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Gi-Wook Shin, Daniel C. Sneider. *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories.* New York and London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2011. 294 S. ISBN 978-0-415-60303-4; ISBN 978-0-203-83166-3.

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G. Shin u.a. (Hrsg.): History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia

Since the re-emergence of the history textbook controversy as a major issue in Japanese domestic politics and East Asian international relations in 2001, a large number of studies on related issues have been published. Laura Hein / Mark Selden (eds.), Censoring History. Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States, New York 2000; Takashi Fujitani et al. (eds.), Perilous Memories. The Asia-Pacific War(s), Durham 2001; Sven Saaler, Politics, Memory and Public Opinion. The History Textbook Controversy and Japanese Society, Munich 2005; Franziska Seraphim, War Memory and Social Politics in Japan, 1945-2005, Cambridge MA, 2006; Sheila Miyoshi Jager / RanaMitter (eds), Ruptured Histories. War, Memory, and the Post-Cold War in Asia, Cambridge, MA 2007; Yoshiko Nozaki, War Memory, Nationalism and Education in Postwar Japan, 1945-2007, Oxon 2008; Tsuyoshi Hasegawa / Kazuhiko Togo, East Asia's Haunted Present. Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism, Westport 2008; Paul Seaton, Japan's Contested War Memories, Oxon 2009; Julian Dierkes, Postwar History Education in Japan and the Germanys. Guilty Lessons, Oxon 2011; Thomas Berger, War, Guilt, and World Politics after World War II, Cambridge 2012; Kazuhiko Togo, Japan and Reconciliation in Post-War Asia. The Murayama Statement and its Implications, Basingstoke 2012. *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia* is a further contribution to this growing transdisciplinary field of research. The book is the result of a research project at Stanford University and consists of four sections: an introduction (Part I); excerpts from Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese and American history textbooks (Part II);five articles analyzing their contents from a comparative perspective (Part III);and five further contributions placing the history textbook issue in the larger context of international relations in East Asia (part IV).

As the introduction by Stanford professor Gi-wook Shin emphasizes, historical issues and "divided memories" still constitute a "fundamental obstacle" to reconciliation in East Asia (p. 4). Most of the contributions reflect a rather pessimistic assessment of the role of history education in attempts at reconciliation in East Asia. In his masterly comparative essay on East Asian textbooks, Peter Duus concludes that writing a "'common history' may be (...) intellectually feasible, (but) it may not be politically feasible, given that the teaching of history in most East Asian nations is still tied to building and strengthening national identity." (p. 103) In her contribution on the "politics of history textbooks in South Korea, Taiwan and China," Alisa Jones emphasizes that the role of school textbooks in modern nation-states is, first of all, to "homogenize" the past and "shape beliefs and values in ways that legitimize the polity." (p. 208) However, her article also shows that, as a result of increasing pluralism, the contents of textbooks in states such as South Korea and Taiwan have changed dramatically over the last few decades. Whether such frequent revisions are desirable, however, remains an open question. Jones rightly points out that changes initiated by one administration might be easily reversed by a subsequent regime (p. 214) - a development recently witnessed in South Korea under the Lee administration (2008-12). The extent to which political change should affect educational issues is thus open to debate, given that strong governmental influence on education might well mean "that completely new history textbooks will have to be written every time there is a change in the administration." (p. 214)

Hiroshi Mitani, an influential voice in the Japanese history textbook debates and author of national textbooks as well as a participant in transnational history textbook projects, represents a group of East Asian historians who have come to the conclusion that "traditional national histories are inadequate or even harmful, (because) they tend to treat other nations as latent enemies." (p. 205) For Japan, Hiroshi proposes "that the Japanese government should provide a new course at the senior

high level that focuses on *modern* history and make this course compulsory." (p. 204, emphasis added) This would be a way of ensuring that some pupils no longer fail to learn anything at all about the controversial modern history of East Asia, a shortcoming which lies at the heart of the issue of "divided memories."Mitani praises the publication of *A History that Opens the Future*, a supplementary text produced by a group of Chinese, Korean and Japanese scholars and activists (discussed in detail in chapter 8 of this volume).

One of the book's major achievements is the inclusion of excerpts from history textbooks from East Asian countries in English translation as well as excerpts from US textbooks. These readings cover a number of controversial historical issues: 1) the Nanjing Massacre; 2) the atomic bombing of Japanese cities; 3) the origins of the Korean War; 4) Pearl Harbor; 5) forced labor (including the comfort women); 6) the Manchurian Incident; 7) economic development under Japanese rule; and 8) the Tokyo war crimes tribunal. Although the reasons for listing the subjects treated in this order is not entirely clear, this is an appropriate selection of the central issues in the contemporary debates over historical memory and history education in East Asia, and the excerpts are excellently translated and edited. The ca. 54 pages of text (plus some full-page reproductions from the original textbooks) are a helpful tool for comparative research, but will also be useful for those teaching classes on the legacies of the past and issues of historical memory in East Asia. Translations of history textbooks from East Asian countries are still not easily accessible. Translations of excerpts from Japanese middle school textbooks were available until March 2012 on a website financed by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (JE-Kaleidoscope). However, due to the withdrawal of financial support, the website went offline in 2012 and the translations, which were heavily subsidized by the Japanese taxpayer, are no longer accessible to the public. Translations of Korean and Chinese textbooks are also not readily accessible.

The less informed reader would do well to read the five essays in the section on Comparative Analysis (Part III) *before* tackling the excerpts. In the absence of contextualization (and previous knowledge), it is at times difficult to make sense of the excerpts as they stand. The five essays in this section remedy the situation by putting the textbook excerpts in perspective. In his essay "War Stories," Japan historian Peter Duus emphasizes that "history textbooks can never be 'objective"', because their goal is to shape national identity and instill values" in order to turn "the young into 'good citizens'." (p. 101) He characterizes US textbooks as a "national *bildungsroman*" (pp. 103ff), in which World War II is portrayed as a "'good war' fought by America's 'greatest generation.'" (p. 104) Unsurprisingly, Chinese textbooks (both in the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China)are characterized as narratives of "resistance and liberation." (p. 105) Japanese textbooks, which are often charged with glossing over Japan's wartime history, do not really embody a story at all, as Duus emphasizes (p. 110). They "make no attempt to glorify or justify the war, to portray Japan as the 'victim' of outside forces, or to offer an apologia for wartime atrocities. (...) There is no attempt to justify the army's actions nor claim for it any noble national motive." (pp. 110f) On the other hand, Duus asserts, Japanese textbooks do not "devote much space to the topic" of war crimes (p. 112). Some of these observations might come as a surprise to the reader, given the negative press that Japanese history textbooks still receive, not only in China and Korea, but also in Western countries. Given this background, the decision by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to take the abovementioned translations of middle school textbooks offline is highly surprising.

The contribution by Tohmatsu from the National Defense Academy of Japan on "Japanese history textbooks in comparative perspective" is a rather mechanical commentary on the eight issues dealt with in Part II. Each of the issues is discussed under the headings of "accepted basic facts", "points of argument" and "analysis." He comes to a similar conclusion as Duus, namely that Japanese textbooks "tend to be concise and neutral on controversial issues." (p. 131) They "remain detached, making no moral judgment. (...) The textbooks lack both passion and a clear message for understanding the wartime past." (ibid.)Parts of Tohmatsu's analysis sections are less concerned with the contents of textbooks as such, but rather deal with the actual "point(s) of controversy." In the Nanjing Massacre section, only a few lines of his analysis deal with the contents of Japanese textbooks; most of this section is concerned with academic discussion of the subject in Japan and in Chinese history textbooks.

The two chapters by Li Weike and Chung Jae-Jong offer Chinese and Korean perspectives respectively. Like Tohmatsu, Wei's contribution at times loses focus on the textbooks, and rather aims at "setting the record straight." For example, he writes of the Nanjing Massacre: "As the Chinese textbooks describe it, the Japanese invaders entered this civilized ancient capital like a pack of ferocious beasts and immediately proceeded to subject the peaceful Nanjing citizens to six long weeks of frenzied mass murder." (p. 143) Although this characterization of the

Nanjing Massacre is probably close to the truth, the excerpts presented in Part II are much less provocative than this statement. According to Chung Jae-jong Chung is a Korean historian of Japanese-Korean relations, an expert on the Japanese history textbook system, a former president of the Northeast Asia History Foundation and is also involved in various transnational textbook initiatives. , the main characteristic of Korean textbooks is the understandable emphasis they place on the Korean independence movement, something that Japanese history textbooks "do not mention" at all (p. 166). They also devote considerable space to issues such as the "assimilation" of Koreans, often presented as a policy of "eradicating the Korean race" (p. 161), and "collaboration." The contribution by Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao compares history textbooks in South Korea and Taiwan and proposes that the treatment of "colonial modernity" -the extent to which the colonizing power (Japan) contributed to the modernization of Korea and Taiwan - is one of the major differences between them in their attitude to Japan. While "nationalist (Korean) scholars have criticized the theory of colonial modernity" (p. 171; see also Hsiao on 185-87), "Taiwanese textbook writers have largely embraced the concept of colonial modernity." (p. 183)

The most informative and balanced essay in Part IV is Mitani's "Writing history textbooks in Japan." An influential scholar of nineteenth-century Japanese history and also a textbook author himself, Mitani first of all emphasizes the limitations that make it difficult to write "good" textbooks, particularly those imposed by the regulatory authority, the Ministry of Education and Research (MEXT). While he considers the hotly debated textbook approval system largely fair, he argues that the rule that publishers must price textbooks at no more than 500 Yen (ca. 5 Euro) leads to shallow and insubstantial works which are "just boring." (p. 193) On the question of the extent to which history education can contribute to international reconciliation, Mitani emphasizes that the present regulations governing textbooks used in senior high schools explicitly oblige the publishers to take into consideration "the viewpoint of promoting international understanding and cooperation" (p. 196). Here the author refers to the "neighboring countries clause" (NNC), which was introduced 1982 in reaction to the internationalization of the history textbook controversy. See Sven Saaler, Politics, Memory and Public Opinion. The History Textbook Controversy and Japanese Society, Munich 2005, p. 29, 69 and the contribution by Sneider in the volume under review here (ch. 9), p. 249. However, recent developments indicate that Japan might take a different direction. The current Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, and several of his cabinet ministers have expressed opposition to the NNC clause on several occasions, and it remains to be seen whether this major tool of Japanese reconciliation policy will remain intact.

Abe is widely known as a hard-liner on issues of wartime history, Back to the future. Shinzo Abe's appointment of a scarily right-wing cabinet bodes ill for the region", Economist, 5 January 2013 (http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21569046-shinzo-abes-appointment-scarily-right-wing-cabinet-bodes-ill-region-back-future); Another Attempt to Deny Japan's History", The New York Times, 2 January 2013 (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/03/opinion/another-attempt-to-deny-japans-history.html). an attitude with its roots in his personal history. His grandfather Nobusuke Kishi was Minister for Ammunition in the wartime cabinet of Prime Minister General Hideki Tojo and, after the war, he was imprisoned along with other cabinet members as a "Class A" war crimes suspect. Although Kishiwas released by the American occupation authorities and never indicted or tried at the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, he remained on the list of "purged" officials and was prohibited from assuming public office until the early 1950s, when he entered politics again, becoming Prime Minister in 1957. Notwithstanding eventually his grandfather's (eventually) successful political career (and that of Kishi's younger brother, Sato Eisaku, who was Prime Minister of Japan from 1964 to 1972), Abe seems to be still deeply affected by the labelling of Kishi as a war criminal. In a book published in 2006, shortly before his first term as Prime Minister, Abe strongly defended the actions of his grandfather and Japan's wartime cabinet as defensive measures aimed at protecting Japan - possibly from US imperialism, although he is not entirely clear on this point. Abe Shinzo, Utsukushiikuni e [Towards a Beautiful Country], Tokyo 2006. Mitani sees the adjustments made to the textbook authorization system during the Abe administration as a "radical change" (p. 202). Abe's return to power at the end of 2012 is thus not an encouraging development as far as efforts at historical reconciliation in East Asia are concerned.

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