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The Nanjing Massacre: official remembrance and history textbooks in the People's Republic of China

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Abstract

This paper analyses the manner in which the 1937 Nanjing massacre is presented and interpreted in Chinese history textbooks and teacher guides for high school pupils. The paper explores the manner in which the construction of a narrative discourse of historical memory in China is powerfully linked to contemporary notions of identity, patriotic and nationalist education in a manner that reflects core ideological, political and social challenges inside China and in its relationships with its Asian neighbours. The paper discusses the notion of school textbooks as ideological discourses and analyses the pedagogical discourse of Chinese history education, this is placed within a context framed by the political and ideological construction of history education in China and the manner in which recent history teaching and public opinion in the People's Republic has reacted to the publication of a history school textbook in Japan that questions claims of a massacre.

Textbooks as ideological discourses

It has been suggested, "One of the swiftest entrees to understanding any modern society is through listening to political discourse about education. Power struggles and ideological controversies about how to socialize and enculturate youth are at the heart of the processes by which a society is continually recreated..." (Marshall, 1994, p.1). In this paper we approach the task of 'listening to political discourse about education' through a study of Chinese school history textbooks. Foster and Nicholls have argued that "All nations use textbooks to some extent as a means to tell stories or narratives about their national pasts" (Foster and Nicolls, 2003, p.1) and Soysal has

claimed that textbooks are “representative of officially selected, organized, and transmitted knowledge” that are “indispensable to the explication of public representations of national collectivities and identities” (Soysal, 2000, p.130). In addition, Stanner has suggested that textbooks provide “a view from a window which has been carefully placed to exclude a whole quadrant of the landscape” (Stanner, 2003, pp.24-25). These authors point to the fact that school textbooks are critical ideological and political constructs and that the history textbook is an important artifact through which different nations explore, analyse and reflect upon each other’s past and through which they re-manufacture the boundaries of their own past (See Fitzgerald, 1979; De Castell, 1991; Chopin, 1992; Schmidt, et al. 1997; Crawford, 2001; Crawford, 2003).

It is now commonly accepted that at the heart of the process of creating textbook knowledge is what Williams called a ‘selective tradition’, where those in positions of authority and power select, distil and refine the vast quantity of knowledge available into what is deemed essential and, therefore, legitimate (Williams, 1961; see Apple, 1993). To paraphrase Stanner, this process frequently results in the ‘window’ having a blind drawn across it that obscures a particular view or provides only a partial view of a theme, issue or problem. This claim is supported by a range of evidence from various nations that the stories many nations chooses to tell, or not tell, about themselves are subject to varying degrees of ideological and political manipulation, sometimes implicit, sometimes unambiguous and unequivocal. While we are focusing attention upon a nation where education is powerfully controlled from the centre it ought not to be assumed that nations labelled, for the sake of argument, ‘liberal democracies’ do not engage in this process; here the United States and Japan, among others, are nations where the culture of the textbook is part of a constant political dialogue (See Foster and Crawford, 2005. See also Anyon, 1979; Delfattore, 1992; Arnove, 1995; Adamson and Morris 1997; Foster, 1999; Hein and Selden (eds.), 2000; Foster and Crawford (eds.), 2005).

In this paper we are particularly concerned with questions that focus upon the presentation, or absence, of a democratic dialogue in Chinese history textbooks, such as:

- who is it that selects school textbook knowledge and what are the ideological, economic and intellectual relationships between these different interest groups;
- through what process is textbook knowledge declared to be official knowledge and how is it filtered through sets of political screens and decisions before it is declared legitimate;
- What voices are heard here, what voices are heard in textbooks, *whose* knowledge is included, which group(s) receive the most sustained attention, whose story is being told;
- to what extent to school textbooks act as a filter in the ignoring of other views? Do texts exclude or marginalise particular groups who are part of a nation’s history e.g. those representing social, cultural, religious, economic, ethnic or geographical groups?

Studying the construction of history textbooks from these perspective allows for the exploration of the views, values and interests involved in the making of curriculum; the political maintenance of power and knowledge and; crucially, the socio-historical context within which curriculum is constructed.

We consider that this approach offers potential in exploring the manner in which Chinese textbooks and teacher guides interpret the Nanjing massacre because, since the early 1980s, the issue has evolved from an historical event to one that has achieved a significant measure of political symbolism making it problematic for historians to discuss it objectively and rationally. Here, attempts to search for 'truth' are fraught with enormous difficulties as a consequence of the very different academic, ideological and political views held in Japan and China about what happened in Nanjing. What is possible, however, is to analyse the claims to truth that are presented in Chinese history textbooks in an effort to work towards an understanding of the origins of a particular Chinese pedagogical discourse of historical truth.

The Sample and Data Analysis

In China textbooks are part of a centrally controlled curriculum and consciously reflect the state's educational objectives. Locating Chinese textbooks to analyse was a relatively easy task as full-text versions are available for examination on the website of the *People's Educational Press* (See www.pep.com.cn). The analysis presented here is based upon an examination of four high school textbooks in use in China, two in common use and two 'experimental' editions being piloted in parts of China. For the junior high school the texts analysed were *Chinese History: Volume 4, 9 year compulsory education textbook* (2001) and the *Standard Experimental Book: Chinese History for the 8th Grade, volume 1* (2001) currently being piloted. For the senior high school, *Chinese Modern History* (2000) and the *Senior High School Experimental Textbook, History 1* (2004) currently being piloted were analysed.

Each book is written by an editorial team of up to nine authors supported by a group of historians from schools and universities acting in an advisory capacity. In addition to school textbooks, use was made of teacher guides that accompany the textbooks, these contain advice on teaching objectives; teaching styles; pupil activities; the construction of lesson plans and knowledge to be included in lessons (See <http://www.pep.com.cn/index.htm>). We looked specifically at units in textbooks and teacher guides in terms of their narrative discourses, pedagogical approaches and pupil activities they presented.

The Massacre of Nanjing: constructing a discourse of memory and official patriotism

On 9th December 1937 the Japanese army captured Shanghai before turning its attention to Nanjing, then the capital city of China, which, after an intense bombardment and ground attack, fell on the 13th December (*The Times*, 23rd

September 1937, p.12; *The Times*, 25th September 1937, p.10; *The Times*, 25th September, 1937, p.12). During the following weeks Japanese soldiers are alleged to have engaged in a programme of mass atrocity against military personnel, prisoners of war and the civilian population resulting in thousands of deaths. Journalists at the time reported that "Wholesale looting, the violation of women, the murder of civilians, the eviction of Chinese from their homes, mass executions of war prisoners ... turned Nanking into a city of terror" (*New York Times*, 17th December, 1937). The correspondent of the *Chicago Daily News* called the siege and capture of Nanjing "Four Days of Hell" (*Chicago Daily News*, 15th December, 1937). On 14th December the Tokyo *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper reported, "At one time, after Nanjing was captured, more than 30,000 Chinese were driven to the foot of the city wall. Machine guns then swept the crowd and grenades were thrown from atop the wall ... 30,000 people were all killed, most of them were women, children, and elderly" (*Asahi Shimbun*, 14th December, 1937).

Despite these, and numerous other accounts, then and since, from victims, perpetrators, eye witnesses and media observers; photographic evidence and countless academic studies, reaction inside Japan has been, at best, to question the extent and savagery of the event or to deny what has become known as the Nanjing Massacre (See Yin and Young, 1996; Chang, 1998; Honda, (translated by Gribney and Sandness), 1999; Fogel and Maier, 2000; Rabe, 2000; Takemoto and Ohara, 2000; Masaaki 2000; Yamamoto 2000). Writing in 1991 Buruma claimed that in Japan the event had been "... killed by silence" (Buruma, 1992, p.114; see also Barnard, 2001; Askew, 2002). This is not, strictly speaking, accurate. Those who argue that the event represents another Holocaust and those who deny its existence are very vocal. Nor it is accurate to claim that Japanese textbooks do not discuss the massacre and other aspects of Japanese wartime behaviour although the depth and breadth of discussion is open to criticism (See Crawford, 2005). Nevertheless, Fogel has asked an important question:

How can established Japanese intellectuals in many fields – although, importantly, few if any in Chinese or Japanese history – buy into the idea that the Nanjing massacre is a phantom, an illusion, even a ruse concocted by the Chinese and their allies to ruin Japan's reputation? How can such people still define Japanese mass murders of fifty or sixty years ago as acts of "Asia's liberator?" Frankly, it boggles the mind (Fogel and Maier 2000, p.4).

Well, they have and they do. The outcome is that claim and counter-claim regarding authenticity, alleged fabrication and responsibility have shaped China's relationship with Japan and continues to generate fierce and partisan ideological debate within both nation's political culture. Importantly, the Nanjing massacre has also emerged as:

... a fundamental keystone in the construction of [...] national identity. As a result, the historian's interest in and analysis of this event can be interpreted as an attack on the contemporary Chinese identity, while a refusal to accept the "orthodox" position on Nanjing can be construed as an attempt to deny the Chinese nation a legitimate voice in international

society ... Moreover, any demonstrated interest in Nanjing can be viewed in some circles in Japan as "Japan bashing" (in the case of foreign researchers) or "self-flagellation" (in the case of Japanese) politics (Askew, 2000, p.1)

What adds fuel to a highly emotional and acrimonious debate between Japan and China over what happened in Nanjing is that until the 1980s the Chinese government had little interest in capitalising upon the event, to have done so would have threatened Sino-Japanese economic relations at a critical time of change for China (Honda, 1999). In 1962, following a two-year investigation, scholars at Nanjing University wrote *Japanese Imperialism and the Massacre in Nanjing* (riben diguozhuyi zai nanjing de datusha). The Chinese government labelled the book a classified document and it was not published. However, supported by the activities of the Chinese Diaspora in many nations (see Chang 1998; Buruma, 1999) the Nanjing massacre is now a powerful ideological, political and educational weapon in China (Yang, 1999) and during the past twenty-five years the Central Communist Party (CCP) has through film, literature, art, museum exhibitions, remembrance ceremonies and the school curriculum consciously promoted the official commemoration of the event. One recent poll that received replies from over 100,000 young Chinese people showed that 83.9% saw the Nanjing massacre as the issue they associated most with Japan (Yang, Daqing, 2001).

History Education in China: principles and practice

The collapse of Communism regimes in Eastern Europe and the social and economic problems of Russia in the post-Soviet era led the CCP to conclude that in order to avoid the spectre of social and economic catastrophe that there was a need to re-assert the role of the state as a bulwark of resistance to such threats. By the late 1980s, in the face of economic and cultural globalisation and this fracturing Communist hegemony, populist dissatisfaction with the CCP was widespread culminating in April 1989 in student and worker demonstrations in Tiananman Square. This crisis of legitimisation led the CCP to develop strategies for reasserting its traditionally claimed role as China's salvation. The result has been an increased concentration upon ideological and patriotic education based upon the claim that domestic tensions were the result of external reactionary forces that led the CCP to "... reaffirm its patriotic credentials as China's past, present and future saviour: from imperialism, Japan, the Nationalists, the USSR and USA, the bourgeoisie, and now, from China's youth, who had, it was asserted, tasted only the sweet fruits of modernisation and not the hard years of bitter struggle, and were thus easily 'led astray'" (Jones, 2002, p.559).

History education, always a site of moral and political education in China, was seen as crucial in pursuit of this goal. Dogmatic forms of Marxist history education that had dominated the curriculum for decades were abandoned in the face of Deng Xiaoping's call to modernise China. Nevertheless, a pedagogic commitment to the socialist construction of the motherland

remained a powerful force (Wang, 1999; Yan, 2001; Ye, 2000; SSPCTMRC, 2002a). History education continued to be "...an important means for thought education in socialism and patriotism" (Tin-Yau Lo, 2004, p.345). Here it was expected to "... promote acceptance of the political system, the current regime and its policies, to foster patriotism and national pride among all ethnic groups, and to instil ideals, morals, culture, and discipline"(SEC,1999a, p.22). Consequently, teaching history in Chinese high schools is powerfully influenced by the claimed superiority of socialism as a political system where one aim is to "... forcefully expose the aggressive nature of capitalism and imperialism and the crimes of plunder they have committed" (SEC, 1999a, p. 39). Linked to this commitment is the claim that "Love for one's motherland should ... be the foundation of our education in patriotism in history teaching" (Tang, 1999, p.78; Fairbrother, 2003).

China often sees itself as being internationally undervalued and criticised and therefore the role of the teacher is to develop in pupils a patriotic fervour designed to "... rejuvenate the national spirit and foster in the educated a quality that will spur them to strive unceasingly to make our nation the equal of all nations"(Tang, 1999, p.82). Emphasis should be placed upon "the glorious achievements of the CCP in leading the Chinese people in their struggle against oppression and for liberation and in building socialism to make students realize the truth that without the CCP there would be no new China, that only socialism can save China and enable it to develop"(SEC 1999b, p.40).

Curriculum guidance for teachers, produced by the State Education Commission (SEC), states that pupils should develop a range of historical knowledge and skills designed to ensure they "comprehend and formulate ... a basically correct interpretation of materials related to China's modern and contemporary history" (SEC, 1999b, p.40). In 2000 curriculum guidance for schools was revised and teaching methods for history modified to reflect pedagogical goals such as 'historical thinking', 'creative consciousness', 'independent study', and 'co-operation with others' (COH, 2001, p. 715). However, the guidelines continued to emphasise the ideological basis of history education identifying patriotism; socialism; public duty and responsibility; national self-respect and unity, in a nation with 53 recognised ethnic nationalities, as key themes (COH, 2001, pp. 715–716; see also Ma, 1999; Rong Zang, 1999).

These changes impacted upon the writing of school textbooks and a move towards ".... analysis, deliberation, and the improvement of [student] intellectual faculties" (Wang, 2003, p.67). However, what we do not see in recent Chinese history textbooks or inside classrooms is anything approaching a pedagogic revolution. While pupils are encouraged to express personal opinions, teachers are invited to assess learning by identifying a particular discourse of truth that emphasises "ideological correctness, basic knowledge, and skills and abilities" (SEC 1999a, p. 23). In addition, while there have been efforts to ensure that the teaching and learning of history incorporates skill and conceptual development the accumulation of factual

knowledge, and the presentation of 'correct' (politically and ideologically) answers remains a central aim of teaching and learning (SSPCTMRC; 2002a).

While there is a tendency for textbooks, and teacher guides, to present themselves as objective and non-discursive, complex judgements are frequently made through the linguistic evaluations that are employed in narratives. Thompson and Hunston explain the importance of evaluation in text by suggesting that it expresses the speaker's or writer's opinion and in doing so reflects the value system of that person and their community while constructing and maintaining a relationship between the speaker or writer and hearer or reader (Thompson and Hunston, 2000). This perspective suggests that it is difficult for the reader to challenge evaluation and that textbook authors are proactive in pointing the reader towards what is considered significant in a text in order to "... influence their behaviour, to express our own viewpoint on things in the world, and to elicit or change theirs" (Thompson, 1996, p.28).

We see this powerfully at work in the manner in which teacher guidance on the teaching of the Nanjing massacre provides an evaluative, pedagogic and didactic framework for teachers to employ. *The History Curriculum Standards* for junior high school suggest that teachers "Use the massacre of Nanjing as an example to make the students recognise and understand the nature of aggression by the Japanese imperial army." (The History Curriculum Standards, 2002, p.80). Detailed advice is provided in the teacher's resource book for the junior high school as part of Lesson 15, a unit on teaching the Sino-Japanese war. Here teachers are told:

The example of the Nanjing Massacre helps students to understand that Japanese imperialism was a barbaric aggression and stimulates in the student the emotion of hating fascism and builds up in them a spiritual struggle for peace, democracy and the forward march of liberation.

Showing this massacre to the students illustrates how this event brought disaster to the people and helps them to remember the impact of Japanese imperialism... Studying this event should make the students think about how similar conflicts in other parts of the world can bring disaster to people and to oppose war and to strive for peace.

The students should discuss: what messages the Nanjing massacre has left this world? How should the Chinese view this event now? These questions enable students to relate history and reality today (PEP, 2001, p.45).

Further explicit advice on using the textbook and on teaching about the massacre suggests that:

... the teacher explains that the Japanese forces slaughtered innocent civilians and soldiers who had surrendered. The teacher should use the teaching material to help the students seek some recent firsthand information about the event that helps them find out and narrate this extremely tragic massacre ... (PEP, 2001, p. 45)

This is followed by detailed factual information designed to form the content base of lessons. Here teachers are told that:

According to the Far East International Military Tribunal Report ... altogether more than 300,000 people were killed. In the Nanjing suburbs, the invading army wantonly looted homes, warehouses, shops, antique and cultural relics ... there was nothing they did not steal. Approximately one-third of the city was burnt down by Japanese forces. This is the shocking 'Nanjing massacre'(PEP, 2001, p.46)

The textbooks respond to this narrative in an equivalent manner. In their presentation of what is known as the "War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression" narrative descriptions of what happened in Nanjing; the discourse; the use of photographic evidence and pupil activities are unequivocal in their condemnation of Japan. Texts adopt a mono-interpretive perspective that denies the existence of alternative dialogues; the evidence of atrocity is vividly presented for unquestioned assimilation through the use of graphic and compelling written and visual images. As a collective, the Japanese army is presented as the perpetrators of a deliberate government inspired programme of mass murder against 'common people'; 'POWs'; 'refugees'; 'prisoners and civilians'; 'old people', 'women and children and babies' and individuals:

"They pulled a young man into the street, stripped him naked, tied his hands to his body and poured nitric acid over him forcing him to run until he died; they tied Chinese soldiers to poles and used them for bayonet practice driving through their throats; they bound refugees and used them as targets for their bayonets and for shooting practice while they were still alive; they gang raped a pregnant woman and split her inside, took out the embryo and placed it on the bayonet for fun..."(Senior High School Experimental Textbook, *History 1*, 2004, p. 38)

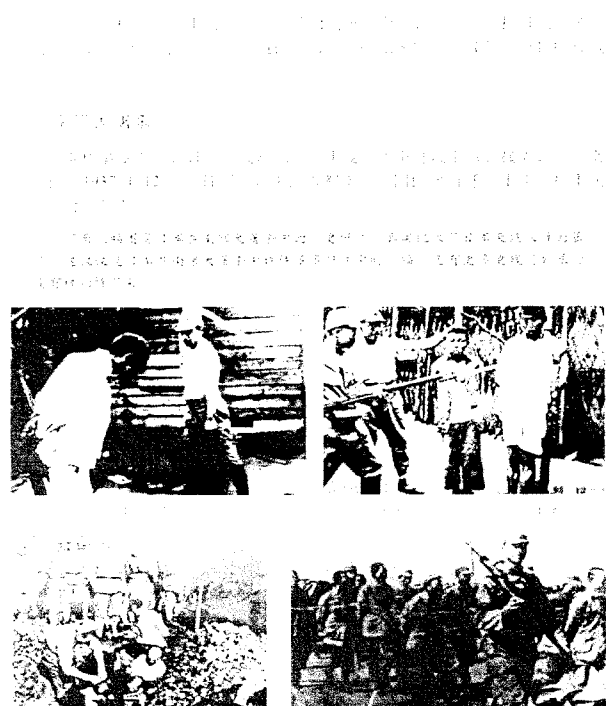
Narratives require of pupils no standards of judgement; rather they are assertive, forceful and explain little. The Japanese are variously described as aggressive and warlike; the strategies they use in war are irrational, uncivilised and barbaric as they pursue expansionist and imperialistic policies.

The photographs used in the textbooks also appear on numerous internet-based sites and in many books on the Nanjing massacre, they are not among the most graphic available. The photographs are also a central feature of the exhibition in the museum at the Memorial to the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre in Nanjing. They have been dismissed by some Japanese writers as unattributable, dateless and location free fakes. For example, the website for *The Association for the Advancement of Liberalist View of History* includes a chapter on the Nanjing photographs taken from "Za Reipu obu Nankin no Kenkyu" (A Study of "The Rape of Nanking") written by Fujioka Nobukatsu and Higashinakano Shudo, published in 1999 (<http://www.jiyuu-shikan.org/e/fujioka/index.html>; see also Tadao Takemoto and Yasuo Ohara, 2000; Tanaka Masaaki 2000; Masahiro Yamamoto 2000).

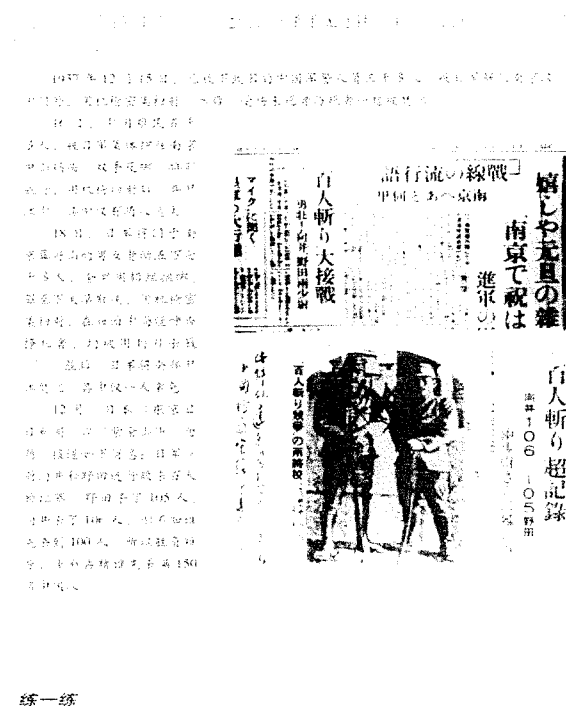
Unlike Barnard's (2001) analysis of Japanese history textbook descriptions of what happened in Nanjing, in addition to identifying the 'Japanese army' and 'Japanese troops' as perpetrators of atrocities, Chinese textbooks name individuals, such as those in what has become known as the "Murder Race", a claimed event that has generated enormous controversy in China and Japan although for very different reasons:

In December, *Tokyo Nichinichi Shinbun*, the Japanese newspaper, reported that two Japanese army officers, Mukai and Noda, held a competition in beheading Chinese with the title "Under the Purple Mountain". Noda killed 105 people, Mukai killed 106 people, but without knowing who reached the 100th person first, they decided to start again (Standard Experimental Textbook: Chinese History for the 8th Grade, Volume 1, 2001, p.79). (See Figure 1).

Following a trial in Nanjing Lieutenants Noda and Mudai were executed as war criminals on 28th January 1948. Their actions form part of the exhibition at the Nanjing Memorial Museum. Some Japanese researchers have claimed that their alleged 'killing competition' was based upon a fictitious, and then misinterpreted, newspaper report in the *Nichinichi Shinbun* of 13th December 1937 that was mistranslated into English by journalists who were not in the city at the time and did not witness the event. While the newspaper report describes a killing contest between the two men it does not claim that Noda and Mudai had deliberately murdered unarmed civilians and Chinese troops. Therefore, the claim is made by Japanese revisionists, and others, that the



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Figure 1: Pages from Standard Experimental Textbook, *Chinese History for the 8th Grade* (2001)

authorities executed two innocent men (Suzuki, 1999; Takemoto and Ohara 2000; Wakabayashi, 2000).

In textbooks and in teacher guides the linguistic discourse of condemnatory evaluation is powerfully emotive:

Teachers should show photographs of the Nanjing Massacre and make the students read diaries written by soldiers in the Japanese army to illustrate how the *barbarity and inhumanity* of Japanese imperialism against the Chinese caused the war(PEP, 2001, p.65).

On December 13, 1938, the Japanese forces attacked and occupied Nanjing ... for six weeks the invading army killed, burned and plundered, *committing monstrous crimes* against Chinese soldiers and civilians (PEP, 2002, p. 67).

Teaching should especially emphasize that the Japanese forces *slaughtered innocent civilians and violated international law* by entering

"the safety zone" to *wantonly kill defenceless civilians* ... (PEP, 2001, p. 56)

The Japanese invaders *committed horrific crimes* against the Chinese, such as burning, robbery, killing and rape (*Senior High School Experimental Textbook, History 1*, 2004, p. 36). (Emphasis added)

Politically and ideologically the manner in which Chinese history textbooks and teacher guides present the Nanjing massacre is also a direct response to elements of Japanese conservatism's attempts to marginalise and deny the event through the publication of a high school history textbook that questions the authenticity of evidence regarding a massacre in Nanjing. It is to a discussion of that debate that we now turn.

"The History of a Nation"

In 1997 Professor of Education at Tokyo University, Nobukatsu Fujioka, co-founded the 'Japan Society for Textbook Reform' (*Atarashii Rekishi Kyôkasho o Tsukuru Kai*). Fujioka and his supporters are implacably opposed to what they call the "... facile self-denunciatory view of history that portrays Japan as 'evil'" (Irie, 1997, p.312; see also *The Daily Yomiuri*, 18th September 1997, p. 3; Tawara, 1999). The Reform Society is also opposed to school history textbooks that refer to accounts of the Nanking massacre that, they argue, contribute to the manufacture of an anti-Japanese ideology. The society has no sympathy for Chinese sensitivities over the issue. Fujioka is quoted as having said "China has no right to say things about our textbooks." In the same interview Fujioka is quoted as claiming that the Nanjing massacre, along with other incidents of Japanese wartime atrocities are "... just wartime propaganda. If you study them carefully, you can see that most of them are quite baseless" (*New York Times*, 14th April, 2001).

Of particular importance in directly shaping the discourse and pedagogy of recent Chinese history textbooks has been the publication of the Reform Society textbook, *The History of a Nation*. Here the events at Nanjing, referred to as "the Nanjing Incident" (Nisho et al., 2001, p.270), are discussed only briefly and the claim made that serious academic doubts have been expressed as to the alleged number of deaths, that the event has generated very different opinions and that debate continues today. Available from 2004, the book's use in schools is very limited; many school districts, schools and teachers were violently opposed to its adoption and have refused to use it. Exceptions include some private schools, the Tokyo Education Board, where the Mayor is the ultra-conservative Ishihara Shintaro, which adopted the book for use in schools for handicapped children that are outside the bureaucratic control of the public education system, and the Ehime Prefectural Education Board, which also chose it for its schools for handicapped and deaf Children.

Nevertheless, Chinese, and South Korean, reaction to its publication revealed a powerful depth of anger, insult and resentment. In China, the state-sponsored newspaper *Renmin Ribao* (*People's Daily*) has carried a number of articles criticising the adoption of the book and its description of events in

Nanjing. A Foreign Office official is quoted as stating, "The nature of the problem regarding textbooks in Japan is whether the Japanese side can correctly handle their history of invasion. The Japanese side should take concrete action to honour its commitment on the issue and educate Japanese young people with the correct view of history" (*People's Daily*, 27th August, 2004). Japan is accused of 'dodging reality', and failing to 'treat history as it is'; the claim is made that "Japanese Rightist forces are attempting to tamper with and delete this part of a bloody invasion history" (*People's Daily*, 26th September, 2004).

While acknowledging that protest in Japan against the textbook was significant (see Nozaki, 2002) the *People's Daily* notes the political power of the Reform Society commenting that the textbook "... distorts history, publicises a 'Japanese Empire History Viewpoint' and beautifies the aggressive war. The adoption of the textbook no doubt brings harm to inexperienced youngsters and will turn young people into tools of extra-right politicians" (*People's Daily* 30th August 2004; see also *People's Daily*, 29th August 2004).

In China, the teacher guidance and the 2004 textbook for the senior high school, which provides considerably more content on the massacre than previous editions, discusses this debate in a direct and unvarnished fashion; while what happened in Nanjing is part of an increasingly distant past it is firmly connected to contemporary Japan and its politics. The Teacher guidance claims that

The difficult point in this session is how get the students to understand correctly the Nanjing massacre and how Japan is trying to deny the truth of the massacre (*The Teachers' Teaching Guide, senior high school, History 1*, p. 82).

Showing this massacre to the students ... supplies material concerning how Japanese textbooks write about this historical event and how to guard against the Japanese right wing's attempts to deny the truth of the Nanjing massacre and their aggression and to guard against the revival of Fascism (*The Teachers' Teaching Guide, senior high school, History 1*, p. 83).

In a section called "Study and Think", directed at students, that follows a graphic description of atrocities, the experimental textbook for Senior High School states that:

The Japanese right-wing are denying the ruthlessness of the Nanjing Massacre saying that this kind of behaviour often happens in war. What do you think of this? (*Senior High School Experimental Textbook, History 1*, 2004, p. 38).

As part of their end of unit activities the students are asked to "Describe the Japanese invasion of China and the war crimes that were committed through the Nanjing massacre and the work of Unit 731" (*ibid*, p. 40). Unit 731 was a

Japanese biological warfare unit based at Harbin in China where experiments on biological weapons were carried out on prisoners of war. The experimental textbook for senior high school papers discusses this and includes a photograph of an experiment that has been denounced by some Japanese sources as a fake (Gold, 2000 2nd edition; Harris, 2001).

Attempts by Japanese conservatives to marginalise the events of Nanjing have also found their way into the experimental junior high school textbook where students are asked to write a letter to students in a Japanese high school using the following advice:

Activity Content.

Write a letter to Japanese high school students exposing the crimes of Japanese militarism explaining that the Chinese people are opposed to war and have a deep love and wish for peace.

Aim of the Activity

Collect evidence about the Nanjing massacre and the struggle over Japanese textbooks today as a way of enhancing patriotic emotion and a sense of social responsibility through analysing and questioning historical evidence.

Suggestions for Completing the Activity

1. Use the content in this unit together with the references in the appendix as a foundation.
2. Further research this question from several perspectives: first, the Nanjing massacre; second, the 1946-1947 Chinese Military Court War Crimes Trial and the 1947-1948 Far East Military War Crimes Trial of Japanese war criminals; third, how the Japanese right wing have attempted to twist the story of the Nanjing massacre in history textbooks; fourth, the position of the Japanese government on history textbooks, fifth, the response of the Chinese government.
3. When writing the letter distinguish between Japanese high school students, Japanese militarism, the Japanese right wing and the Japanese people (*Standard Experimental Book: Chinese History for the 8th Grade, Volume 1*, 2001, p. 87).

Students are also provided with guidance on the issues they might want to include in the letter under following sections:

1. "The fact that the court at the Nanking War Crimes trial sentenced to death Japanese soldiers found guilty of war crimes based upon evidence from 80 Chinese and 3 foreign witnesses.
2. The fact that the Tokyo War Crimes Trial sentenced to death Japanese military personal such as Tojo and Matsui for war crimes. Also mention the fact that J. Rabe wrote a diary about the events in Nanking and that the

- diary was an important piece of evidence, including 80 photographs, in proving that the Japanese committed war crimes.
3. That ex-Japanese soldier Shiro Azuma admitted that he had killed Chinese civilians in the Nanjing massacre and that he has been to Nanjing several times to apologise sincerely for what he did. Also that he published a diary he wrote during the war which includes the Nanjing massacre and that he was threatened by the Japanese right wing because of his views.
 4. That in 2001 the Japanese right wing New History Textbook Society wrote a new Japanese history textbook that denied Japanese crimes in China, Korea and Eastern Asia and that in the book they discuss the Nanjing massacre as something that happens normally in wartime and not as a massacre and that this textbook had been approved by the Japanese government.
 5. That on 23rd December in 1998 the Chinese Foreign Minister stated in a press conference that the Japanese imperial army's invasion of China had brought tragedy to the Chinese people and the fact that the cruel Nanjing massacre was one of their criminal acts has been proved by historical evidence and that to attempt to deny this truth is useless and that he asked Japan to respect and view history correctly and to learn lessons from it to prevent such things from happening again"(*Standard Experimental Book, op.cit*, p. 88)

Shiro Azuma's credibility as a reliable witness was called into question when in April 1996 the Tokyo District Court and, in December 1998 the Tokyo High Court, ruled that his diary was wrong to accuse his former commander, Koji Hashimoto, of atrocities in Nanjing and ordered Azumi to pay 500,000 yen in damages (*Xinhua News Agency*, 25th December 1998; *China Daily*, 4th April 1999; *People's Daily*, 29th April 2000; Tadao Takemoto and Yasuo Ohara, 2000, pp. 113-114)

There is little serious academic doubt that Japanese imperial troops committed the most horrifying acts of atrocity in Nanjing resulting in the unjustifiable deaths and abuse of thousands of men, women and children, military and civilian. But recent research in Japan, China and elsewhere is beginning to re-appraise and re-write the event (See Yang, 1999; Askew, 2002; Wakabayashi, 2000). Much of this is a direct response to claims made in the late Iris Chang's deeply flawed and largely discredited book (Chang, 1998) that has ironically provided fuel for the massacre deniers in Japan(see Tadao Takemoto and Yasuo Ohara, 2000; Tanaka Masaaki, 2000; Masahiro Yamamoto, 2000).

What is interesting is that Chinese textbooks acknowledge this in asking pupils to differentiate between the Japanese people, Japanese militarists and the ultra- right. Here the textbook acknowledges that in Japan many Japanese are deeply concerned over what seems to be a growing ultra-nationalism and attempts to present the nation's wartime behaviour as a war of East Asian liberalisation from western imperialism rather than as a brutal aggression.

Nevertheless, Chinese history textbooks continue to use what many now consider to be suspect evidence. This is not at all surprising and not only because of China's specific ideological and political context. It would be naive

and hypocritical to exclusively judge China on this point for she is certainly not alone in presenting quite specific views of a national past based upon a carefully selected range of evidence (see Foster and Crawford, 2005).

In what Kallis has called 'redeeming the nation' and 'extolling the nation' (Kallis, 1999) China not only produces claims of national virtue, achievement and triumph but also relies significantly upon the ideology of victimhood as a powerful binding agent in the patriotic and nationalist project. Essential ingredients in creating textbook discourses of a nation wronged, common in many nations other than China, is to mobilise populist support by focusing the attack on the 'other' through accusation of prime responsibility for past national sufferings and traumas.

Engaging in this process involves, through the creation of a particular evaluative discourse of what constitutes truth, assigning oppositional groups a stereotype that categorises them as being different and dangerous. At a structural level Hall argues that the social construction of nationhood and national belonging are a product of "... the marking of difference and exclusion" (Hall, 1996, p.4) and Ross has suggested that the creation of core values through which national identity is shaped happens through a process of contrasting 'us' against the 'other' (Ross, 1995, p.90). Contrasts with the 'other' are particularly significant in teaching about the past; Hein and Selden have pointed out that "The stories chosen or invented about the national past are invariably prescriptive – instructing people how to think and act as national subjects and how to view relations with outsiders" (Hein and Selden, 2000, p.4).

Integral to the creation and interpretation of national histories is that they cannot only be about us. "The imaging of 'our' community involves imagining, either implicitly or explicitly, 'them', from whom 'we' are distinct" (Billig, 1995, p.66). Here stereotypes of an 'enemy', military, cultural, political and economic, are particularly authoritative in promoting a profound psychological awareness of a common identity, group membership and belonging. The enemy is a valuable evaluate device leading to "... systematic comparison, differentiation, and derogation of other groups"(Gross Stein, 1996, p.94). In the textbooks and teacher guides analysed here the value of the Japanese enemy is that it provides a pedagogic and ideological context whereby viewing 'them' in intrinsically negative terms creates a binary opposite through which a competing group can allocate themselves opposite and fundamentally different qualities. For example, the history of Japan is one of brutality and imperialistic aggression; in contrast China was a victim and is committed to peace and democracy. This process is abstracted and made easier by providing members of the out-group with a set of socially constructed traits and viewing them as a homogenous group, this process makes demonisation 'commonsense' and more easily justified (Stephan and Rosenfield, 1982).

Conclusions

Descriptions of the Nanjing massacre described above have become so ingrained

into Chinese culture that they have matured into a hegemonic commonsense, obvious, taken for granted, deeply imbedded and unquestioned. They represent an emotional shorthand response to a powerful crisis in Chinese identity as it seeks to maintain its national integrity in an ethnically diverse society, develop a powerful sense of popular nationalism and juggle its relationships with its international neighbours. Elias and Scotson write of periods in the life of nations when their power and standing in relation to other nations becomes fractured and vanishes. They write:

Yet the dream of their special charisma is kept alive in a variety of ways — through the teaching of history, the old buildings, masterpieces of the nation in the time of its glory, or through new achievements which seemingly confirm the greatness of the past. For a time, the fantasy shield of their imagined charisma as a leading established group may give a declining nation the strength to carry on... (Elias and Scotson, p. xliii).

While China is most certainly not a nation in decline, in fact it is the complete opposite, much of Chinese education is geared towards maintaining the 'dream' and supporting a 'special charisma.'

Barthes has suggested that ideology speaks with the 'voice of nature' (Barthes, 1977, p.47). it is natural, largely unseen and commonsense: but, to paraphrase Barthes, ideology has a more proactive stance in that Chinese history textbooks speak with the voice of 'nurture' in the manner in which they promote specific sets of values and beliefs. Despite what appears in history textbooks nations do not have a single story to tell, what is interesting is the process through which tales are created, how this illustrates the struggle for hegemony and how national histories are repeatedly re-written to create, maintain and reflect modifying hegemonic agendas.

Billig makes the interesting point that 'By this reckoning, ideology operates to make people forget that their world has been historically constructed' (Billig, 1995, p.37). Renan elaborates this point by arguing that forgetting is 'a crucial element in the creation of nations' (Renan, 1990, p.11). What is important here is that ideology operates simultaneously not only in making societies 'forget' but also in making them 'remember' through the construction of a collective memory. What Chinese history textbooks create is a sense of national uniqueness to be transmitted unchallenged and uncontaminated by alternative visions, a uniqueness that can be mobilized should a threat emerge to a particular vision of nationhood.

We want at this point to sound a note of caution regarding the interpretation of textbook content. The examples of textbooks analysed here provide narratives expressed in language that is candid and extreme, their discursive style also promotes a strong relationship between the author, as the dominant partner, and the reader, as the subordinate partner. Author viewpoints and opinions are not presented subliminally; rather they represent authoritative and unquestioned cultural messages. Textbook writers function within a particular culture and it is not surprising therefore that they should transmit, consciously and unconsciously, that culture's values and the rules for interpreting the 'other.' They provide 'dominant'

readings inviting the reader to accept the text uncritically. (See Apple and Christian-Smith, 1991). In Barthes' words they are 'readerly' texts where "... the reader [is left] idle or redundant ... an inert consumer to the author's role as producer" (Barthes, 1976, p.113) in a way that validates the status quo rather than 'writerly' texts that challenge the text.

This can lead to the accusation that textbook writers in China, in reflecting broader social and cultural imperatives, are dogmatic propagandists. This is too unsophisticated an explanation, coherent understanding of textbook content must take account of whether views expressed can be considered excessive within the cultural context within which they were written. Clearly this is easier in some cultures at some times than others. Few would doubt that textbooks written in National Socialist Germany could be accused of being propagandist tracts. (Pine 1997). However, even here accusations of propaganda must be contextualised, carefully weighed and justified. History textbooks are artefacts of particular sets of values prominent at particular times, values locked into the nature of society and the aims of education that reflect the social background and views of their authors. Therefore, while ideological and political propaganda may feature as an element in the social construction of textbook knowledge we ought to be cautious about naively critiquing it as such.

Nevertheless, in China it is the state, in the most direct and open manner, that controls the ideological character and presentation of history textbook knowledge; there is no alternative discourse. The voice heard, for it is only one voice, is that of the Chinese state. The story being told is one where popular nationalism, patriotism and the identification of a personal and national enemy are powerfully presented. Specifically, the evaluative discourse at work provides a highly partisan version of the truth, a discourse and regime of truth where the linking of knowledge and power is fundamentally underpinned by the ideological and political concerns of China's ideological, political and intellectual elites. Here education, pedagogy, politics and ideology are inextricably linked in the most open of fashions.

In creating a sense of patriotic identity and commitment the borders in people's minds are more powerful than those drawn on maps as China's attitudes towards the form of official knowledge sanctioned in history textbooks suggests. The analysis in this paper highlights just as strongly the condition of contemporary China as it does the problem of Japan's wartime behaviour. The academic and intellectual debate over what happened in Nanjing is intensely complicated: as this cultural, political and ideological football is kicked back and forward across the Sea of Japan both sides mount their barriers of nationalistic self-defence and the search for empirical answers that has produced in China, Japan and elsewhere, high quality rigorous research and superficial, partial and poorly justified polemic, remains dogged by accusation and counter-accusation. In populist and political terms, if not entirely in academic terms, the debate has become politicised theatre replete with villains and heroes, plots and counter-plots and is dominated by dogmatic support for unquestioned assumptions.

The stark and painful reality of the Nanjing massacre is that as an example of how human beings are capable of suspending notions of morality enabling them to lash out with inhumane acts of persecution and violence it is not unique. The

significance of events like the Nanjing massacre for contemporary society is vitally important, particularly in terms of issues connected with the maintenance of democracy and individual rights, political, social and moral indifference and apathy. What we explore and learn from studying what happened in Nanjing is the state of the human condition and the potential for evil, ignorance, culpability and indifference. In trying to come to terms with it China and Japan are studying themselves.

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