18 Education and archaeology in Japan

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Introduction

When a group is large – a nation, for example – its origins will often be described in terms of formal, standardized history. Usually this history is government-controlled. But even when not explicitly upholding government policy, history is still strongly influenced by the opinions and ideologies of politically and economically dominant groups.

Japan is a country where history, especially official history, has been an important means of defining the Japanese national identity since a centralized school system began authorizing textbooks in 1883 (Duke 1978, p. 250). Interpretations of Japanese ancient history have changed drastically over these hundred years. The most dramatic and rapid transformation came in 1945 after Japan’s defeat in the Pacific War. Before the Second World War, mythological texts were used to describe the origins of the Japanese people and the Japanese state to schoolchildren. Since 1945, archaeology has become the primary means of understanding the prehistoric and protohistoric past of Japan. The question that has continued to preoccupy archaeologists and educators since the war is whether historical education, as manifested in textbooks, has really been purged of ideology. It is true that the distortions of emperor worship ideology have been eliminated, but the purpose of formal historical education in Japan, as in many other countries, continues to be teaching young citizens patriotic nationalism, civic pride, and acceptance of mainstream political and social values. With such goals history inevitably justifies and maintains a status quo advantageous for certain politically dominant groups in Japanese society but perhaps disadvantageous to other weaker groups and individuals. Furthermore, archaeologists, educators, and others interested in educational policy are constantly wary of a return to nationalist values in Japan. Under these circumstances can Japanese historical education be considered neutral and free of ideology? In this chapter we examine this question with reference to past and present history textbooks used in Japanese middle schools.
The past in Japanese education

In contemporary Japan, education, especially formal education, is seen as crucially important by children and adults alike. From the Meiji Period (1868-1912) until today, education has been the key to social advancement in Japan. In addition, schools have been primary centres of national socialization. It is in school that students learn about their place in Japanese society and Japan's place in the world.

The structure of Japan's contemporary educational system was established during the years immediately following the Second World War. Because Japan was occupied by the USA, the American educational system was the model for the new Japanese system. Consequently, Japanese students now attend nine years of compulsory education; six years in primary school followed by three years in middle school. Although the subsequent three years of upper secondary school are not compulsory, in 1976 92 per cent of students completing middle school continued their studies for at least three more years. Many then went on to acquire post-secondary qualifications in two-year college or four-year university courses. All these students had studied history during their second year of middle school when they were approximately 14 years old. All of them had used textbooks authorized by the Mombushō (Ministry of Education), a national government agency (Beauchamp 1982, p. 7).

One of the goals of formal education in Japan is to prepare students for adult life by preparing them to pass examinations that are crucial entry points into higher education and most careers. Preparations for school and university entrance examinations form core parts of all school curricula in Japan. Students spend the greater part of their academic careers preparing to write examinations in mathematics, English, Japanese, social studies (including history) and the natural and biological sciences. Since examinations test standardized knowledge, which textbooks provide, the latter have become important foundations of the Japanese educational system. Even teachers who prefer not to teach from textbooks owe it to their students to provide them with information broadly defined by the scope of the textbooks so that the students can compete with others who have followed these closely. History textbooks, then, are the main way in which Japanese children and adults acquire a base for understanding the past. This foundation can later be built on using other media such as television, popular books and magazines, museums, and newspapers.

The passages we have chosen to analyse are taken from the ancient history sections of middle-school textbooks published by the Tokyo Shoseki company. We have selected this particular series for two reasons. It includes texts used in schools from the early 1950s, when the authorization of texts by the central government became standard procedure and, second, because Tokyo Shoseki texts were used in 31 per cent of middle schools in 1983, making them the most widely read history texts at this level (Shuppan Roren Kyōkasho Taisaku Inkai 1984). The discussion of contemporary

Education about the past: some comparisons with other countries

In an analysis of worldwide historical education, Ferro (1981, p. vii) points out that the images we hold of ourselves and of other peoples reflect the history we are taught as children (see also Parker 1975, Fitzgerald 1979, Vincent & Arcand 1979). In his opinion, the control of knowledge of the past is a prerequisite of effective social control in the present. For this reason, the dominant interest groups in any society, be they the state, political parties, churches or private individuals will try to control history. They will do this through control of the media and through schools, both important means of teaching individuals about their own and their society's past. Vincent & Arcand (1979), in a study of dominant history in Québec, have also discussed this issue. They show how the image of the North American Indian in textbooks authorized by the Québec Ministry of Education is simplified and distorted to fit the White society's stereotyped image of native peoples and conclude that any history will reflect specific interests. The best we can do is to make explicit our ideological orientation and, in this way, try to control the propagation of stereotypes and other prejudices. This is best done through a historical education which is both thoughtful and self-critical.

Nationalism and ideology in Japan

The teaching of history in Japan has long been regarded as a crucial means of creating and maintaining nationalism, and this nationalist ideology remains at the centre of debate about policy on teaching prehistory and history. In Japan 'nationalism' and 'ideology' have specific meanings. The term ideology refers only to explicitly stated political ideologies. Communism and nationalism are both considered ideologies in Japan. If an idea, statement, or book is declared ideological, it is, by implication, biased. Ideologies are not necessarily linked to the viewpoint of the dominant groups of a society. Nor are they simply generalized world-views shared by a number of people. Rather, they are believed to be distortions of knowledge and as such are diametrically opposed to idea systems derived from 'science', a body of knowledge considered to be neutral, value-free and, therefore, nonideological. Nationalism in Japan today is a complex topic. Suffice it to say here that nationalism refers to those viewpoints and government policies that echo prewar values. Policies of the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) government, in power since 1948, are often described as nationalist, since
they tend to stress the need for a militarily and economically strong Japan and emphasize the notion of the Japanese as an exclusive group of people within the world community. The status of the emperor and the state also continue to be hotly debated issues when the government is accused of nationalist leanings. The death in January 1989 of Hirohito, the Showa Emperor, has prompted vigorous discussion about the role of the emperor in contemporary Japan.

The trend toward nationalist education began during the Meiji Period when Japanese leaders, anxious to bring their country out of almost 300 years of self-imposed isolation, tried to establish Japan as a technical, military and economic equal to nation-states such as the USA, the UK, France, and Germany. These pragmatic considerations were paralleled by efforts to create a strong feeling of national pride at all levels of Japanese society.

The focus of prewar and wartime Japanese nationalism — an ideology that encompassed militarism, imperialism and notions of Japanese superiority — was the nation (kuni). Great emphasis was placed on the need to protect the nation militarily. Distinctive of Japanese nationalism, furthermore, was the melding of the concept of the nation with that of race or ethnicity (minzoku); the Japanese nation was thought to consist, by definition, only of Japanese people. The imperial house was a centre of nationalist attention. By the end of the 1930s, veneration of the emperor as a descendant of the gods — an aspect of the Shinto religion — and the leader of the Japanese national family was firmly established as government policy. Emperor worship, as an ideology, stressed the sanctity of the imperial line. It was developed in policy statements and documents such as the Meiji Constitution (1889), the Rescript on Education (1890), and the Cardinal Principles of the National Entity (Kokutai no Hongi) (1937).

Extreme nationalism and veneration of the emperor affected historical education directly. By the late 1930s and early 1940s history courses in schools and universities taught a view of history exclusively centred on the emperor and the imperial family. The origins of the Japanese nation and the imperial line were explained by the mythological and quasi-historical tales of the Nihon Shoki and the Kojiki texts. Those archaeologists and historians who continued to use material remains from sites to interpret prehistory were removed from their research and teaching posts, and some were jailed. As a consequence, most research from this period was devoted to the relatively innocuous typological study of artefacts. Historical education focused entirely on imperial history.

The past in postwar Japan

In August 1945 the Japanese government surrendered to the Allied forces; the Second World War was over and the occupation of Japan by US troops began. The goal of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers
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(SCAP)\textsuperscript{9} was to change the political philosophy of Japan. SCAP's administration aimed to instil the principles of democracy in Japanese youth as an antidote to prewar nationalism. With the onset of the occupation, the Japanese were forced, as a society and as individuals, to question their entire official world-view.

The reforms were carried out in myriad ways at formal and informal levels. Drastic changes in the economic and political organization of Japan ran parallel with attempts to change the fundamental belief systems and ethics of individual Japanese by reforms in religious and educational institutions. Textbooks came under immediate scrutiny by SCAP. Officials found ultranationalist doctrines to be so central to textbooks in history, geography, and ethics that from the end of 1945 they suspended these courses. The first history books used after the war were prepared under the direction of SCAP by a committee of scholars from Tokyo Imperial University, as the soon renamed Tokyo University was then still called. The resultant history book, \textit{Footsteps of the nation} (\textit{Kuni no Ayumi}), was issued in 1946 as a national textbook (\textit{Kokutai Kyōkasho}). This book was severely criticized by some members of the Democratic Scientists' Association (\textit{Minshu Shuqi Kagakusha Kyōkai}). They argued that the text, while seemingly neutral and scientific, was actually written from a perspective that emphasized the importance of imperial history and supported militaristic ideals. Whatever faults the book may have had, however, it did derive its interpretation of the ancient past from the results of archaeological and anthropological research. The mythological tales that had been central to prewar history were set aside (Duke 1978, p. 253) and replaced by interpretations derived from empirical evidence of past lifeways.

This change in direction had profound effects on young Japanese and on the discipline of archaeology. An entire generation of children, then in their early to middle teens, felt betrayed by teachers and other leaders who had taught them imperial history, an interpretation of history that they were told to forget virtually overnight. Archaeologists, on the other hand, promised to use concrete, empirical data to understand the historical development of Japanese culture and society. Archaeology became a popular field of study for professionals and amateurs alike. The empiricist and positivist orientation of contemporary Japanese history stems partly from this time. After the war, archaeologists were painfully aware of the potential for the political manipulation of prehistory. Some tried to side-step this problem by avoiding theoretical discussions and focusing on the typology and description of artefacts, features and sites. Others wrote papers with an explicitly Marxist slant to counteract any revival of nationalist thought.

By 1948, a Textbook Authorization Committee had been organized by the Ministry of Education under the direction of SCAP. The committee's job was to authorize textbooks written and published by individual authors and private publishing companies for use in schools. This gave the Ministry of Education, and hence the national government, far less power over textbooks than they had had prior to the war.
Controversies over texts

After 1953, Ministry of Education control over textbooks suddenly tightened after a series of administrative and bureaucratic manoeuvres that led to curriculum committees becoming appointive rather than elective and Textbook Selection Districts being made larger and therefore more difficult to control from the local level. These changes reflected a shift in Japanese educational philosophy towards a more conservative and, some would say, nationalist position. As Ministry of Education control over textbooks strengthened, those written from a socialist perspective (let alone a historical-materialist angle) were often refused authorization. Those socialist texts that were authorized were rarely selected for classroom use by the curriculum committees.

The controversy over texts came to a head in 1965 when the first of three lawsuits (a second was made in 1967 and a third in 1984) was brought against the Ministry of Education by a Tokyo Education University professor, Ienaga Saburō. One of the original authors of the textbook Footsteps of the Nation, Ienaga had been submitting versions of his history text to the Ministry of Education since 1941. He was not in 1947, nor is he today, considered a scholar of left-wing or socialist persuasion. Nevertheless his book was rejected in 1943. In 1944 he rewrote and resubmitted it. The text was accepted on condition that Ienaga made substantial amendments. These, Ministry of Education officials felt, were necessary because the book was according to them incorrect and inadequate. The reasons put forward at the trial to support this claim were that the book failed to recognize the achievements of Japanese ancestors in creating Japanese civilization, it gave the students no sense of being Japanese, and it did not foster affection toward Japan (Duke 1978, p. 241). The Ministry of Education was particularly critical of Ienaga's stress on the mythological nature of the Nihon Shoki and the Kojiki. Ienaga's rebuttal argued that the authorization procedures were a form of censorship that contradicted the Fundamental Law of Education and were consequently illegal.

Ienaga's three lawsuits met with varying success. The first was decided in 1974 in a judgment more advantageous to the Ministry of Education than to Ienaga. The presiding judge declared that the authorization itself was legal but that the amendments were inappropriate. Both parties appealed. In March 1986 the Tokyo High Court decided in favour of the Ministry of Education, declaring that the Ministry's criticisms were valid and that the amendments suggested in the 1960s should have been made. Ienaga appealed to the Japanese Supreme Court.

Ienaga's second lawsuit was heard in the Tokyo District Court, which found in his favour in 1970. Subsequently appeals were lodged by the Ministry of Education in several high courts. In 1982 the case ended up in the Tokyo High Court and the hearings were completed in October 1988. Ienaga's third lawsuit was initiated in response to a tightening of authorization procedures that had resulted from new criticisms of alleged left bias in
Changes in content

In Japan today there are seven companies publishing middle-school textbooks. Selections are made on the basis of recommendations from a District Selection Committee (one of 497 throughout Japan) which selects appropriate texts for individual schools administered by each local Board of Education (Shuppan Roren Kyōkasho Taisuku Iinkai 1984, pp. 77–85). If the contents, or even the wording, of a textbook deviate from these strictly defined norms the book can be rejected by Ministry of Education officials.

The guidelines have changed five times since 1946 when they were originally implemented. These revisions took place in 1951, 1955, 1958, 1969, and 1977. The texts themselves are generally rewritten every three years. According to the 1977 guidelines, history texts should examine Japanese history in relation to Asian and world history; detail the characteristics of each historical period and show how contemporary Japan is a result of accumulated experiences; explain how certain individuals and groups have contributed to the development of the Japanese state, society and culture; teach students appreciation of the historical interaction between Japan and other cultures and traditions; and nurture a historical awareness by training students to judge and evaluate the significance of historical events (Mombushō 1977). Given guidelines such as these and the fact that texts are controlled by the national government, it is not surprising that they focus on the contrast between Japanese and non-Japanese history, take an evolutionary and progressive view of the past, discuss the development of Japan in the international context paying attention to the diffusion of people and culture from other Asian countries, and emphasize the methodology of historical study.
The Tokyo Shoseki's Revised New Society: History (1984) textbook is an example of the implementation of these guidelines. The introductory paragraph explains to students that the study of history is important because knowing about the past will help them understand life in the present. Studying history shows how our ancestors lived and how today's lifestyle developed over years of hard work and human effort. In the first chapter this theme is amplified in a discussion of four subtopics: 'The beginning of the human way of life', 'The beginning of civilization in the ancient world', 'The beginning of Japan', and 'The birth of the ancient Japanese state'. The first two of these subtopics outline human physical and cultural development using evolutionary theory. The emergence of prehominid primates, palaeolithic hunters, neolithic farmers and civilizations (the latter in the four great centres of Egypt, the Tigris-Euphrates and Indus river valleys and central China) are discussed, as are Greece, Rome and early Christianity.

'The beginning of Japan' sketches Japanese prehistory, starting with a description of the early palaeolithic hunters who migrated from continental Asia to Japan during the Ice Age. The subsections on the Jomon Period (c. 10,000–300 BC) and the Yayoi Period (300 BC–AD 300) stress the prehistoric lifestyle and subsistence of these people, illustrating how indigenous cultural development and imported cultural traits were both important in the formation of early Japanese culture and society. Foreign influence is especially emphasized in the discussion of the Yayoi Period since this was the time when the diffusion of ideas and material culture (and possibly the immigration of people) from the continent brought rice agriculture and iron and bronze technology to Japan.

The final subsection of Chapter 1, 'The birth of the ancient Japanese state', outlines in one paragraph the archaeological evidence of state formation during the Kofun Period (AD 300–600). The rest of the subsection is devoted to a description of political and cultural interactions between Japan, Korea, and China. Japanese culture is portrayed as stemming from a combination of native belief systems and sophisticated techniques of pottery manufacture, sericulture, a writing system, and Buddhist worship imported from China.

The Revised New Society: History text presents students with a summary of their country's early history. Indigenous cultural developments are stressed in discussions of Japanese history to the end of the Jomon Period. After the summary of the Yayoi Period, Japan's connections with Asia are emphasized in discussions of the cultural, social, technological, and political development of the emerging Japanese state. The question of the relative importance of internal origins versus imports from mainland Asia in the development of the culture and social institutions of Japan has been a major problem of archaeological study for decades. Although many of the 'simpler' features of Japanese domestic culture are seen as native to the islands, the ruling elites have, for centuries, borrowed and transformed continental institutions such as writing, an efficient bureaucracy, and the Buddhist religion, all of which are stressed in the Revised New Society: History text.
Looking at how changes were made in the Tokyo Shoseki's middle-school history series between 1952 and 1984, we found that the number of pages devoted to the Palaeolithic, Jomon and Yayoi periods has gradually decreased. The contents of these sections, furthermore, have become less interpretive and more descriptive. Subsections such as 'Life in a village' and 'Religion', which were featured for one and a half pages in the 1954 version of the book, had by 1956 been merged together and shortened to half a page. This subsection had been eradicated by 1962 (Nishioka et al. 1953; Atarashii Shakai Henshu Iinkai 1955, Nishioka et al. 1962).

Most of these changes occurred in response to shifts in the orientation of Japanese educational policy and the resultant guideline revisions although some were due to increased knowledge about the archaeology of Japan, the result of postwar field research. After 1953 the texts were criticized by conservative politicians, including Nakasone Yasuhiro, later LDP Prime Minister of Japan. As a result, authorization procedures were suddenly tightened. In addition, the 1958 guidelines specifically warned authors against delving too far into archaeology. Consequently, beginning with the 1962 edition of New Society: History (which for the first time included a section on the Japanese Palaeolithic, discovered in 1949), there has been a drastic reduction in the number of pages allocated to discussion of the Palaeolithic, Jomon and Yayoi periods.

It is clear from our analysis of changes in textbook contents that since 1952 emphasis has shifted away from discussions of the prehistoric and protohistoric past; the relative number of pages covering these periods has decreased and what is left is less interpretive and less interesting. Early history has been reduced to a discussion of prehistoric periods. This makes it difficult for students to feel an affinity with the people who inhabited Japan in the past. The reason for these trends is covertly rather than overtly political. The best way to teach prehistory and protohistory is not the question debated by politicians, bureaucrats, and educators. Much of the textbook controversy focuses on modern not ancient history. Those with strong nationalist leanings cannot reasonably argue that the myths of the Kojiki and Nihon Shoki are true; there is too much archaeological evidence that clearly refutes this. Nevertheless some archaeological results indicate more clearly than others that the early emperors were mythical. By reducing the number of pages devoted to prehistory and protohistory, potential conflicts between renewed nationalism and archaeological interpretations of ancient history can be avoided.

A second reason why prehistory and protohistory have been deemphasized in the later versions of the texts is that in Japan, as in many other countries, history usually refers to political history – the history of powerful elites – rather than social history – the history of the common people. History known primarily through archaeology is not political history and is considered relatively unimportant by the politicians and bureaucrats who push for strong national state control of Japanese society.
Nationalist influence on texts

When discussing education and archaeology in Japan it is important to remember that all history texts are government controlled and that since 1948 the party forming the government has been the conservative and increasingly nationalistic LDP. Although they are written by historians and archaeologists, texts are always authorized by government officials. Textbooks are political. Revisions of the guidelines for authors over the past twenty years have made them more nationalistic (Ritsumeikan Daigaku Kodaishi Kenyūkai 1955, Matsushima 1958, Naaı et al. 1959, Nishikawa 1961, Sato 1970, Miyahara 1973, Amakasu 1982).

What does this nationalism mean? The ideological orientation of Japanese archaeology has changed over the past 50 years. Before and during the Second World War, Japanese history texts reflected the imperial ideology of the ultranationalist government. During this period, archaeological research focused on uncontroversial and apolitical problems of pottery chronology in order to avoid confrontation with the ideology of emperor worship. After the war there was a rush to make a direct connection between the contemporary Japanese people and their ancestors, the prehistoric people who made the artefacts found at the excavated sites. Archaeologists acknowledged the potential political importance of their work and used studies of prehistoric people to counteract the effects of prewar ideology. They provided proof that neither the emperor nor the Japanese people were descended from the gods. Much of this research continued in the highly empiricist tradition of prewar prehistoric studies, focusing on the description and classification of artefacts rather than examining the relationship between archaeology and society. In the immediate postwar period, however, historical materialist interpretations of prehistory and history were in vogue. Consequently some archaeologists concentrated on trying to reconstruct ancient lifestyles and determine relationships between the prehistoric subsistence base and the social structure. With this work they hoped to incorporate Japanese history into the broader framework of world history interpreted using historical materialist concepts. This was a clear move away from the inward-looking prewar nationalism which saw prehistory only in terms of the Kojiki and Nihon Shoki. It was an attempt to examine the everyday life of the common people of early Japan in an international framework. The earliest textbooks echoes this trend in prehistoric study. As mentioned above, the 1952 version of Tokyo Shoseki's text included a page and a half about the life and beliefs of the common people.

Despite this boom in theoretical prehistory, the highly empirical studies of the prewar era continued to affect prehistoric research. The new ideological orientation of historical materialism soon lost its place in Japanese archaeology. One reason for this was that the methodological difficulties of reconstructing past lifeways, social organization, and belief systems from only the material remains soon became apparent. Furthermore, young archaeologists, tired of ideological manipulation, decided to 'get back to the
facts' to interpret prehistory. Finally, as Japanese society and politics swung to the right and the nation turned to technology as a guide to the future, 'science' became a keyword for archaeologists. Research efforts were once again concentrated on producing verifiable, empirical data to understand the past.

The new conservatism in Japanese society and archaeology is not blatantly nationalistic or ideological. It is, rather, a position of detached neutrality. Archaeologists today merely deny the political role of their work and concentrate on discovering what they believe is the factual 'truth' of the prehistoric record. Most Japanese archaeologists, furthermore, are not seriously interested in discussing archaeological education and the textbook problem. They see these issues as ideological and nonscientific and therefore having nothing to do with their studies.

Conclusion: a false neutrality?

The problem with supposedly neutral attitudes towards archaeology is that they deny the contextual nature of archaeological research. Archaeology is not done in a vacuum. Archaeological data, although they may be unadulterated and neutral when they come out of the ground, must be interpreted. When archaeologists take an apolitical stand the interpretation falls on the shoulders of politically dominant groups, for example, government bureaucrats who write textbook guidelines or politicians who dictate educational policy. It is in this sense that the teaching of archaeology in schools is becoming increasingly nationalistic.

Historical education is not taken lightly in Japan. For decades, educators and archaeologists have been considering the implications of prehistory for understanding past and present Japanese society. In this chapter we have touched on several issues involved in Japan's ongoing debate about historical education. Inevitably we have raised and left unanswered many questions. What, for instance, is the role of implicit ideology or world-view in the teaching of the Japanese past? In Japan discussions about archaeology and ideology revolve around debates over the effects of specific ideologies, such as nationalist ideology, on archaeology and on historical education. Another sort of analysis might show how basic assumptions about what it means to be Japanese or about Japan's place in relation to other nations have influenced and, in turn, been affected by the teaching of history and prehistory. These are the sorts of questions that will guide future research into archaeology and education in Japan.

Notes

1 Before 1945 Japanese people were taught that the Japanese nation was founded in 660 BC by Jimmu Tenno, the first emperor of Japan. Today debate continues among prehistorians over the origins of the Japanese state.
2 In Japanese, *minzoku* means ethnicity but on occasion may also mean race. Before 1945, the concepts of race, ethnicity and nationality were not clearly differentiated.

3 Shinto, directly translated as the 'Way of the Gods', is Japan's native religion. Through the Meiji Period (1868–1912), Taisho Period (1912–26) and during the prewar and war years (1926–45) of the Showa Period (1925–89) Shinto was used by the nationalist Japanese state as a means of binding the Japanese people together under absolute imperial rule. The Japanese were told that — through Jimmu Tenno, the first emperor and founder of Japan — the emperor was a direct descendant of the gods and was therefore 'sacred and inviolable'. During the Occupation (1945–52), religion and the state were legally separated. Shinto still plays a role in the lives of many Japanese people but the religion is not part of an all-encompassing, nationalist ideology as it was before 1945.

4 Promulgated in 1889 as a gift to the Japanese people by the Meiji Emperor, the Meiji Constitution formalized the idea of the emperor as 'sacred and inviolable' and as the leader of the country. The constitution was rewritten in 1947 by Japanese politicians guided by Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers administrators. Today the emperor is the symbolic leader of Japan. He has no political power.

5 The Rescript on Education is a document issued by the Japanese government in 1890 that outlines the cardinal principles of the imperial ideology. Using Confucian concepts, the Meiji Period leaders presented the idea of Japan as a large family with the emperor as a symbolic father to his subjects. They also stressed the need for all Japanese citizens to obey the law and work for the good of the nation rather than for their own personal gain. The Rescript on Education became one of the bases of the prewar educational system and was an important means of teaching nationalism to the people.

6 The Cardinal Principles of the National Entity was a document issued by the government in 1937. It stressed the concept of *kokutai* or 'national body' and the need for the Japanese people to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the emperor and the nation.

7 The *Nihon Shoki* is a historical chronicle completed in 720 and written in the Chinese style. It describes the ancient history of Japan, including the founding of the Japanese nation and the exploits of the various early emperors.

8 The compilation of the *Kojiki* was completed in AD 712. The book, often called Japan's native history, discusses the preliterate history of Japan and was probably derived from early genealogical records passed down by word of mouth, and from oral mythology and legends. The *Kojiki* describes the formation of the Japanese islands, the gods and the Japanese people as well as the foundation of the Japanese state. It became a central feature of prewar nationalism.

9 The occupation of Japan by SCAP lasted from 1945 until 1952. Throughout this time the country was run almost exclusively by the US military under the command of General Douglas MacArthur. SCAP implemented reforms in the Japanese political and economic systems as well as in education.

10 According to a recent newspaper article (Asahi Shimbun, 15 March 1989, p. 1), Ministry of Education officials have announced the drastic revision of guidelines for primary, middle and high school textbooks. The new guidelines, which will be enforced after 1992, mean that primary school students will soon be exposed to the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*. These texts explain Japanese history in terms of
myths, legends and traditional Japanese religion. Previously students studied the ancient myths but did not necessarily study the *Kojiki* or *Nihon Shoki*. The reason for this change is that the Japanese government wants to interest young Japanese in the formation of the Japanese state. Many historians and archaeologists are worried that the new regulations might result in the merging of myth and history when teaching about the ancient Japanese past, a situation that occurred before 1945.

11 The Jomon Period is distinguished by distinctive pottery types and by a subsistence base generally relying on hunting, fishing and gathering.

12 The Yayoi Period saw the establishment of wet-rice agriculture and iron and bronze metallurgy in Japan.

13 The Kofun Period is distinguished by its enormous 'key-hole-shaped' tombs. It was at this time that the early Japanese state was formed.

14 The Japanese Palaeolithic dates from between either 100000 BC or 30000 BC to 10000 BC. Thousands of Palaeolithic sites with lithic remains have been found throughout the Japanese archipelago.

**References**


