly the passages about the emperor.<sup>43)</sup> Nevertheless, *The Progress of the Country*, as the very first postwar history textbook, has had a lasting impact on all postwar history textbooks that have followed; it represented a “new” approach to history that focused more on the common people rather than on the emperor and the elites, and emphasized describing Japanese atrocities committed during World War II. It is exactly this type of historiography, begun by none other than Ienaga Saburō himself, which the Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai has so vehemently campaigned against.

While SCAP was busy making preparations for its new history textbook, it ordered the creation of interim textbooks to fill the gap between the blackened-out textbooks and the release of its new postwar history textbook. Referred to as “*pamfuretto kyōkasho*” (“pamphlet textbooks”) or “*shinbun no yō na kyōkasho*” (“newspaper-like textbooks”) because they were literally flimsy pamphlets printed on recycled newspaper, these interim textbooks reflected the poverty of the postwar situation.<sup>44)</sup> According to an eyewitness recalling his days as a student during this time, “The new history textbooks had small writing, no pictures, moreover, there were a lot of misprints. To us students, they were dull and uninteresting ... The spirit of these student textbooks, changing from a sense of ‘reverence’ [of the nation] to ‘love’ [of humanity] was an indisputable example of a turning point in the era.”<sup>45)</sup> He also added, however, that there was one favorable aspect of the new textbooks, stating, “because it was easy to walk with the textbooks in our bags, there weren’t any students left who could be scolded by our teachers for forgetting them [at home].”<sup>46)</sup>

In the spring of 1948, SCAP started the controversial postwar textbook authorization system — the culmination of its efforts to screen and to control the content of textbooks in order to instill democratic and pacifist values — with the establishment of the *Kyōkasho Tosho Chōsakai* (Textbook Authorization Research Committee) in the spring of 1948.<sup>47)</sup> SCAP’s formation of this committee invited criticism from both the left and the right as many commentators felt that the committee’s power to authorize textbooks represented a return of the Ministry of Education to its wartime authoritarian power over textbooks. Throughout the postwar era, this criticism of the ministry regaining its control over the content of textbooks has only increased and intensified, though primarily from the left — this is a subject that will be discussed at length later in this paper.

Textbook screening during the Occupation was a two-fold process in which publishers were required to submit both Japanese and English versions of their textbook manuscripts to the Ministry of Education and to the CI&E of SCAP, respectively. Because of the central involvement of the ministry in matters of screening and translation, criticism by SCAP of ministry officials subverting the authorization process commonly arose.<sup>48)</sup> In the Ministry of Education, five commissioned examiners evaluated each manuscript and sixteen appointed committee members, consisting of publishers, authors, teachers, and school administrators, made the decisions regarding authorization. After approval and translation by these ministry officials, the CI&E then screened the English versions of the



manuscripts. The CI&E had the last say: if it requested a revision, a publisher would have to resubmit the manuscript and go through the entire authorization process from the beginning. The CI&E was much more stringent regarding authorization: as of August 11, 1948, 418 of the 584 submitted manuscripts had passed the ministry's standards, but only 90 of these 418 had also passed the CI&E standards for textbook screening.<sup>49)</sup>

The Allied Occupation's program of censorship and propaganda has had a lasting impact on right wing ideology in the postwar. To this day, conservatives feel that the Occupation's use of censorship and thought control to instill liberal and democratic values has tainted the Japanese people's sense of their own history and national identity. Indeed, in the immediate postwar, teachers, whose lesson plans had included teaching the values of loyalty and reverence to the Emperor, were forced to throw away those values and instead teach the values of freedom, democracy, and love of humanity; the ideological pillar of the Japanese nation before and during the war, the idea of *kokutai* centered around the fatherly emperor, became, for a short period of time, an ideology associated with evil. According to right wing scholars, the abrupt, drastic changes of the postwar education reform have made the Japanese people feel anxiety and shame towards their own history. As the writer Eto Jun stated, the Occupation's "censorship and propaganda plan became entrenched in our media and educational systems, so that even when the CCD [Civil Censorship Detachment] was disbanded and the occupation itself had ended, the internal destruction of the identity of Japanese people and trust in our history continues, making us permanently exposed to threats of foreign censorship."<sup>50)</sup> Indeed, this echoes the criticism of the Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai regarding Japan's "loss of national identity" due to the "Japan-bashing, masochistic historiography" that has prevailed in postwar Japan. In this way, SCAP's reliance on the existing government bureaucracy and on the practice of censorship and thought control during the Occupation has influenced the present-day history textbook controversy.

*The Reverse Course and the Strengthening of Government Textbook Control*

As the Occupation's initial flirtation with such "democratization" gave way to economic pressures and the exigencies of the Cold War ... For the Japanese government and its SCAP (Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers) supporters a key concern was to re-establish some semblance of control and to check the rising power of the left.<sup>51)</sup>

T. J. Pempel

Commonly called the "reverse course," the redirection in postwar Occupation policies under SCAP from democratization and demilitarization to economic growth and self-reliance resulted from a concerted effort to rebuild Japan's economy and to make it a bulwark of anti-communism in Asia. The reverse course allowed right wing leaders, many of whom had been ousted and jailed for war crimes during the early stages of the Occupation, to reassert their influence in the Japanese government, and, according to critics, to avoid dealing with their wartime responsibility. In the case of educational reform, this return to power of the right wing coincided with a movement to strengthen and to centralize government control over education, specifically over textbooks through a textbook authorization system, which many liberals feared, was a return to the prewar

and wartime Ministry of Education authority over the production and distribution of textbooks as well as the practice of using textbooks as tools of state-centered, moral indoctrination. This fear of the right wing reasserting its grip on textbooks is the very same fear that present day critics from the left and from neighboring Asian nations have had regarding the *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho*; its authorization by the ministry in 2001 was evidence of the conservative dominance over the Japanese educational system and of the use of education for advancing a nationalistic political agenda.

As early as 1947 with General MacArthur's suggestion that the U.S. plan for an end to the Occupation, the U.S. clearly had a future Cold War with the Soviet Union on its mind. As George Kennan, the originator of the postwar policy of "containment" and the director of the Department of State's Policy Planning Staff during the Occupation, recommended after a trip to Tokyo, "no further reform legislation should be pressed. The emphasis should shift from reform to economic recovery ... Precedence should be given ... to the task of bringing the Japanese into a position where they would be better able to shoulder the burdens of independence."<sup>52)</sup> Along with continued poverty and social strife within Japan, the growing communist threat in Asia — demonstrated by the success of the Communist Revolution in China in 1949 and the sudden outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 — influenced SCAP to alter its reforms, halt the Tokyo war crimes trials, and suppress communist and left wing groups. These actions effectively allowed a return to power by wartime leaders who had been purged. The most symbolic representation of this change in policy was the rise of Kishi Nobusuke to the office of Prime Minister in 1957 (Kishi had served in General Tōjō's cabinet and was indicted as a war criminal). Indeed, the scale of this reversal in policy from the initial liberal and democratic ideals of the Occupation was so dramatic that the United States had even urged Japan to repeal Article Nine (the "no-war" clause) of the Constitution and to begin rearmament. As Kenneth Pyle writes, "in the U.S. view, Japan was 'the most desired prize' for the Communists, 'a natural target for the desire to dominate the Far East.'"<sup>53)</sup>

On September 8, 1951 with the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which formally ended the hostilities of World War II,<sup>54)</sup> and the signing of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the United States, which subordinated Japan militarily to the U.S., Japanese and American leaders planted the seeds for Japan's economic growth and development as well as its diplomatic subservience to the U.S. In exchange for economic aid and military security, Japan granted military bases to the United States as well as rights including veto power over any third country's military presence in Japan, the right to intervene in any domestic disturbance, and extraterritoriality for members of the U.S. military.<sup>55)</sup>

Under the protection of the United States, the right wing in Japan has worked and continues to work to resuscitate patriotism and nationalistic fervor. As Horio writes, "Through their calls for a new emphasis on patriotism, the anti-pacifist, anti-socialist, pro-American elements in Japanese society had found a new way to revive the prewar *kokutai* ideology and reassert what were ultimately anti-democratic values."<sup>56)</sup> This was a huge shock to the left and to countries such as China and Korea who had suffered from Japanese aggression during World War II; in the eyes of these critics, it seemed that Japan had not only avoided its responsibility for the war but had even been rewarded for the crimes it had committed.

Amid this political landscape of the 1950s, the right began proposing legislation that attempted to rollback the Occupation's educational reform; one of its primary goals was and continues to be a revision of the *Kyōiku Kihon Hō* (Fundamental Law of Education). Promulgated on March 3, 1947, the Fundamental Law of Education was the legal basis behind the educational reforms of the Occupation and is the backbone of Japanese education to this very day. Intended to replace the Imperial Rescript of 1890, it is a declaration of education for the purpose of developing individuals for the benefit of each particular individual, as opposed to education for the benefit of the state. In the words of constitutional law scholar Tanaka Jirō, it is “the central law within the body of educational law, an Educational Constitution.”<sup>57)</sup> In the eyes of liberals in Japan, the Fundamental Law of Education represents the pinnacle of what Japanese education could and should be.

According to Article One of the Fundamental Law:

Education shall aim at the full development of personality, striving for the rearing of the people, sound in mind and body, who shall love truth and justice, esteem individual value, respect labor and have a deep sense of responsibility, and be imbued with the independent spirit, as builders of a peaceful state and society.<sup>58)</sup>

And perhaps more importantly in regard to the present-day textbook controversy, it states in Article Ten:

Education shall not be subject to improper control, but shall be directly responsible to the whole people.

School administration shall, on the basis of this realization, aim at the adjustment and establishment of the various conditions required for the pursuit of the aim of education.<sup>59)</sup>

The issue over the control of textbooks has become deeply intertwined in the postwar movement by the right to reverse the liberal values defined by the Fundamental Law of Education in the Occupation's educational reform — indeed, almost two decades later, Ienaga Saburō based his textbook lawsuits against the Ministry of Education for improper control of the textbook authorization process upon the very egalitarian principles of education expressed in this law.

Throughout the 1950s, the issue of textbook control has played a primary role in postwar politics. In June of 1954, members of the Liberal and Democratic parties attacked the liberal Japan Teachers Union — a major activist group against the centralizing policies of the Ministry of Education throughout the postwar — for its role in creating pacifist, “anti-Japanese” textbooks. In 1955, the future Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)<sup>60)</sup> prime minister, Nakasone Yasuhiro advocated a return to state-authored textbooks as a central election platform. And in 1956, Hatoyama Ichirō, of the newly formed LDP submitted three bills (Law Concerning the Management and Operations of Local Educational Administration, the Textbook Law, and the Law Establishing an Extraordinary Deliberative Council on the Educational System) in order to return educational power to the Ministry of Education, to centralize the ministry's control over

textbooks, and to cut at the heart of the Fundamental Law of Education.<sup>61)</sup> Only the first law concerning the selection of school board members passed — and only because the Hatoyama administration brought police into the Diet to fend off its dissenters.

Responding to the difficulty of controlling the content of textbooks through legislation, the LDP administration attempted to strengthen control over textbooks through regulations outside of public control.<sup>62)</sup> In this way, the increasing power of the textbook authorization system that began in 1948 represented Japan's turn to the right. Ever since its inception under the auspices of SCAP, the Ministry of Education attempted to consolidate and to strengthen its power over the textbook authorization system by increasing the number of screening committee members and by pressuring publishers and authors through the use of vague suggestions and guidelines for revision in order to "encourage 'self-discipline' on the part of publishers and authors by forcing them to revise texts without specific Ministry statements."<sup>63)</sup> This "self-discipline" often resulted from the costs of production and time associated with textbook manuscripts — it was simply in the best interests of publishers and authors to produce textbooks that adhered to the ministry's views in order to avoid expensive resubmissions of their texts.<sup>64)</sup>

In 1958, the ministry made compliance with the *Gakushū Shidō Yōryō* (National Curriculum Standards) mandatory, thereby increasing the rigor of textbook inspection and authorization. Promulgated in 1947, the National Curriculum Standards originally was nothing more than a document intended as a reference to aid teachers in planning their lesson plans; by this time, however, it became a legally binding document mandating what teachers *must* teach. Although the Ministry of Education stated that the process of textbook certification must be "in strict accord with the Fundamental Law of Education ... and must not be in violation of the spirit thereof," these guidelines actually violated the spirit of the liberal and democratic ideals expressed in the Fundamental Law of Education because it made the ministry the sole determiner of the "proper" content of textbooks.<sup>65)</sup>

In 1963, the government further increased the Ministry of Education's control of textbooks by passing a bill that made textbooks free to all elementary and middle school students, creating what Ronald Dore terms as "combined textbook areas."<sup>66)</sup> This law called for prefectural level school boards rather than local school boards to select textbooks, thereby removing teachers from the textbook selection process and monopolizing textbook control into the hands of a few bureaucrats.<sup>67)</sup>

By the time of America's entry into Vietnam, the right wing had largely succeeded in subverting the aims of the textbook reform that SCAP had imposed on Japan during the early stages of the Occupation; its use of the postwar textbook authorization system in order to impart a conservative agenda of national pride and moral values closely resembled the use of the wartime state-textbook system in order to inculcate ultranationalistic and militaristic values. The minister of education at the time, Kiyose Ichirō, aptly summed up the goals of the right and the fears of the left by stating:

It is simply not good enough to speak about the rights that accrue to individuals as the members of a democratic society; we must also make as concerted an effort as possible to advocate and nurture among our students feelings of loyalty and devotion to the State.<sup>68)</sup>

Throughout the postwar, the success of the right wing in reasserting its grip over textbooks and in its attempts to use textbooks as tools for indoctrinating conservative values has angered and incited the left as well as Japan's neighboring nations. Ienaga Saburō's textbook lawsuits challenging the legality of the textbook authorization process and the 1982 textbook controversy over a falsely-alleged order from the Ministry of Education to alter the description of Japan's aggression in China during World War II in secondary-school history textbooks<sup>69)</sup> have served as predecessors to the present-day controversy over the *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho*: the very same issues that had shaped these previous textbook controversies — particularly of the right wing strengthening its control over textbooks and using this control to carry out a conservative agenda — have framed the terms of the debate over the *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho*.

In recent years, the rhetoric of the right wing has only gained momentum against the rhetoric of liberal pacifism. As demonstrated by the recent *shingikai* ("special government committees") regarding the reform of the Fundamental Law and the reform of the Constitution, many scholars in the academic community fear that any remaining educational freedom will soon cease to exist. As Nagai Kenichi exhorts, "If the pace [of these calls for reform] continues with the existing government of [conservative] ruling parties holding a stable majority, the Fundamental Law of Education will be able to be revised in a single stroke."<sup>70)</sup>

The return to power by the right wing in the postwar and its rollback of early occupational reforms have scared the left wing as well as many of Japan's neighbors. In the case of education, the subversion of the aims of the early, liberal educational reforms through a textbook authorization system, and the use of this system in order to impart a conservative, nationalistic ideology have reminded them of the wartime government control of textbooks — a time when the government had shamelessly used textbooks in order to inculcate militarism and nationalism. The ministry authorization of the *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho*, the textbook written by a group of conservatives with the explicit purpose of reforming historiography in order to instill national pride, has simply fueled their fears.

*"Bringing It All Back Home": The Legacy of the Past*

Millions of copies of newly revised textbooks are expected to start rolling off the presses next month, to be distributed to Iraq's 5.5 million schoolchildren in 16,000 schools. Some 563 texts were heavily edited and revised over the summer by a team of US-appointed Iraqi educators. Every image of Saddam and the Ba'ath party has been removed.

When it comes to dealing with controversial subjects such as the 1991 Gulf war, the texts won't be much help. Pressured to have the books reprinted in time for the new school year, the US-led ministry of education simply deleted all sections deemed "controversial", including references to America, Shias and Sunnis, Kurds, Kuwaitis, Jews and Iranians. Saddam's hand was heaviest in history, but his touch was everywhere. Some books lost sentences or paragraphs. In modern history, half of the text was deleted.<sup>71)</sup>

*The Guardian*, November 25, 2003

This passage from the November 25, 2003 issue of *The Guardian* describes the textbook reform of Iraq. But if one were to substitute the dates, statistics, and proper names, this description could easily paint the picture of the textbook situation in late 1945 to early 1946 Japan. The Allied Occupation of Japan almost sixty years ago and the present occupation of Iraq bear a striking resemblance to each other in the case of textbook reform. In each case, an American-led occupation blamed a ruthless, militaristic regime for oppressing its own people, and attempted to free these people by imparting liberal and democratic values through education reform, specifically through the reform of textbooks. While textbook reform has just started in Iraq, the textbook reform of occupied Japan is over and its effects are felt to this very day.

In the case of Japan, although SCAP strove to instill democratic and liberal ideas into Japanese education, its pragmatic methods worked against it. Changing the way a population thinks is difficult — based on the urgency of the situation, the Occupation leaders decided to use existing Japanese government machinery in order to enact its policies as swiftly and as forcefully as possible. In order to instill the values of freedom and democracy, they took freedom and democracy away through censorship and propaganda. Furthermore, the Occupation did not follow through with its reforms. Due to a growing fear of communism in the early 1950s, SCAP abandoned and allowed the reversal of many of its more liberalizing reforms, including educational reform and specifically, textbook reform.

The Allied Occupation's textbook reform has greatly influenced the history textbook controversy of today. The Occupation's use of censorship and thought control while enacting this reform has served as evidence for the right wing in Japan to argue for a change in postwar historiography — indeed, the Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai wrote the *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho* expressly in order to affect this change. Similarly, in the eyes of the left wing in Japan and of the nations hurt by Japan during World War II, the Occupation's abrupt reversal in policy allowed the right wing to return to power in Japan and to avoid its wartime responsibility. In the case of education, the conservative-led postwar movement to strengthen government control over textbooks through the textbook authorization system has represented a return to the wartime era when the government had complete control over the creation and distribution of textbooks, and had used textbooks in order to inculcate militarism and nationalism. To the left and to Japan's neighbors, the ministry's authorization of the *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho*, a nationalist textbook that denies the very occurrence of Japanese wartime atrocities and paints Japan as a victim of the war, has symbolized the ever-growing power and influence of the right in the postwar. In this way, the present-day controversy over the *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho* has its roots in the legacy of the Occupation's textbook reform. The continued influence of the Occupation in the political and educational controversies in Japan today proves that unlike old soldiers, wartime and occupational memories simply do not fade away.

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## Notes

- 1) These "colonial and wartime atrocities" include Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910, the Nanking Massacre in 1937, the use of Korean women as "sex-slaves" during World War II, and the use of Prisoners of War as test subjects in chemical and biological experiments in a laboratory in Manchuria known as Unit 731.
- 2) On May 8, the South Korean government issued a formal list of 35 revisions it wanted the Japanese government to make; similarly, on May 17 the Chinese government issued a list asking for eight changes.
- 3) Of the 35 changes requested by the government of South Korea, the Japanese government agreed to two of them on the basis of errors in "academic theory." The Japanese government rejected all eight points raised by the Chinese government, saying that they "cannot be said to be clear errors." "Proper Perception of History Needs Forum with Neighbors," *Asahi Shimbun*, July 11, 2001.
- 4) Ibid.
- 5) Paul Shin, "South Korean president refuses to meet Japanese envoys over textbook controversy," *The Associated Press*, July 9, 2001.
- 6) Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai (Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform), "The Restoration of a National History: Why Was the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform Established, and What Are Its Goals?" (Tokyo: Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai, 1998) 6.
- 7) John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1999) 78.
- 8) "Basic Initial Post-Surrender Directive to Supreme Commander for Allied Powers," National Archives of the United States, Military History Section, Record Group 319, Records of the Army Staff, ABC 387, Japan, Joint Civil Affairs Committee 48 (30 August 1945).
- 9) Akira Iriye, "Continuities in U.S.-Japanese Relations, 1941–1949," in Yonosuke Nagai and Akira Iriye, ed., *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977) 386.
- 10) *Report of the United States Education Mission to Japan*, Submitted to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (Tokyo: GHQ, SCAP, March 30, 1948) 42–46.
- 11) Joseph C. Trainor, *Educational Reform in Occupied Japan: Trainor's Memoir* (Tokyo: Meisei University Press, 1983) 129–130.
- 12) Ibid., 86.
- 13) Ronald Dore, "The Legacy," in Edward R. Beauchamp, ed., *Learning to be Japanese* (Hamden, CT: Linnet Books, 1978) 37–38.



- 14) Joseph Pittau, *Political Thought in Early Meiji Japan, 1868–1889* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1967) 2.
- 15) Teruhisa Horio, *Educational Thought and Ideology in Modern Japan: State Authority and Intellectual Freedom* (Tokyo: University Press, 1988) 68.
- 16) Horio, 67.
- 17) Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985) 103.
- 18) *Kokutai no Hongi: Cardinal Principles of the National Entity in Japan*, translated by John Owen Gauntlett and edited with an introduction by Robert King Hall (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1949) 10.
- 19) For a terse explanation of the controversy Minobe's theory caused, see *Gluck*, 241–242.
- 20) *Ibid.*, 34.
- 21) Harold Wray, "A Study in Contrasts: Japanese School Textbooks of 1903 and 1941–45," in *Monumenta Nipponica*, Volume 28, Issue 1 (Spring, 1973) 77.
- 22) Horio, 78.
- 23) *Ibid.*
- 24) Herbert Passin, *Society and Education in Japan* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1965) 268.
- 25) Wray, 77.
- 26) *Ibid.*
- 27) Quoted in Masami Yamazumi, "State Control and the Evolution of Ultrnationalistic Textbooks," in James J. Shields, Jr., ed., *Japanese Schooling* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1989) 234–242.
- 28) Herbert Wunderlich, *The Japanese Textbook Problem and Solution, 1945–1946*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Palo Alto: Stanford University, 1952) 180.
- 29) Nishio Kanji et al. *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho* (Tokyo: Fuso Publishing, Inc., 2001) 295.
- 30) Wunderlich, 243.
- 31) *Ibid.*, 235.
- 32) *Ibid.*, 10–21.
- 33) Victor N. Kobayashi, "Japan: Under American Occupation," in Edward Beauchamp, ed., *Learning to be Japanese: Selected Readings on Japanese Society and Education* (Hamden, Conn: Linnet Books, 1978) 184.
- 34) *Ibid.*, 184–5.
- 35) Wunderlich, 256–257.
- 36) Takahashi Shirō, *Kyōkasho Kentei* (Tokyo: Chuo Kōron Shakan, 1988) 69–70.
- 37) Quoted in Gary Tsuchimochi, *Education Reform in Postwar Japan: The 1946 U.S. Education Mission* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1993) 90.
- 38) Karasato Tomitarō, *Kyōkasho no Rekishi: Kyōkasho to Nihonjin no Keisei* (Tokyo: Gyōsei, 1990) 316–317.
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- 42) Karasato, 328.
- 43) Ienaga Saburō, *Japan's Past; Japan's Future: One Historian's Odyssey*, translated and introduced by Richard Minear (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001) 129.
- 44) Karasato, 320.
- 45) Quoted in Karasato, 322.
- 46) *Ibid.*
- 47) This committee was later formalized in 1950 with the establishment of the *Kyōkayō tosho kentei chōsa shingikai* (Textbook Certification Investigations Council). Lawrence Beer, *Freedom of Expression in Japan: A Study in Comparative Law, Politics, and Society* (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1984) 260.
- 48) Nishi Toshio, *Unconditional Democracy: Education and Politics in Occupied Japan, 1945–1952* (Stanford, CA:

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- 49) Nozaki, 39.
  - 50) Quoted in Herbert Passin, "The Occupation — Some Reflections," in Carol Gluck and Stephen R. Graubard, eds., *Showa: The Japan of Hirohito* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992) 120.
  - 51) T. J. Pempel, "Patterns of Policymaking: Higher Education," in T. J. Pempel, ed., *Policymaking in Contemporary Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977) 280.
  - 52) Quoted in Kenneth Pyle, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996) 224.
  - 53) Ibid., 234.
  - 54) It is important to note that the San Francisco Peace Treaty has remained unsigned by the Soviet Union, which was not present at the negotiations. This is an important sticking-point regarding the present Northern Territories controversy.
  - 55) Pyle, 235–6.
  - 56) Horio, 148.
  - 57) Ibid, 109.
  - 58) "The Fundamental Law of Education," in Edward Beauchamp and James Vardaman, eds., *Japanese Education Since 1945: A Documentary Study* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994) 109.
  - 59) Ibid., 111.
  - 60) It is important to note that the Liberal Democratic Party as well as its antecedents, the Liberal Party and the Democratic Party, is neither liberal nor democratic.
  - 61) Horio, 149 and Nozaki, 40.
  - 62) Nozaki, 40.
  - 63) Ibid.
  - 64) Beer, 262–4.
  - 65) Horio, 151–2.
  - 66) Ronald P. Dore, "Textbook Censorship in Japan: the Ienaga Case," in *Dimensions of Contemporary Japan: Education and Schooling in Japan since 1945* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998) 56.
  - 67) Ibid., 56–7.
  - 68) Horio, 149.
  - 69) In 1982, a controversy erupted over the false allegation of the Ministry of Education ordering the replacement of the word *shinryaku* (invasion) with *shinshutsu* (advance) in history textbooks to describe Japan's invasion of China in the 1930s — this controversy created a rift in relations between Japan and its neighbors, South Korea and China, forcing Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Miyazawa Kiichi to issue an official apology.
  - 70) Nagai Kenichi, "Ima Kyōiku Kihon Hō no Kaihen ga Susumerareteiru," in Nagai Kenichi and Teruchika Ritsuko, eds., *Kyōiku Kihon Hō no 'Minaoshi' ni Hanron suru* (Tokyo: Kamogawa Shuppan, 2002) 3.
  - 71) "A new history of Iraq," *The Guardian*, <<http://education.guardian.co.uk/schoolsworldwide/story/0,14062,10922,08,00.html>> (12/25/03).