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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

Key words: Textbooks, Identity, War textbooks, Nanjing, China, Japan, Textbook Research.

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