

Reflexive Historiography in Postwar Japan's World History Textbooks

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1. Objectives of the Study

In school textbooks, history is usually conveyed as “truth.” The information provided concerns “matters that have already occurred,” and is elaborately systematized beforehand to enable us to understand streams of serial events. As a result, individuals consider history as an external and complete concept in and of itself.

However, when we look at a textbook used in a period different from our own school days, we can see that what was considered “truth” in those days is substantially different from what we recognize as true. Since a textbook itself is a social product, the information it contains and the way history is narrated are always influenced by the political and social context in which the texts are written.

This paper aims to report the alteration of data in history textbooks in Japan during the latter half of the 20th century. The content and narration concerning Japan's past in those textbooks will be considered, and the impact of the social forces of the times will be studied. The main objective of this study is to analyze the historical transformation of the contents of history education in terms of postwar Japanese nationalism, by dealing with history

textbooks as one of the expressions of “nationally defined historiographical consciousness.”

2. Background and Goal of the Study

Before starting this study, we would like to refer to the opinion of Benedict Anderson (1991: 113-140) who recognizes the nation as an “imagined community.” According to Anderson, the group of human beings called a “nation” is not a long-standing phenomenon in the history of humankind but one newly established by modern cultural apparatuses. Before the modern age, people were separated too far geographically to recognize others as being members of the same group. They could not grasp the idea that they belonged to the same nation until modern information media, such as newspapers and other publications, became available to them. This idea was further purported by the uniformity and hierarchy of the modern educational system, which provided the national basis for people's understanding of history. Standard textbooks and other educational materials led people to mutual conclusions about the type of information they should recognize as “history,” and how this information should be systematized. Strict regulations were established with regard to the curricula for various age groups, which made the latitude and pace of historical study more uniform in

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nature. In this way, it became possible for individuals to distinguish the history of their nation from those of other nations, and to imagine that the borders and sovereignty of their own countries existed since ancient times. The “nation,” in Anderson’s view, materializes because of interaction among individuals. Therefore, we can say that the study of history in modern education has its foundation in a national history that conveys the logic of national unification.

However, the “nation” itself is an outgrowth of modern technology, and is usually influenced by its relation to the environment. As Anderson (1991: 42-43) pointed out, “What made the new communities imaginable was a half fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communications (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity”; therefore, we can assume that there will be further changes in our concept of “nation” when, for example, there are significant changes in communication technology. The content analysis of this study examines the transformation of history textbooks in Japan on the basis of this sociological perspective on nationalism, and its final goal is to show the holistic image of “nationally defined historiographical consciousness” in Japan in the second half of the 20th century.

3. Methods and Data Sources

This study adopts the method of time-series analysis of a long-lived textbook, which was used in Frances FitzGerald’s work on U.S. history textbooks. As FitzGerald (1979: 27) said, “If you look through the various editions of the very long-lived texts, you will see the book changing like a

Brunswick stew or a customized stock car. After thirty years or so, the latest edition will show very little trace of the original.” She also explained how social changes in the U.S. affected the contents of textbooks. This seems to be the best way to show the transformation of textbooks and to understand the reasons of the change.

The main textbooks examined in this study are authorized textbooks for high school education entitled *World History* published by Yamakawa Publishing. By examining this long-lived text, we can grasp which historical events have been taught or not taught during the years 1951 to 2000 in Japanese high school education. The textbook clearly shows a part of the results of the reflexive monitoring by Japanese people on the world and on their nation.

There are mainly three reasons why Yamakawa Publishing’s *World History* is chosen for this study. First, this textbook is the most popular history textbook in Japanese high schools. Yamakawa’s *World History* was adopted by more than fifty percent of Japanese high schools in postwar years. It had a greater number of readers than any other textbook and can therefore be considered as a national standard history textbook in Japan.

Second, after the sixth revision of the Study Guidelines by the Ministry of Education in 1989, world history became a required subject for all high school students, while Japanese history became an elective course. In other words, in present-day Japan, students have more opportunity to learn the nationally defined historiographical consciousness through “world history” education than through “Japanese history” education.

Third, throughout its existence, this

popular textbook has been written by almost the same big-name historians: Kentaro Murakawa, Namio Egami, Tatsuro Yamamoto, and Kentaro Hayashi. Thus, by using Yamakawa's textbooks, we can avoid much of the bias caused by changes of authors in the analysis of transformation of the textbooks. There have been some changes: the first version published in 1951 was written only by Murakawa and Egami, and recent versions after 1994 were written by Egami, Yamamoto, Hayashi, and Osamu Naruse, instead of Murakawa. There are only a few textbooks in Japan, which contained the same influential authors in its continual revisions for almost fifty years. Using Frances FitzGerald's term, this textbook is the best "Brunswick stew" made by mostly the same cooks.

Further, this study pays special attention to screening opinions on the manuscripts of textbooks given by the Ministry of Education. In postwar Japan, when authors or publishers wanted to publish new textbooks or revise the former edition, they had to submit new manuscripts to the Ministry of Education. Special assistants in the Ministry of Education would give them editorial suggestions and screening opinions to rewrite or delete some descriptions. After this process, the Ministry of Education approved the new textbooks officially.

We discuss concrete instances of screening opinions by the Ministry of Education, based mainly on the publications of the Japan Federation of Publishing Workers' Unions (JFPWU). This organization, in coordination with the Japan Teachers' Union, had been against the textbook screening system controlled by the Ministry of Education. Of course, it cannot be said that

these publications are politically neutral because of the ideological standpoint of the Federation, but these are the best sources to help in understanding how the screening opinions by the Ministry of Education have changed over time. We will use these elements as indicators of the independent variables that have resulted in changes in textbook content.

4. Japanese History Textbooks in the Latter Half of the 20th Century

4-1. From National Society to International Society

The educational administration of Japan in the latter half of the 20th century started from a review of the policies of postwar disposition by the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander for Allied Powers, and moved to re-establishing autonomy in determining the content of school curricula (Tokutake 1995). Therefore, when it came to the content of history education, aims were set toward re-establishing narratives relying on the national society. After the Peace Conference in San Francisco and the establishment of the 1955 Setup, a screening of textbooks by the Ministry of Education in 1957 resulted in the announcement that the aim of history education was "to recognize the efforts of ancestors, enhance self-consciousness as Japanese and cultivate abundant affection in the nation" (Ienaga 1956/74: preface). Soon after, in the 1960s, it became clear that the goal was "textbooks that enable [students] to learn precisely about the autonomous position of the State and its nation" (JFPWU 1964: 16). Under such administrative guidance, a textbook, for example, revised its description of "unconditional surrender" to "surrender," deleted expressions such as "the

arbitrary decision and execution by the military,” and included more explicit statements such as, “Iturup and Kunashir essentially belong to the territory of Japan.” In this way, by the 1960s, history textbooks came to fulfill the requirements of conveying the continuity of sovereignty, conformity of the nation, and legitimacy of the borders (Okamoto 2001: 65-67, 80-89).

Using historical narratives that rely on a principle of nationhood helps people to recognize themselves as members of a nation distinct from others, and to admire its development. In textbooks of the 1960s and 1970s, descriptions of the act of war as “invasion” were revised. In addition, descriptions of the “tyranny and incompetence” of the Japanese military’s administration office in Southeast Asia was withdrawn. Referring to the nation’s “reckless” rush into the Pacific War was also eliminated. Instead, texts began to mention that the victory in the Russo-Japanese War “gave a great influence to Asian countries where the colonization prevailed, and it played a role to expand the racial sentiment of Asia,” and that “Japanese soldiers showed the greatest activity” in the Boxer Rebellion (Okamoto 2001: 99-127). We can say that textbooks of this period had an effective and consistent framework in terms of protection and admiration of the nation.

In Japan, however, a situation arose in the latter half of the 20th century that did not allow the history textbooks to eliminate social surveillance altogether. A controversy erupted over the legitimacy of the textbook screening system in 1965. This controversy was launched by lawsuits brought by Saburo Ienaga, a historian and professor at the Tokyo University of Education. The manuscript of Ienaga’s own textbook was

disqualified by screening in 1957 and 1963 and was given only a conditional judgment of acceptance in 1964, on the grounds that it did not meet the views of the Ministry of Education. In his suits, Ienaga called for the national indemnity and withdrawal of the administrative decision on the grounds of the unconstitutionality of textbook screening and the illegality of its decisions (Ienaga 1965). The so-called “Textbook Trial” of 1965 ignited a controversy on the vision and content of education in Japan, which raged for 32 years until the close of the third lawsuit in the Japanese Supreme Court in 1997. Although Ienaga did not win favorable decisions, the trials themselves played a socially significant role because the standard of judgment and internal regulation of the screening process, which had not been public until that time, was opened to scrutiny.

Furthermore, it became clear that it was necessary to adopt new viewpoints in historical narrative, as Japan re-established relations with other Asian countries. Negotiations on compensation with Southeast Asian countries since the 1950s, and the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and Korea as well as the Joint Communiqué between Japan and China normalized national interactions with those countries, respectively. In light of this new viewpoint, concepts and items became grouped in ways that would be in keeping with the activity of the Japanese nation that tightened its links with countries located overseas (Ishida 1995). From the middle of the 1970s through the beginning of the 1980s, a scheme existed through which the authors and publishers of textbooks began to present new terminology, but the screening by the Ministry of Education re-emphasized the need to use a framework relying on the

principle of nationhood. For example, with regard to the description of “HongKyong-nae” in Korean history and “PhanBoi Chau” in Vietnamese history, the opinions for improvement in 1977 were presented as “unnecessary” to the former, and that, “It is better not to put in anything new,” to the latter (JFPWU 1979: 23). In addition, on the “Nanking Massacre,” they commented in 1980 that, “It reads like the army conducted the massacre in an organized manner. The time of occurrence and systemicity cannot be concluded” (Asahi Shimbun 1993: 2). In addition, they instructed that a description of “Forced Mobilization” be changed, making the comment that: “We should write about the Korean and Chinese separately. Korea belonged to Japanese territory at that time, and the National Requisition Ordinance was applied to them, so it cannot be said that they were forced, in case of Korea” (JFPWU 1982: 49).

However, these processes became exposed to the eyes of society that had been aroused by Ienaga’s trials, and around 1980, a situation arose that drew their focus from outside the borders due to media intervention. In 1982, a Japanese newspaper reported on the requirement by the screening that textbooks reword “Japan’s ‘invasion’ of the continent” to “advancement.” When these stories were reported in the Chinese and Korean media too, textbook screening in Japan became an international issue. As a result, the Ministry of Education released some of the results of screening opinions in 1983. Furthermore, in correspondence with it, the authors of history textbooks began to report examples of the screening process, in order to publicize the facts about the screening of textbooks. According to Nobuyoshi Takashima (1994: 98), the

situation at that time is outlined as follows:

Before, the Ministry occasionally overlooked such actions, just in case Mr. Ienaga were to release information regarding the practice of screening. However, from that time, the situation changed to forbidding the Ministry of Education to interfere, even if many authors of social studies textbooks were to reveal concrete examples of screening, which has continued being the case until today... Not only for authors and editors, but for ordinary people, sometimes those in the industrial community or those concerned about the social problems related to the descriptive content, and people abroad if the issue was of international interest; all gave their diverse opinions during the process of screening, which had the effect of checking excessive screening.

4-2. The History Being Elaborated

Before the 1980s, the monistic screening filter used by Japan’s Ministry of Education officially regulated the perspective of history textbooks, but in the 1980s, that filter became a more pluralistic one. Moreover, as is frequently pointed out, the period after 1980 is the age in which internationalization was advocated as the policy and the inflow of foreign workers grew in large scale. In Japan’s case, this new population lacked political force to commit themselves directly to the publication process of textbooks, but nevertheless created a beneficial impact as the members of society began to visually recognize that their society was not conformed in “a single culture.”

Of course, the critics and reviewers who

looked at textbooks from both inside and outside of Japan represented the interest of their respective principles and culture. But, as a result of the confrontation of the different assertions, a tendency to elaborate upon the quality and increase the quantity of the information about certain historical events emerged. Under such circumstances, it became extremely difficult to officially regulate the core value of nationhood. The change in descriptions of the relationship between Korea and Japan serves as a clear example. When Japan tried, as a modern state, to enter into diplomatic relations with other countries, it chose to focus its efforts on the Korean Peninsula as the first counterpart, since it was closest to Japan. Thus, Japan's diplomatic history with Korea is described just after a discussion of the Meiji Restoration. However, at some point in the 1950s, the standard textbook description was quite simple:

Since the Meiji Restoration, Japan kept demanding that Korea open up its country. Considering the risk of subordinating Korea under the rule of a weakened China against the Southing of Russia, Japan concluded the Chemulpo Treaty [sic] with Korea in 1876, and forced it to promise its independence and opening of the port of Pusan. After that, Japan took steps to monopolize the Korean trade market. Public opinion in China strongly demanded the recovery of the Korean market and suzerainty, and, as the struggle inside the royal family of Korea was entwined in that situation, the commercial power of Japan was finally expelled from Korea. Worried, Japan opened hostilities against China,

taking advantage of the Tong-hak Rebellion. As the Chinese military revealed weakness against Japan's forces and its more modern equipment, China ceded the Liaotung Peninsula and Taiwan to Japan under the Treaty of Shimonoseki and approved the independence of Korea. Soon, Korea became a Japanese protectorate, then a part of the Japanese Empire, and was ruled by Japan until 1945. (Murakawa and Egami 1951: 254-255)

This passage is the full extent of the discussion of modern Korea in the textbook *World History* of 1951. Here, Korea is only accessorially mentioned as part of a description of the relations between Japan and China. The diplomatic history from the Meiji Restoration until 1945 is simply summed in general terms, and no detailed information is given regarding the steps that were taken in Japan's expansion of power into the Korean Peninsula. Hereafter, and until the 1970s edition, the recognition of Korea, a neighbor of Japan, basically stayed in this status.

It was after the 1980s that information on the diplomatic history of Japan and Korea was more readily available, which is affinitive with the process in which Japan deepened its relations with Korea. The closer relations between Japan and Korea became, the more detailed the narratives of their mutual past. The word "advancement" was included in the information increasingly given out. Quite naturally, in 1982, Korea protested the use of the term "advancement." In the consecutive edition of 1983, the phrase "invasion of the mainland" was adopted. Its description of the diplomatic history of Japan and Korea is given the headings, "The Opening of Korea and the Sino-Japanese

War” and “The Russo-Japanese War and Japan’s Annexation of Korea.” Concerning the Ganghwa Island Incident, this textbook emphasized the action from Japan, mentioning that, “Japanese warships performed military drills along the coast of Korea” (Murakawa et al. 1983: 270). At the “March 1st Movement,” the first photograph of the event was provided, and the information was presented from a viewpoint different from the conventional one protecting and admiring the nation. It mentioned, “A crackdown by Japanese military and police authorities resulted in a large number of Korean dead and wounded” (Murakawa et al. 1983: 305).

These descriptions were continued all through the 1980s, although some changes in inscription and expression were added to the 1987 edition. In the 1989 edition, items such as “Daeweon-gun” and “The Min Family” and others were added (Murakawa et al. 1989: 266). The description of the March 1st Movement that resulted in independence was given the heading, “The March 1st Movement of Korea” (Murakawa et al. 1989: 301), and the internal events in Korea were explained in greater detail. Information on the “Korea-Japanese Treaty” and the “Volunteer Movement against Japan” were added (Murakawa et al. 1989: 281), which provided a clearer understanding of the development of events.

The increase in information accelerated a great deal in the 1990s, and the description of the history of Japan-Korea relations became about five times longer than the edition of the 1950s. The description of the “HongKyong-nae Rebellion” that had been judged as “unnecessary” in the screenings of the 1970s was now mentioned. “Daeweon-gun,” “The Min Family,” and the

internal situation in Korea in the 19th century were mentioned in correlation with the expansion of Japan’s power (Egami et al. 1994: 260). The “Annexation of Korea by Japan” had been mentioned in the past primarily only in relation to the Russo-Japanese War. During this time, however, it became a more independent discussion, and the separate description of the “Korea-Japanese Treaties” helped to make the process of Japan’s conquest of Korea much clearer. The excerpt below serves as a fine example. When comparing the description below with of the single line found in the textbooks of the 1950s: “Soon, Korea became a Japanese protectorate, then a part of the Japanese Empire, and was ruled by Japan until 1945,” we can see that the elaboration of information progressed.

During the Russo-Japanese War, Japan concluded the Korea-Japanese Treaty on three occasions (1904, 05 and 07) and intensified its interference against Korea. The second treaty gave Japan the opportunity to establish a Resident-General* who would stay permanently in Seoul to supervise diplomatic activity and represent the Japanese government. The third treaty gave Japan an opportunity to interfere in Korea’s domestic politics and dissolved the Korean Army. Against such interference by Japan, the people of Korea developed an intense voluntary struggle against Japan, but Japan quelled it with armed force, annexing the country in 1910 (the Annexation of Korea) and governing it through the Government-general of Korea.

*Hirobumi Itoh, the first

Resident-General (1841-1909) who propelled the annexation of Korea, was assassinated by An Jung-gun in Harbin in 1909. (Egami et al. 1994: 275)

Textbooks began to describe the status of Japan's ruling system, focusing especially on the "Volunteers' Struggle against Japan." Photographs were inserted that carried the explanation: "In Korea, people who voluntarily rose up during the crisis were known as Volunteers, and the struggles by the Volunteers were repeated, calling for an anti-Japan movement" (Egami et al. 1994: 275). In addition, the "Soshi kaimei" (forcible imposition of Japanese names on Koreans) was described for the first time, and there was more information about the status of colonial rule, including statements such as, "After or around the Sino-Japanese War, Japan strengthened its rule of Korea and proceeded with assimilation policies like 'Soshi kaimei.' In order to deal with a shortage of labor in Japan, a forced mobilization effort was conducted in Korea, and the conscription system was also applied at the end of the War" (Egami et al. 1994: 315).

The increase in this sort of information indicates that history education is moving away from viewpoints expressing the naive protection of the nation's orthodoxy. Yet, the national history focus itself is maintained here as well. In the first place, even though the screenings until the early 1980s specified that, "We should write about the Koreans and Chinese separately" (JFPWU 1982: 49) as Korea belonged to the territory of Japan from 1910 through 1945, no information was given about the concrete process that Japan had employed to annex the nation into the territory of Japan. Although the 1994 edition

deals directly with the occupation of Korea and the nationalization of the country through the "Cultural Policy" and "Soshi kaimei" by the state of Japan, it is nothing but the detailed expression of the status of society from the viewpoint based on the framework of national history. It can be said that information perceived to be both objective and critical of one's own nation has become more apparent as part of the phenomena mentioned above. The elaboration of information on the diplomatic history between Japan and Korea in the 1994 edition is an example of the fact that the framework of national history is maintained but the values dealt within it are becoming pluralized.

4-3. Development of the Universal Values

An objective and critical historical narrative is not necessarily made only on one's own country. This can be better understood when we look at the description of the relation between Japan and victorious nations of World War II. For example, concerning the "damage from the atomic bomb," the 1951 edition only made the brief comment, "On August 6th, [the United States] dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. On August 9th, the American Military again dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki..." (Murakawa and Egami 1951: 298). In the 1957 edition, a photograph of an atomic bomb mushroom cloud was inserted for the first time, but the comment was not changed. More comments were added in the 1964 edition, but no concrete information on the damage was given until the edition of 1973. However, the trend of descriptive elaboration since the 1983 edition is illustrated through the following examples:

On August 6th, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima...

On the 9th, the American Military again dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki...

[Photo] The horrible spectacle of Ground Zero. During the five years after the attack until 1950, more than two hundred thousand people were killed in Hiroshima, and over one hundred forty thousand people died in Nagasaki; even today, many people are suffering from the bomb's after-effects. Hundreds of thousands of people were victimized as well in the air raids on other cities. (Murakawa et al. 1983: 324)

The 1983 edition carried concrete information on the number of victims for the first time and reported the status of damage lasting until today. Along with this trend, screening opinions such as, "It needs verified data on the number" (JFPWU 1987: 36), were released many times in the 1980s, but as a result of repeated verification, the information became more detailed as shown in the following description from the 1994 edition. Furthermore, the photograph showing the scene of the A-Bomb Dome and its surroundings was attached to this description since the 1983 edition. The picture convinces the readers that the condition of the city was truly disastrous, and clearly shows that the viewpoint of victims has been adopted.

[Photo] The vicinity of Ground Zero in Hiroshima. The multicide of ordinary people killed by the A-bomb coupled with the post-blast radioactive dangers

that remained active after the bombing created a major international humanitarian issue after the war. The photo shows the Center for the Promotion of Prefectural Industry (A-Bomb Dome) taken from the Chamber of Commerce of Hiroshima. (Photographed by U.S. military, November 1945). (Egami et al. 1994: 317)

Details about the relations between Japan and Soviet Russia at the end of World War II increased during this time period as well. In the 1983 edition, it was indicated that, "After the war, Soviet Russia detained many Japanese prisoners of war, forced them into labor and caused a large number of deaths" (Murakawa et al. 1983: 324). In the 1994 edition, the description was more specific: "After the war, Soviet Russia detained six hundred thousand Japanese prisoners of war in Siberia and European Russia for a long time, engaged them in forced labor and caused a large number of deaths" (Egami et al. 1994: 317).

In these examples, the elaborated descriptions in the editions after 1983 established the trend to describe the harm suffered by Japan in detail, from the same perspective that describes the damage of Asian nations by Japan. Using expressions such as the "multicide of ordinary people by the A-bomb," "a major international humanitarian issue," and "engaged them in forced labor and caused a large number of deaths" indicates that events like "damage by an A-bomb" and "forced detention in Siberia" have become recognized as the oppression of humanity itself. Therefore, it can be said that the effect of further elaborating the data in textbooks not only increases the amount of

information presented that could be critical to some specific human groups but also provides a viewpoint that helps people to recognize values that apply universally to people in general.

5. Conclusion: Gradually Pantoscopic Viewpoints, although in the Framework of National History

When we read historical narratives in Japan, which have changed, as mentioned above, we see that many more people in Japanese society were tuned into the textbook publication process at the very time when the movement questioning history education being based on monistic viewpoints overlapped with the “deterritorialization” of human activities (Scholte 2000: 44-50). It was the interaction of a plurality of people from different backgrounds making various efforts to communicate their interaction in broad ways. The publishers were encouraged to deal with historical data on Japan’s relations with Asian countries in keeping with the increase in exchange of people and goods after the re-establishment of interaction with the countries in that region. The Ministry of Education controlled this movement by means of screening, but Ienaga’s trial forced them to open the screening process to public scrutiny. The international solidarity of the mass media further enhanced the probability of opening the process to the public.

As a result of these movements, the data provided in history education was increased and more fully elaborated, and it reflected a change in viewpoint. It is recognized by Anthony Smith that national unification is accomplished by transmitting the myths, symbols, values, and memory of the people who make up the “core” of a

nation’s society to other people who end up sharing them (Smith 1986: 157-161). The media certainly played a role in transmitting and sharing conventional education in history. However, in the increasingly globalized age dealt with in this paper, the textbook publication process came within the purview of people beyond the “core” of society. The historical narratives executed in this changed environment began to adopt pantoscopic viewpoints that more fully recognize the positions and experiences of people and the complexity of events. Monistic explanations that had served to protect and promote admiration of the core members of national society were relativized, and the information included in textbooks began to be more fully elaborated in both quantity and quality in order to point out that the backgrounds of a nation’s people were diverse in the first place.

However, it is also important to keep in mind that the national framework of narrating history has not been abandoned. In order to realize the cosmopolitanism advocated by persons like David Held (1995: 221-238), it is necessary to consider identity as transcending geographic borders, and in order to do so, we have to prevent history from being territorialized on the grounds of nationality. On the other hand, history education in Japan has been nothing but “national history” at all times, and if the concept that brings the framework relying on the principle of nation to naught is called “post-national history,” history education of Japan does not belong to that category even at the end of the 20th century.

However, when we observe the transmission of values actually inherent in the system of “national history,” it is obvious that the values disseminated through the

history textbooks of the 1990s are not applied only to the specific nation-states or human groups involved. When we look at the elaborated descriptions of, for example, the damage of Asian nations by Japan, as well as the “multicide of ordinary people by the A-bomb,” we see basic human values at work. In the textbooks of the 1990s, the universal dignity of human beings is considered within the framework of national history. We can say that the most significant feature of the narration of history in the global age is that textbooks began to seek a narrative approach through which events could be understood from a position of communality, different from that of the principle of nationhood, even though they follow the traditional form of national history education.

Of course, the work in this paper involved a study limited to a particular long-lived history textbook. Considering that there are a boundless number of factors that determine the shape of “nations,” there is a logical risk in emphasizing a particular vision on the direction of the future. However, as discussed, the history textbook is a significant medium through which members of a nation are led to maintain and continue the nation. Therefore, we believe that our efforts to prove the change in the content elaborated in textbooks, and to reason the future direction, based on the proof, should be appropriate at least to the same extent as this medium has contributed to the reproduction of the nation. In other words, when we made a decision about the alteration in the content and narration in history textbooks of the latter half of the 20th century, we also decided upon a basis for our assumption about the works as the next challenge for conducting a complete analysis of the diverse factors that determine what

human groups will be.

Note

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Reflexive Historiography in Postwar Japan's World History Textbooks

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This paper focuses on the most popular world history textbook in Japanese high schools and has examined how its detailed descriptions were changed from the first publication in the 1950s. In every country, social science textbooks, especially history textbooks, often include descriptions that justify its own history. This tendency was also true of Japanese history textbooks for a long time. However, these historical descriptions have been changed since the 1980s, when Japan started to transform into a sort of multicultural society, and many textbooks have adopted critical descriptions about the history of the country. More specifically, as the first point, those texts mention the mistakes of the Japanese government and nationals more frequently than before. Second, the texts include more descriptions of particular historical events from the viewpoint of foreign countries and people.

Some people argue that, amid this situation, Japanese education is becoming more masochistic toward the national historiography. In contrast, others say that Japanese history textbooks are still nationalistic. It is exceedingly difficult to draw up a "correct historiography" and the fundamental point is whether a "correct historiography" can be established or not. However, there is one thing that is certain: Japanese education has been adopting multiple insights since the 1980s. This change has something to do with the accelerating trends toward multiculturalism in Japanese society.