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| **[Who are the Han? ---- Representations of the Han in Chinese school textbooks in late Qing and early republican China]** |
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**1. Introduction**

In the second year report, I mainly focused on the comparative study on the works of three intellectuals, which illustrates that although their political standpoints varied, they were all using similar social categories and markers in defining the Han and clarifying the boundaries between Han and ‘the Others’. Although some of them (e.g. Zhang Binglin) performed in a more radical way in the discussion on the relationship between the Manchu and the Han, they all to different degrees promoted the anti-Manchu movement. Although some of them (e.g. Liang Qichao) made an effort in claiming that Hanese should abandon their social superiority in order to achieve the national integration of the Chinese nation, it is not difficult to find evidence to prove their belief in the cultural superiority of Han. For those Chinese intellectuals during the late Qing period, the main principle of the unification of the traditional Chinese nation was the acceptance of the dominance of Han culture, as well as its supposed superior standard of civilization.

In this year, I have mainly focused on the representation of Han in school textbooks during the late Qing and early republican period in China. School textbooks, which can be considered a reflection of the history, knowledge and values considered important by powerful groups, are one of crucial organs in the process of constructing legitimated ideologies and beliefs in a society. In many nations, debates over the content and format of school textbooks are sites of considerable educational and political conflict. The work on school textbooks plays an important role in shaping the opinions and values of future generations, and is significantly influenced by academic experts. The production of textbook content can be considered as the result of a competition between powerful groups and their struggle over meaning making (Liu & Hilton, 2005). Textbooks inform and shape people’s understanding of the world, and are hence seen as crucial in the creation of identity in collective memory as it is designed to meet specific cultural, economic and social imperatives.

It was during the late 19th century and the early 20th century that a large number of countries on a global scale were experiencing radical social changes. This greatly contributed to the construction and consciousness of different types of identity. The increasingly unstable social conditions in Chinese society, as well as the turbulent international environment, altered Chinese people’s opinions and views of both the outside world and China itself. The weakness showed by the late Qing government in the wars towards the West, deeply impacted on the social spheres, and the consciousness of national identity. The focus of my study accordingly is on aspects of historical representation that are central to understanding the identity of a people and how this conditions responses to political events. Liu and Hilton have demonstrated the significance of history to the construction of identity:

History provides us with narratives that tell us who we are, where we came from and where we should be going. It defines a trajectory which helps construct the essence of a group’s identity, how it relates to other groups, and ascertains what its options are for facing present challenges. A group’s representation of its history will condition its sense of what it was, is, can and should be, and is thus central to the construction of its identity, norms and values. Representations of history help to define the social identity of peoples, especially in how they relate to other peoples and to current issues of international politics and internal diversity. Taking group’s representations of their history into account can help us understand why countries will react differently to a challenge where their common interests are ostensibly the same (Liu & Hilton, 2005: 537).

Being one of the important representations of history, textbook research plays an important role in analysing how people’s identity is created, maintained and changed, as well as their corresponding social background. By analysing what significant social events are collectively or selectively included and in what ways they are narrated, a framework of studying social representations of nation, “race” and ethnicity is in this way presented. Moreover, the period from late Qing to the early republic in China was worthy of study because on the one hand, modern nationalism in China emerged during this period; on the other hand, it was the key era during which the narrative of History was brought into Chinese culture and language. Indeed, historical representation not only provided interpretation of the past, but also contributed to the understanding of the present meaning of the nation and the perception of the world.

Prasenjit Duara (1995) highlighted the interconnection between History and the modern nation:

The nation—hence nationalist leaders and the nation-state who act in the name of the nation—attains its privilege and sovereignty as the subject of History; modern History is meaningless without a subject—that which remains even as it changes… The nation insinuates itself as the master subject of History…’ (27).

In my research I attempt to identify and discuss representations of Han and Chinese identity in different history textbooks from the same period as the other historical sources. I will also clarify in what ways and by what means school history textbooks in China tend to retain an ethno-centric and nationalistic role in the education system. The textbooks are hereby regarded as a form of ideological discourse; my focus accordingly is on aspects of the representation of identity within different social settings and its corresponding responses to political events, rather than simply collective remembering (Pennebaker, Paez & Rime, 1997) or collective memory (Halbwachs, 1980 [1950]).

Thus, the third part of my research will focus on the sphere of education. I am going to discuss some of the most important school textbooks on the subject of history during the period of 1895 to 1920. I will study in what ways they constructed and represented Han identity by analysing how they explain specific historical cases, and define social terms including Han, race, nation and ethnicity. In this report, I will firstly discuss the methodologies adopted in this part of the research and provide a summarized introduction of the *keju* system. In traditional Chinese society, the *keju* examination system was the most important criteria and channel for selecting talented people. The *keju* system deeply influenced various social spheres, including education, elections, politics, economy, culture and even customs and psychological aspects. In imperial China, the *keju* system was used as the major mechanism by which Chinese intellectuals could get access to the national bureaucracy. In addition, it was also an efficient tool by which the central government was able to capture the loyalty of local-level institutions. The main body of the report will analyse the representation of identity in the two periods, with the watershed of the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911. There are three emphases I will focus on: 1. The origin of the Chinese nation; 2. The signification of *minzu* and the position of Han; 3. The interpretation of minority groups – separation and combination.

**2. Methodologies**

My empirical-historical analysis will be conducted in a methodological frame of a historically oriented, content and textual analysis, and critical discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is widely used in different ways. In regards to school textbook research, specific attention will be paid to the ‘relationship between language use and social structure’ (Deacon et al., 1999: 146-148). This analysis also focuses on ‘forms of representation in which different social categories, different social practices and relations are constructed from and in the interests of a particular point of view, a particular conception of social reality’ (148). My project will also adopt a comparative thematic content analysis. It will do so capturing and comparing the dominant themes in different texts, and decoding the emphasis, analysing the background and foreground information, especially the different ways of describing the same thing or different ways of defining the same term.

The adoption of discourse analysis is closely linked to the method of narrative analysis in this report. Narrative analysis is another useful qualitative methodology in this part of research. One of the clearest explanations of this method can be found in Connelly and Clandinin’s (1990) work, that ‘humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and collectively, lead storied lives. Thus the study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world’ (2). Griffin (1992) noted ‘the use of narrative mode to examine and exploit the temporality of social action and historical events’ (Griffin, 1992: 402). He defined the historical from the nonhistorical in sociological justification which is a product of converging comprehension of the “new” historical sociology. Historians and sociologists challenge the conventional view of the possibility of representing or “mirroring” sociohistorical actuality by the use of particular concepts, organisational techniques, and theories without speculating about the nature of the circumstances under investigation. Maines (1993) for example, classified and organised a story ‘through the use of plot, setting, and characterization that confer structure, meaning, and context on the events selected’ (21).Narrative is defined as the organisation of simultaneous actions and occurrences in a consecutive, linear order ‘that gives meaning to and explains each of its elements and is, at the same time, constituted by them’ (Griffin, 1993: 1097). Subsequently, ‘a temporal ordering of events must be created so that questions of how and why events happened can be established and the narrative elements can acquire features of tempo, duration, and pace’ (Maine, 1993: 21). Narratives, are alternatively temporal in both construction and explanatory logic and ‘take the form of an unfolding, open-ended story fraught with conjunctures and contingency, where what happens, and action, in fact happens because of its order and position in the story’ (Griffin, 1993: 1099). In focusing my study on the representation of Han, the approach of narrative analysis can be adopted in many ways: to investigate in those textbooks edited by Chinese and non-Chinese, which period was highlighted and which were excluded; which periods were evaluated in a positive or negative way; and who was described as a national hero (protagonist) or an enemy (antagonist).

In historiography, the narrative has traditionally been the main rhetorical device used by historians (Stone, 1979). The term narrative has been described by many scholars using different epithets: it is ‘a primary act of mind’ (Hardy, 1987: 1), ‘the primary scheme by means of which human existence is rendered meaningful’ (Polkinghorne, 1988: 11), ‘a means by which human beings represent and restructure the world’ (Mitchell, 1981: 8). Bruner (1990) summarized it as an ‘organizing principle’, by which ‘people organize their experience in, knowledge about, and transactions with the social world’ (35). The adoption of narrative methods in my research is conducted to ‘discover what was going on inside people’s heads in the past, and what it was like to live in the past, questions which inevitably lead back to the use of narrative’ (Stone, 1987: 13).

I will identify central elements in the representation of Han in Chinese history textbooks, which were one of the important forms of social representation of history, and therefore contained descriptive components (Moscovici, 1988). A systematic consensus across ethnic and regional groups can be constructed by the selections of important events and groups of people being analysed, admired and criticized in the constitution of national history (Huang, Liu & Chang, 2004). In my research on school textbooks, narrative history comes to be seen as a powerful tool in constructing identity that had dynamic emotional implications for action (Rime, 1997).

One of the main reasons for politicians being able to make good use of history, is that history can never speak for itself; instead, in can be only described through interpreters’ tongues. Therefore, it provides a way of connecting the individual to a larger collective, by which the consciousness of identity is constructed. This construction is not fixed and unchangeable; instead, it is an ‘open-ended drama’ (Laszlo, 2003), since ‘the charter components of social representations are negotiated’ that ‘can be challenged by constituent groups and may be renegotiated. Their principles can be extended beyond the original groups for whom they were intended’ (Liu & Hilton, 2005: 540)

The period during the late Qing to the early republic was an important stage, in which the Chinese people’s consciousness of nation, race and ethnicity was primarily constructed and their understandings of these terms were highly contested. The signification of the Han was frequently mixed and alternatively used with the term Chinese. Even in those academic works, including the school textbooks, which are always viewed as constituting standard knowledge in society, the explanation and signification of Han was often sliding and confusing. Focusing on this part of research, there are three main layers I will discuss. The first focus is the origin of the Chinese nation, which was closely linked to the definition of identity. The theory of *wailai shuo* (the theory claiming that the Chinese nation originated from the West) dominated the Chinese academic and education field during the late Qing period. After the establishment of the first Chinese republic, impacted by data provided by the social archaeology research, and also the international environment, the dominance of *wailai shuo* was gradually replaced by *tuzhu shuo* (the theory claiming that the Chinese nation originated within China). The second analytical layer in my research is the signification of *minzu* and the position of Han; while the last layer is the interpretation of minority groups – separation and combination. The analysis follows an order based on three questions: 1 Who are ‘we’; 2 What are ‘we’ and 3 Who are ‘they’/ ‘the Others’? The identification of ‘we’ and ‘they/’ ‘the Others’were altered in different period corresponding transformed social background. By analysing these three layers, I can pursue the process of the construction of social identity of the Han, within different social categorizations: nation, “race” and ethnicity.

**Issues of periodization**

My research covers a historical period during which the Chinese education system underwent a profound transformation that laid the basis of the modern Chinese education as we know it today. More than100 years or so ago, on the 2nd September 1905, the Qing government promulgated a decree proposed by Guangxu Emperor: since the year of *bingwu[[1]](#footnote-1)*, the provincial examination known as *keju* was abolished as well as all the yearly examinations in all provinces (Zhu, 1958: 5392). This well-known institutional system of exams, which had been implemented in China for more than 1300 years, was therefore abrogated. This important marker in the history of Chinese civilization had to pull up the curtain because of both internal and external threats. For over a thousand of history, *keju* directed a series of social phenomena, strongly impacting on the formation of political structure and culture as well as everyday habits and values within traditional Chinese society. Thousands of Chinese intellectuals were working hard for decades to get involved in the central government class. There are plenty Chinese proverbs describing the superiority of *du shu* (reading books, it specifically means academic sphere here), for example, *wanban jie xiapin, wei you du shu gao* (scholarship pursuing surmounts all other occupations). In the traditional Chinese society, *shu* (books) exclusively referred to *sishu wujing* (Chinese classic texts and historical works), which was the only content examined in the *keju* system.

In this part of my work, I will firstly explain the general characteristics of the *keju* system, the changes it underwent during the late Qing period, and reasons for its abolishment. This will be followed by the analysis of textbooks, divided into two periods: the first period is from 1895 to 1911, during which most of the Chinese history textbooks were translations of Western and Japanese works, and only a limited number of these was edited by Chinese authors. The second period is from 1911 to 1919, during which Chinese scholars were well aware of the propaganda function of education and advocated the use of textbooks edited by Chinese authors. However, given the lack of reliable historical sources in Chinese, the authors of textbooks still had to rely somewhat on Western historical works.

**3. The *keju* system**

3.1 The main characteristics of the *keju* system

In traditional Chinese society, the *keju* examination system provided the most important criteria and channel for selecting talented people. The *Keju* system deeply influenced various social spheres, including education, elections, politics, economy, culture and even customs and psychological aspects of life in China. Therefore, the *keju* system greatly contributed to the construction and development of traditional Chinese society.

*Keju*, refers to the imperial examinations in Imperial Chinese society, which determined who among the population would be allowed to get access to the state’s bureaucracy. The system of *keju* was established in 605 during Sui Dynasty (581~618). It had lasted for over 1300 years until it was abolished near the end of the Qing Dynasty. During the rise of the feudal society, *keju* effectively contributed to a centralization of political power, which therefore promoted the stability of the bureaucratic structure.

Under the *keju* system, the Chinese educational Curriculum was all along in accordance with the four subjects of *jing* (Chinese classic texts) *shi* (historical works) *zi* (philosophical works) and *ji* (literary works). In the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Four Books and Five Classics, Chinese classic texts chosen by Song dynasty Neo-Confucianist [Zhu Xi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhu_Xi), were the subject of mandatory study by those Chinese classic texts or Chinese canonical texts (*dianji*) refer to the pre-Qin Chinese texts, especially the Confucian Four Books and Five Classics (*sishu wujing*). All of these pre-Qin texts were written in classical Chinese. They can be referred to as *jing*. The traditional Chinese educational Curriculum also included *shi*(historical works), *zi* (philosophical works belonging to schools of thought other than the Confucian, and also works of agriculture, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, divination, art criticism, and all sorts of miscellaneous writings) and *ji* (literary works).Confucian scholars who wished to become government officials, were required to pass and be highly marked in the *keju* examination with no exception. Any political discussion was full of references to this background, and one could not be one of the literati, or even a military officer, without knowing them. Chinese students were required to memorize these classics in order to ascend in the social hierarchy (Gu, 2008).

Prior to the *keju* system, most appointments in the imperial bureaucracy were based on recommendations from prominent aristocrats and local officials. The Wu Emperor in the Han Dynasty started a basic form of the imperial examinations, in which local officials would select candidates to take part in an examination of the Confucian classics, from which he would select officials to serve by his side. The Yang Emperor in the Sui Dynasty established a new category of recommended candidates for the *jinshike* (madarinate) in 605 CE, which marked the first time that an examination system was explicitly instituted for a category of local talents. This is generally accepted as the beginning of the imperial examination system *keju* (Ren and Xue, 2003).Theoretically, the *keju* examination provided a considerably fair mechanism for those ordinary people who expected to participate into the government. Any male adult in China, regardless of his social status, could become a high-ranking government official by passing the imperial examination. There are large numbers of examples in Chinese history showing that individuals climbed to political prominence from a very low social status through success in imperial examination (*ibid*).

In imperial China, the *keju* system played an important role in tightening the relationship between the central bureaucracy and local-level elites. It was used as the major mechanism by which the central government was able to capture the loyalty of local-level institutions. On the other hand, the loyalty of local-level elites contributed and maintained the integration of the state and cultural uniformity (Tian, 2005: 74).

3.2 Changes during the late Qing period

Wang Ermin (2003) defines the historical period from 1840 to 1900, as a process of ‘absorption, fusion, budding and metamorphosis’ of ‘new concepts’ (*xingainian*), and further argues that this period of 60 years is ‘an important time of transition that brewed modernity, and also a unique development of academic thought’ (1~21). It not only determined the development of the modern Chinese academic basic pattern, but also shaped the narrative patterns of people’s understanding of the "past" and "present" (Sun, 2009: 2). According to Liu (2002: 2), different methods of classification led to the different classification of modern academic concepts in the process of transformation of modern knowledge. Moreover, knowledge of the nature of disciplines and disciplinary boundaries are all greatly distinct from the traditional academic.

The main target for changes in the educational system was the content of the examination. Although *bagu wen* (the eight-legged essay), which was the main entry of *keju* examination, was widely criticized by the Chinese intellectuals in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, it was not changed until the erosion of the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894. The unprecedentedly serious national crisis, as well as the rising tide of political reforms, contributes to the abolishment of *baguwen.* During the period of *bairiweixin* (the Hundred Days Reform), *bagu wen* was finally abolished, while *shiwucelun* (a discussion on current affairs) was included in the content of the examination, which involved astronomy, geography, manufacturing, sound, light, chemical, electrical and other disciplines, as well as Western educational, financial, military organization, business and legal systems. This was a major reform of the old *keju* examination, and since then, Western scientific and cultural knowledge became central to examination content.

During the Late Qing period, the abolishment of *keju* was closely linked to the rapid emergence of modern *xuetang* (schools), which was one of the most important markers of the development of the Chinese educational system. After the *keju* was abolished in 1905, the number of schools around the country increased dramatically: there were only 8277 schools in nationwide in 1905; the number reached 23,856 in 1906 and rose further to 59,117 in 1909 (Zhu, 1989).

After the abolishment of the *keju* system, development in the field of education was also reflected in the establishment and gradual improvement of the new academic system. There was a new law on degrees: *renyin* and *kuimao* were promulgated in August 1902 and January 1904, for the first time in China has an established academic system in the modern sense, in which the degrees of primary, middle and high schools were clearly categorized. In addition to general education, various kinds of special education were also included, such as the Educational School, the Administrative Law School, as well as some specialized schools, such as agriculture, industrial, medicine, gymnastics, arts and police schools. In 1906, the Qing court advocated the new educational objectives as the following: loyalty to the Qing court, Confucian beliefs, sufficient attention paid to public spheres, military and physical education. This marked the age of education from traditional Confucianism to all of totalitarian rituals to practical, specialized transition. The new schools did not simply focus on moral philosophy and the political philosophy of education, but also paid attention to vocational and modern scientific knowledge. While Confucianism continued to exist as the national religion, it lost its dominant status in the educational field, and it was reduced to only one among an array of subjects.

In order to ensure the smooth progress of transition to the modern schools, specialized education administration and management systems were also established. *Xuebu* (The Study Department), established in 1905, was the highest executive body in the country managing education (Yang, 2001: 271).

3.3 The reasons for the abolishment of the *keju* examination

There were two main factors that contributed to the reform and abolishment of the *keju* system: the internal will for change among the elites, and external challenges from the West. The internal will for the development and improvement of the Imperial Examination was discussed in the section above. In the following paragraphs I will mainly focus on external factors.

As scholars were keen to participate in *keju* tests, the attraction of *keju* became the most powerful obstacle for Western missionaries attempting to disseminate their religious ideas. At the General Missionary Meeting in 1869, it was seriously discussed whether Chinese Christians should be allowed to participate in *keju* examinations. As both of the provincial and metropolitan examinations lasted nine days (including over a weekend), participants were in conflict with the church on the weekends. Moreover, most Western missionaries believed that the content in *keju* tests would negatively impact on the understanding of the true meaning of Christianity. Thus, most of them did not allow the Chinese Christians to participate in *keju* exams in China (Hartwell, 1869: 217~220). However, these Western missionaries in China also knew well that most Chinese scholars would definitely participate in the *keju* exam, and they could play an important role in contributing to the spreading of Christianity in China. Hence, some Western missionaries would distribute the *Bible* and other Christian handouts before the time of entry into provincial examinations, in order to declare some effective impacts in including more Christian recruitment from the Chinese students (Hill, 1888: 282~283). On the other hand, Western missionaries also established some church schools in order to teach Western knowledge, which challenged the weak *keju* system, and accelerated the disintegration of the imperial examination system.

While missionaries’ influence on the Chinese *keju* examination system was considered rather gentle and consisted of a kind of ’ cultural infiltration’, the Western military forces had exerted a violent and direct influence on the *keju.* In 1900, the *baguolianju[[2]](#footnote-2)* (Eight-nation Alliance) entered into Beijing, and burned the Beijing *gongyuan*(Beijing Imperial Examination School), which was a concrete symbol and visible expression of the invisible *keju* system. In the capital Beijing, the *gongyuan* was one of the largest buildings, second only to the imperial palace. During the late 19th century and early 20th century, Westerners had been well aware of the imperial examination system and the *gongyuan* and of the importance of Chinese scholars, and knew that this attack would have an enormous impact. According to the Boxer Protocol signed in 1901, Western powers had forced the Qing government to cancel the *keju* examination in some provinces as a punishment (Wang, 1957: 1012). Some Western scholars argued that there is no direct connection between the signing of the Boxer Protocol and the abolishment of the *keju* system (Frank, 1960: 67~68). However, after the Beijing *gongyuan* was burned, the *keju* examination had to take place in the Henan *gongyuan* from 1902 to 1904, which had never happened during the history of *keju* exam. The normal operation of the *keju*, including the rules, content and forms, was largely disrupted by the threat of the Western military, which indicated the demise of the *keju* system. We can therefore conclude that the signing of the Boxer Protocol actually played an important role in the abolishment of the *keju* exam, even if the causal link between the two was not direct.

**4. Period I: 1894 ~ 1911**

‘The format of comprehensive history textbooks in contemporary China, is actually copied from the West, which is inherently, non-Chinese’ (Bai, 1997: 208). Although Bai may have exaggerated the situation, it was true that cultural communication between China and the West, and especially Japan and the West at the end of the 19th century, strongly influenced the writing and editing of history textbooks in China (He, 2006). After the abolishment of the *keju* exam and the establishment of modern schools, in order to provide school textbooks to students the format of comprehensive history was brought into China by intellectuals from Japan. Before that, the historical education in the *keju* system was not systematically designed. The school textbooks during the late Qing period could be categorized into three types, which performed in a developing order: 1. Most schools adopted translated sources as textbooks before the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911; 2. While the educational function was noticed by most schools afterwards, which mainly used Chinese literature as the source of school textbooks, the third type was a combination of the two. In this part of the study, I will focus on the first period, during which most school textbooks were translated from the Western works, especially for Japanese literature.

In 1902 and 1904, the Qing government successively promulgated the Authorized School Regulation (*qindingxuetangzhangcheng*) and the Contemporary School Regulation (*zoudingxuetangzhangcheng*, and also named Yin-yan Education System [*yinya nxuezhi*]) in order to promote education reform. According to these new regulations, the length of primary education (including elementary school and high school) was nine years and the length of secondary education was five years, which counted fourteen years in total. History as a curriculum was set in both primary and secondary schools, which was respectively arranged as “History” in elementary primary schools and “Chinese History” in high primary schools, and “History” in secondary schools. Qu and Tang (1911) argued that this curriculum was built for ‘explaining the reasons of strength and weakness, rise and fall, as well as enhancing troop morale of Chinese’ (3)

Chinese traditional scholars firmly believed in the existence of national boundaries between *yi* (barbarians/others/non-Chinese) and *xia* (or *Hua/Huaxia*, which is regarded as the origin of Han) (Liu, 2004: 11~12), which was discussed in detail in the last report. Most of them believed that the Han nation was the only truly civilized culture, while all other cultures were seen as barbarian and less developed. One of the results brought in by this idea was the lack of interest in foreign historical knowledge. Although there were some Western works translated into Chinese by foreign missionaries, most of them were about technology and natural sciences, while only a few focused on history. According to the *Reading List of Western Books* (*xixue shumubiao*) published in 1896 by Liang Qichao, there were only 25 books which could be categorized as historical. It is understandable that it was difficult for the Chinese intellectuals at that time to comprehensively understand the world and its history using such a limited number of books. Moreover, some intellectuals criticized the quality of these translated works. For example, Tu argued (1897: 17) that the information provided in the translation works was out of date and was usually related to religion, since most of these works were translated by missionaries, and were therefore unable to inspire Chinese wisdom.

Ye (1996) summarized four shortcomings of the translations as follows: a. they were unsuitable for teaching and learning; b. they were unsuitable as an outline of political science; c. the content was hard to comprehend; d. they were full of conflicting views and contradictions (358).The fact that there was a lack of historical textbooks during the period of late Qing was partially due to the limited amount of reliable historical sources in China. It was also influenced by the slowness of social development. Although some Chinese scholars tried to establish a new Chinese cultural system, their contribution to the construction of modern historical theory was limited. For example, according to the announcement made by *xuebu*(the Chinese Education Department) in 1907, ‘there has seldom been any suitable textbooks for history as a curriculum, thus we have to leave it as a blank until there are some excellent works coming out and we will then make another announcement’ (Wang, 1907: 56). It was further explained in the announcement that, ‘there is no reliable version of history textbooks available for analysis currently, even the limited number of existing relevant literature was translated from the foreign works. We therefore have to use the existing foreign textbooks to satisfy the educational needs’ (57). Using the translated Western history textbook to address the needs of domestic needs was therefore legally approved.

Another reason that led to the widespread use of the translations from the West and Japan, as well as the lack of Chinese historical textbooks, was that Chinese intellectuals were suffering from a strong sense of frustration and weakness from the failure of the Hundred Days’ Reform in 1898. Some of them were fascinated by Western works and strived to promote Western Enlightenment. Meanwhile, they completely denied the value of Chinese culture and civilization, and some even argued for the Chinese language to be substituted by Esperanto. This attitude was radically distinct from the long-existing national pride of the Han, which regarded the Han as the only standard of civilization. The phenomenon was criticized by some scholars, for instance by Liu Shipei (1906), who argued: ‘when they view the current things, there is nothing bad if it is foreign while there is nothing good if it is domestic. Thus the only concern of them is whether they look like foreigners when they try their best to pretend to be’ (300).

Since the late 19th century, Chinese students who had studied abroad made a great effort in organizing the study organizations and translating the foreign history textbooks, in order to meet the Chinese educational needs. During that period, the organizations which made a great contribution included *Huiwen*Society, *Dongwen*Society, *Guangzhi*Society, and etc., while the most significant publications were *Shangwu*Press (The Commercial Press) and *Wenming*Bookstore (The Civilization Bookstore). During the early 20th century, the Chinese translation industry was very active and a massive number of works were published, especially translations of foreign political and historical textbooks. However, this was because the fact that those great economic benefits could be made by publishing the translated textbooks. Some translators were eager to publish as many works as possible without properly identifying the comprehensive content of the works. This phenomenon was criticized by some scholars, for instance, *qunyi* Society (1903) made the following comments: ‘...translators with little understandings of the book, who randomly focused on some of the terms in haste and finished the work imprudently, can never negotiate with the authors. Some even regarded commercial benefits as the only target, entirety ignoring social decency, which only leads to a large number of translations that are far from being readable and that make little contribution to the inspiration of nationals’ consciousness’ (27). Due to such problems, a very limited number of Chinese translations of Western history textbooks were officially validated before the Chinese Revolution in 1911. The following table includes all the officially approved translations of Western history textbooks, which were widely adopted by most schools across the country and therefore exerted a considerable impact in Chinese education.

|  |  |  |  |
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| **Publication Time** | **Title** | **Author/Editor** | **Publishing Press** |
| 1899 | *dongyang shiyao* (The Summarized History of Asian), | Kuwabara Jitzuzõ (Japanese), translated by Fan Bingqing | The Commercial Press |
| 1899 | *Zhina tongshi* (The General History of China) | Naka Michiyo (Japanese), written in Chinese | The Study Society of Eastern Literature |
| 1902 | *Zhina shiyao* (The Summarized History of China) written by Sanjirõ | Sanjirõ Ichimura (Japanese), translated by Chen Yi | The *Guangzhi* Book Store |
| 1903 | *Zhina siqiannian kaihuashi* (A History of 4000 Years Chinese Civilization) | Chinese boy (Pseudonym) | The Chinese Translating Press. |
| 1903 | *Zhina wenmingshi* (The History of Chinese Civilization). | Shirakawa Jiro and Kokufu Tanenori (Japanese) | The *Jinghua* Bookstore |
| 1904 | *Zuixin zhongguo jiaokeshu zhongguolishi* (The latest middle school textbook: Chinese history) | Xia Zengyou | The Commercial Press |
| 1905 | *Zhongguo lishi jiaokeshu* (The textbook of Chinese history) | Liu Shipei | The Quintessence Press |
| 1908 | *Zhongxue zhongguolishi jiaokeshu* (The middle school textbook: Chinese history) | Zhang Qin | The *Wenming* Book Store |
| 1908 | *Benguo shi* (The national history) | Shen Engao | The Chinese National Company |
| 1909 | *Xinbian zhongguolishi quanshu* (The Newly Edited of Comprehensive Chinese history) | Zhang Yunli | The Commercial Press |
| 1909 | *Zhongguo lishi duben* (A reading book of Chinese history) | Wu Zengqi | The Commercial Press |

4.1 The origin of the Chinese nation

Consideration of the origin of the nation is one of the main focuses in national historiography of the 19th century and early 20th century. This approach focuses on the constitution of the national group, and aims to identify the inner characteristics of the group members (e.g. their somatic appearance, language, culture etc.), based on which it is allegedly possible to identify and trace the same or similar, supposedly objective characteristics of members of the same nation in space and time. On the basis of this, Chinese historians in the 19th century and early republican era sought to analyse the relationship of their nation and other nations, and thereby also contributed to the development of a sense of the collective self and its others. This historiographical approach was the main theme manifest in national history in the late 19th century and early 20th century, during which period social conflicts were especially radical in both Chinese society and on a global scale, while theoretical enquiries into the phenomenon of nationalism began in earnest. Heinrich von Treitschke (1874, cited in Lawrence, 1979: 17) a German nationalist historian and politician noted,

War is political science par excellence. Over and over again has it been proved that it is only in war that a people becomes in very deed a people. It is only in the common performance of heroic deeds for the sake of the Fatherland that a nation becomes truly and spiritually united.

Though it is the fact that there is no fashioned general theory which can be applied to all cases (Smith, 1998: 10), research on national historiography at this stage was largely ‘ethical’ (Umut, 2000: 12). Since the doctrine and systematic meaning and theory of nationalism was still unfurling during the late 19th century, most scholars, including those Chinese intellectuals at that time, were writing or editing history within the embracement of nationalism. Stefan Berger (1999) noted, ‘the nineteenth century witnessed the increasing professionalization of historical writing’, which was closely linked with ‘the task of nation-building’ (10), and therefore showed ‘remarkable zeal in demonstrating the uniqueness of their particular nation-state’ (12). Suny Ronard (2001) further concluded that even historians not directly involved in nation-building endeavours were often ‘deeply affected by the emerging discourse of the nation’ and generally did not question ‘the progressive evolution of peoples into nations, and the claim that nations had a unique right to sovereignty and political representation’ (346). Thus, the construction and conceptualization of Chinese national identity can be unearthed from the study of various written sources in its national historiography.

Regarding the school textbooks in history, my first concern is the origin of China and the Chinese. The origin of the Chinese was narrated in a wide range of fairy tales, but there were hardly any reliable historical resources recorded in Chinese. Consciousness of national identity was not a major concern of Chinese scholars until the modern era, during which time Western ideas of nation, race and ethnicity in social sciences research were widely brought into China. One of the scholars dealing with this topic, Lu (1987) argued that there was little evidence shown that the Chinese had been residing in the territory beyond the historical records, or were migrated from somewhere else. He considered that the Chinese people had a lack of knowledge about foreign countries in the past, and regarded their nation as *tianxia* (the entire world). However, ‘the comprehension of the outside world has been strengthened that the Chinese start to recognize that China is only one of the nations in the world’ (7), and more important, to acknowledge that other nations with their own civilizations exist (*ibid*).

*Wailai shuo* (foreignness)

With regard to discussion of the origin of the Chinese nation, which can be equally referred to as the origin of the Han, *tuzhu shuo* (nativeness) and *wailai shuo* (foreignness) are the only theories that have been considered. The scholars in the first camp claimed that the Han originated within the territory of China, while the rest argued that the territory was originally occupied by barbarians which were subsequently replaced by the incoming Han. This view, regarding the Han as an exotic immigrant to Chinese territory, dominated discussion of the origin of the Chinese nation during the period from the late Qing to the early 1930s.

One of the most important works discussing the origin of the Chinese nation is *zaoqizhongguowenming de xifangqiyuan* (Western Origin of the Early Chinese Civilization), written by French sinologist Terrien de Lacouperie (1844~1894) published in 1894. It was noted in his article:

Narkhunte, also known as Nai Hwang Ti, along with Elamite were addressed as the KudurNakrhunte, who fought and gained themselves fame and dignity by a side of the Tigris River, also played a crucial role in moving Bark towards the East, through Turkestan and finally settling down at the East of Kunlun. This happened during the period from the 24th to the 27th century BC. One of the Bark groups separated themselves from the majority and travelled towards the North where Yenisei River was. Recent discovery by the river also found the evidence of their words ever existed. Meanwhile, those of who failed to make themselves to the East, had emerged with the North Tibatan. In this massive migration, the leader was known as Huang Di, according to the China’s ancient history (1903 [1894]: 11).

He cited hundreds of similarities in the fields of astronomical calendar, language, science and technology, invention and the political system between China and Babylon, and therefore concluded that Chinese civilization resulted from emigration from Babylon. His idea was rapidly echoed by some Japanese scholars, e.g. Shirakawa Jiro and Kokufu Tanenori (1903). One of the representatives in this camp was Jiang Zhiyou, who published *zhongguorenzhongkao* (The Investigation into the Origin of the Chinese) on *Xinmin Congbao* (New Citizen Journal) in 1903, edited by Liang Qichao. In this article, Jiang comprehensively explored Lacouperie’s work, and tried to provide evidence from the records of ancient Chinese history to support Lacouperie’s theories. This theory, claiming that Chinese people emigrated from another territory was widely accepted in the school textbooks during the late Qing period and the early Republic.

The book *dongyang shiyao* (The Summarized History of Asia) written by Japanese sinologist Kuwabara Jitzuzõ, published in 1899, and recommended by Liang Qichao as ‘the best work on Japanese history’, defined the origin of the Han as ‘an immigrated group from Babylon to the mainland, which settled down by the Yellow River and thrived across the Chinese territory’ (1909 [1899]: 15). He went further to argue: ‘the Yellow Race trekked from North-West of Babylon, decided to end their journey in *shu* (Sichuan Province in current China)’ (15). Kuwabara Jitzuzõ clearly used racial markers to define the Han since he constructed the Han as being a part of the ‘yellow race’. He summarized the consideration of the origin of Han from the exotic nations into three assumptions: some thought the group passed through Qinhai which was located in the Northern part of Tibet; others considered that the group travelled through *shu* and afterwards settled down alongside the Yangtze River; while the rest claimed that the ancestor of the Han followed the flow of the Yellow River and eventually settled down in *shu* (*ibid*)*.* Jitzuzõ believed that the Huang Emperor was born in and grown up in Babylon, led one of the ethnic groups emigrating towards the East and had arrived at the Yellow River in 2280 AC finally (16).

Another Japanese work *zhina shiyao* (The Summarized History of China) written by Sanjirõ (1902) supported Jitzuzõ’s ideas: ‘Hanese were immigrated from North-west, and further multiplied their descendants, and progressively travelled towards the South and excluded the Miao nationality, and eventually dominated the entire China’ (4). Although Sanjirõ did not clearly point out the origin of the Hanese (which was clarified by Jitzuzõ as Babylon), he considered Han as a group which definitely immigrated from elsewhere.

The Chinese intellectuals were found in this camp as well. For example, Liu Shipei, in his *zhongguo lishi jiaokeshu* (The Textbook of Chinese History*),* published in 1906, clearly supported the claim that the Han Chinese originated from Babylon: ‘The Han was originally prospective in Chaldea of Babylon, which was known as *tai di* in the ancient works. It went over the Kunlun Mountain (presently known as Pamirs), crossed *daxia* (presently located in the Mid Asia) and eventually resided in the middle of China. For that reason, the so-called *huaxia* by the West was sourced from the Flower Kngdomof the Kunlun[[3]](#footnote-3). Liu further made an effort in quoting the relevant literature in the Western works to find the clues echoing the corresponding contents, including the fields of academia, technology, writing character and literature, within the traditional Chinese society. By identifying the similarities and interconnections between Chinese and Babylonian cultures, Liu concluded that the Han originated from Babylon (*ibid*). Liu’s thought caught up with Jitzuzõ’s idea, and doubly approved the correspondence by adopting the same methods of review, that the human race originated in the West.

The theory of *wailai shuo* dominated Chinese academia until the early republic. Some scholars considered that the wide acceptance of *wailai shuo* was considerably influenced by admiration of Western civilization and regarded the theory of *wailai shuo* as a special effort trying to link traditional Chinese ancestor worship and the West, in order to create a national equality by highlighting the similarities between Chinese and Western civilizations (e.g. Lu, 2001 & Sun, 2004). Other scholars went further to argue that there could not be any consideration of the origin of the nation before Chinese civilization had been included in the national order of the West (Sun, 2004).

After the erosion the Opium War in 1840, the Qing government had no choice but to accept the fact that China was only one of many nations in the world. However, due to the long-term policy of seclusion by the Qing court, most Chinese intellectuals had very little knowledge and understanding of the wider social landscape outside China.

The Chinese geographer Xu Jiyu’s book (1849) *yinghuan zhilve* (A Short Account of the Maritime Circuit) made a great impact on many intellectuals, including Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, in helping them understand the geographical composition of the world (Fred, 1975). The Qing court’s failure of the First Sino-Japanese War generated a deep sense of crisis, which led Chinese intellectuals to re-place China into an expanded wider landscape. However, this new interpretation of China as well as the world was strongly shaped by racial stereotypes. Even for the very famous Chinese scholar Yanfu, who had studied in Britain, simply quoted Asia with the yellow race, and Europe with the white race (1986 [1898]).

The wide acceptance of the theory of *wailaishuo*, was strongly influenced by the political ends which needed to be served. Due to China’s declining international status, it was the first time that Chinese civilization, which was based on Han cultural and moral standard, was radically challenged. The focus of national origin mostly relied on the existence of objective historical records. Nevertheless, these existing objective data, could still be selected, elaborated, and narrated in different ways to transport different meanings. Moreover, those objective sources were recorded by human beings, who with no exception owned their own memory with their own standard of judgment. Some scholars categorize (e.g. Kohl & Fawcett, 1995) two different kinds of elites: professional historians and political scientists, who usually attempt to provide a ‘dispassionate’ record of the past, versus politicians and opinion leaders, who on the other hand, always seek to ‘persuade the public of the correctness of policies they advocate’ (Liu & Hilton, 2005: 541). In the case I am studying, these two types of intellectuals were mostly working together, by claiming the necessity of national integration, in order to serve the shared goals – to save China.

It was very hard for Chinese intellectuals during the late Qing period to find a balance in the controversy between the sense of urgent political inferiority and that of traditional cultural superiority. Western races, who used to be described as strange groups, exerted a strong control in international communications. The perception of *wailaishuo* was actually an attempt to relate the powerful West to China, racially and culturally. This was an effort to find geographic evidence in order to support the long-term superiority of Han civilization.

With the appearance of more evidence shown from archaeology as well as the impacts from the international environment, this was gradually replaced by another theory *tuzhu shuo* (nativeness), which will be discussed in the next part of the report.

4.2 The signification of *minzu* and the position of Han

At the end of the Qing Dynasty, history textbooks usually used the term *minzu* to identify and categorize social groups, signifying the content of nation, “race” and ethnicity. The historian of the late Qing consistently addressed “*minzu*” as an important element of history, and made a great effort to discuss and explain the term. As mentioned in the previous part of the report, the earliest history textbooks during the late Qing were mostly edited and translated from Japanese. For example, in *Shinashiyō* (The Summarized History of China), Sanjirō (1902) listed five *renzhong* (national groups), namely Miao, Han, Mongol, Manchu and Hui, to describe the Chinese *minzu.*

In *dongyang shiyao* (The Summarized History of Asia), Kuwabara Jitzuzõ (1899) categorized the various groups in Japanese history as representing the “Asian race”, which ‘was permanently in domination regardless of any social changes’ (15). In order to demonstrate the detailed categorization of Asian groups in Jitzuzõ’s book, I offer the following chart.



Jitzuzõ saw the Asian Race as being divided into two major groups: the Chinese and the Syberian. The former consisted of the Hanese, the Tibetian, the China *Jiaozhi,* and the latter consisted of the Japanese, the Tungusian, the Mongolian and the Turkish. The construction of his categorization of the yellow was not comprehensively explained; nevertheless, he used various social markers in identifying the yellow race, e.g. territory boundaries, collective origin, and etc. He further explained the racial hierarchy within Asian groups in this way: the Han, Tungus, Mongol and Turkey were the most important *renzhong* in Asian history, while the rest were considered less significant. His standard of judging the importance of *minzu* was based on that whether those *minzu* had governmentally dominated the Chinese mainland. Jitzuzõ considered the Han to be the most important *zhong* in the Asian history, which originally inspired the Asian civilization. However, he denied that the Han was the dominant nation in Chinese history; instead, he thought the above-mentioned five national groups as having ruled China in sequence (6~8).

It has been shown that, in Chinese history textbooks edited by different Japanese authors, the Han nation was considered important but only as one of the national groups in Chinese history, which shared the same political status with other national communities, though being more culturally powerful. However, the comprehensive explanation of the Han, the role of minority groups, as well as the relationship between the Han and the remaining minorities, was distinct in Chinese edited history textbooks. In *zhina siqianniankaihuashi* (A History of 4000 Years of Chinese Civilization) (1903), the author provides a detailed description in both physical and spiritual ways of the various *renzhong* in China. This can serve as a telling example of how the description of the various *renzhong* in Chinese-edited textbooks differed from the one in Japanese textbooks:

The Miao was the most ancient group and had been inhabitants of the Yangze river, Huai river and its environs, who were the most obstreperous amongst others. The Hanese, who is widely considered as the initiates of China, occupies the largest portion of Chinese territory. Although the Han experienced rise and fall at later stage, most of the emperors in various dynasties were Hanese, which is the reason that the Han dominates the Chinese mainland and shows an influential impact to Chinese society. Compared to other minority groups, the Hanese are the most educated and intelligent group. The Mongolian was the most violent group and obsessed with destruction. It became weak and less aggressive as a result of superstition of religion which fooled them by the Russians. The Manchu’s appearance of look was very close to the Hanese, but looks more vivacity in characteristics. The Hui poses little difference to the Han nowadays, yet it believes in Moslemism (5~7).

The book *zhina siqianniankaihuashi* (A History of 4000 Years of Chinese Civilization) (1903) was revised from the Japanese edited textbook *Shinashiyō* (The Summarized History of China) (Sanjirō, 1902). Although the *renzhong* listed in the former book were the same as those in the latter, the narration was radically changed in the Chinese version. Sanjirō briefly introduced the origin, distribution and developing process of each *renzhong,* without any evaluation and judgment. Instead, in the book *zhina siqianniankaihuashi* (A History of 4000 Years of Chinese Civilization) (1903), the author’s evaluation and criticism of all the other minority groups were fully based on the Han as the highest standard. The Han civilization was seen as the only standard of cultural and civilized judgment, the Han moral system was viewed as the only standard of social virtue. This construction of Han-central narration, which established a clear social hierarchy in the relationship between Han and minorities based on the constructed superiority of the former, and the constructed inferiority of the latter, was widely seen in Chinese edited history textbooks during the late Qing period.

In Xia Zengyou’s (1904) *zuixinzhongguojiaokeshuzhongguolishi* (The Latest Middle School Textbook: Chinese History), he alternatively referred the term China and Han to China when he discussed the origin of China (2~3). In his opinion, the Han was not only the dominant nation, but also the unique pure ethnic group in China. In the discussion of the origin of China, he investigated the origin of Han without mentioning any of the remaining minority groups, for example, he noted: ‘with regard to the origin of China, it was named as the Han by the Xiongnu[[4]](#footnote-4)during the Han Dynasty’ (3). This textbook, which had been re-published six times from 1904 to 1907, was widely admired by some famous scholars at that time. For example, Liang Qichao (2003 [1903]) praised his work as ‘a fresh view of Chinese history’ (68). It therefore created a great impact in Chinese school education during the late Qing period.

We can see from the above that the definition of *minzu* was strongly influenced by the social background in the late Qing period, during which the Chinese nation was radically challenged by the Western threat that created an urgent necessity for cooperation between the Han and other minorities in China in order to defend China against a shared opponent.

4.3 The interpretation of minority groups – separation and combination

The construction of the self is always intertwined with the construction of other. The understanding and interpreting of minority groups was simultaneously altered with changes in the representation of Han. The term *zhonghua minzu* (Chinese nation) appeared in academic discussion in the late Qing. The shift of the term and the meaning it referred to can be generally summarized in three ways: firstly it referred to all the independent nations within Chinese territory or Chinese history, in China. This meaning was mostly adopted by Japanese edited textbooks. For example, in Jitzuzõ’s (1899) work, although he claimed that the Han was the most important group in the Asian history by promoting Asian civilization, he did not mention the Han was the dominant group in Chinese history. On the other, the term *minzu* can sometimes mean the collection of nations, among which the Han performed an absolute dominance. For example, Liu Shipei (1906), in his *zhongguo lishi jiaokeshu* (The Textbook of Chinese History), included the mentioning of other *minzu* within the Chinese territory when he discussed national integration and separation; however, the term *minzu* only referred to the Han when he was dealing with the term *zhongguo renmin* (Chinese people). This understanding of *minzu* was often mixed with the third interpretation of the term that exclusively referred to the Han nation. The latter two interpretations were mainly used in Chinese written or edited textbooks.

The long-term Chinese cultural tradition was constructed based on a potential rule that assumed there had been a natural hierarchy of ethnicities within China, with Han Chinese at the top while the minorities existed at the bottom. In various dynasties, some Hanese criminals were made to settle in the territory of those minorities, usually as a form of punishment. Moreover, *hanhua* (Hanization) was defined and widely accepted by elites as well as the Han public, as the only way of achieving civilization for those minority groups. Han intellectuals considered that it was their tasks and success to bring those minorities to a higher form of life, which was legitimized as the Han cultural and moral system.

The relationship between the Han and minority groups showed differently in the Japanese edited textbooks and those, which were Chinese self-edited. For example, the event of *wuhuluanhua* (The *wuhu* uprising Jin Dynasty) was described by most Chinese history textbooks for its importance. *Wuhu* was a Chinese term referring to the five northern minority tribes, which rose up against the Jin Dynasty (265~420) of China, and therefore delimited the territory of the Jin Dynasty (a Hanese regime established to the south of Huai River). The *wuhu* uprising was always seen as one of the most devastating events in Chinese history, since it introduced a fairly long period during which China was divided. In Jiro (1903) and Jitzuzõ’s (1899) books, the regimes respectively established by the Han and *hu* (barbarian) were both “states”. Jitzuzõ’ categorized the *hu* (barbarian) into China *jiaozhi* (minority groups within China). Jiro (1903) paid more attention to those *hu* heroes who successfully obtained some parts of the territory of the mainland which had belonged to Jin Dynasty, by admiring them as ‘the heroes with braveness and intelligence’ (1903: 40). Jiro’s narration on this part of history was based on an external angle, without the belief that the Han should be the host of the nation. Instead, he placed the Hu and Han into an equal position. Some Chinese intellectuals therefore judged that Jiro’s discourse was actually an effort in promoting Japanese domination in Asia, by questioning Han’s dominant role in China and driving a wedge between the Han and the minorities (Fu, 2002 [1931]). Fu considered that Japan was actively participating in the construction of the world in order to enhance its position in world history. To become the dominant country in Asia, the first task to be completed was to replace the traditional domination of China. Therefore, Fu criticized Jiro’s work for hardly containingany clues in tracing the origin of the national subject of China; instead, it seemed more like a territory carved up by different world powers (Fu, 2002 [1931]).

However, the narratives in those Chinese edited textbooks were made in a distinct way. For example, in Xia Zengyou’s (1904) *zuixinzhongguojiaokeshuzhongguolishi* (The Latest Middle School Textbook: Chinese History), the author described in detail the enthronement of the Xiongnu[[5]](#footnote-5) emperor as a *wei* (puppet) regime, and negatively described this process as full of intense pain of subjugation and humiliation. This was because the authors of these Chinese written textbooks were influenced by Han-based thinking, which defined the Han as the traditional and unique representative of Chinese civilization as well as the host of China. Thus, the nationalism promoted in the Chinese self-edited textbooks during the late Qing, was mostly Han nationalism, which could be proved by Zeng Kunhua’s (1903) book *zhongguolishi* (Chinese History). Zeng listed Han, Mongol, Tungus, Turkey, Tibet and Miao as the ethnic groups which had even existed in Chinese history. He used the term *benzu* (our nation) to refer to the Han, and further argued that Chinese history was actually the history of Han, which fully contributed to the shaping of current China. The other five nations were therefore named as *waizu* (alien nation). According to this, Zeng concluded the different status of social hierarchy in the long-term Chinese society: ‘Han is the main trunk of China, while the rest five minorities are the branches. Chinese history was therefore constructed by the combination of trunk and branches’ (18).

This explains why, in the representations of the Other, it is significant that the exoticization and eroticization of the minorities in China served as a daily reminder of the cultural and moral superiority of the Han.The construction of Chinese national identity was based on the perception of Han superiority, with the portrayal of the Other as immoral and barbarous. This point was widely demonstrated in Chinese written textbooks and other literature.

The perceived splendidness of Chinese civilization was emotionally elaborated in all the history textbooks written by Chinese authors. This was at least partially due to Chinese decline in international conflicts. Representing history is a useful mechanism in challenging the legitimacy of the existing social order, which was generally performed in the interests of white superiority as well as Han inferiority (compared to what used to be) in the social hierarchy of that time.

After the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911, the explanation and evaluation of this event was considerably changed because of different political aims. This will be discussed in the next part of the report.

**5. Period II: 1911 - 1919**

The prominent pieces of Japanese history were compiled to be Chinese school history textbooks which brought worry to the intellectuals of China. This was an efficient method to gradually indoctrinate the Chinese primary and secondary school students with Japanese scholars’ conception of history and their values and, with the help of school history education, to imperceptibly influence and ultimately achieve cultural colonization.

The lack of reliable historical sources and the weakness of China as a nation-state commonly meant that Chinese education in history considerably relied up on Western and Japanese sources, which had already been narrativized in the Enlightenment mode (Duara, 1905). Many important Chinese scholars during the late Qing period were making an effort in “narrating” Chinese history to achieve different political aims; therefore, Chinese history was assimilated into a progress of universal history. This re-producing progress manifests a need to represent ‘the heterophony of the Chinese past’, as well as ‘a Chineseness that is simultaneously Western and Chinese’ (27). However, my study is not intended to provide an original history of China; instead, it aims to discuss different layers of narratives, as well as the corresponding social crisis they contributed to and were influenced by. By using various markers for categorization and corresponding including and excluding , the Han has been defined and represented.

It is noticeable that Chinese intellectuals and cultural elites were clearly convinced by the significant function of history education in cultivating national consciousness when comparing it with other subjects in school. They believed that the compiled and translated versions of history textbooks discouraged the impact of such a function, and insisted that it is an essential requirement for Chinese students to use history textbooks which were written by Chinese. This also showed the wave of modern patriotism in school history education. In 1910, some scholars even wrote a detailed report to demonstrate the great negative impact on such educational phenomenon that most textbooks were relied on the translations. Pan Shusheng (1910) argued, ‘there are a variety of types of history school textbooks in China, though most are copied from the Western literature that have been cut and modified. However, none of these textbooks are suitable for contemporary Chinese education’ (21). Therefore, one of the unavoidable results will be that ‘foreigners might have destroyed all of us before the widespread of schools’ (23). Pan defined the function of school textbooks in the training of national character and the maintaining of nationally consanguineous continuation. This idea was shared by Qian Mu (1913), who wrote that the ‘history lesson is the important subject of national education, which is designed for the formation of national character of a specific nation instead of any other nation’ (57). He considered, ‘we have our own national culture and customs while other nations have theirs, thus the information brought by other nations to their nationals are definitely not for our students’ (57). Pan and Qian’s ideas are similar to Meinecke, who was educated in the tradition of Rankean historiography. According to Rankean, the social sciences should attempt to uncover ‘the general characteristics of nations’; it is the responsibility of the historian to ‘concentrate more on observing the particular features of an individual nation as faithfully and precisely as possible’ (1970 [1907]: 10). It is demonstrated from the works written by Chinese intellectuals at this time that history was performed as a patriotic mission, and more, it was the responsibility of these writers to construct the nation as a legitimate object and to enable recognition of the nation-state as the ‘supreme value and final goal of history’ (Meinecke, 1970 [1907]: 21).

After the establishment of the Republic of China, in regard to the educational aims of middle school, the government promulgated the *putongjiaoyuzanxingbanfatongling* (Interim Regulation on orders of General Education) (1912), in which it was stated that the ‘thrust of the historical education is to introduce the important events and social changes in history, the evolution of nations, the rise and fall of other nations, with extra emphasis on the revolution of political system as well as the foundation of the establishment of the Republic of China’ (23). The textbooks used in the late Qing period were forbidden according to the Interim Regulation (*ibid*).

5.1 The origin of China

In the last section, the theory of *wailai shuo* (foreignness) was discussed in relation to the origin of China. After the establishment of the first republic, influenced by data provided by social archaeology research, and also the international environment, the dominance of *wailai shuo* was gradually replaced by *tuzhu shuo* (nativeness) in Chinese academia and the edition of school textbooks. Scholars[[6]](#footnote-6) in other camps claimed that the Chinese emanated and multiplied their descendants within the mainland. This gradually became the dominant position in this field of study after the establishment of Republic of China. The famous British scholar Bertrand Russell, in his book *The Problem of China* (1923), pointed out the confusion concerning the origin of the Chinese: ‘…where the Chinese came from is a matter of conjecture. Their early history is known only from their own annals, which throws no light upon the question’ (18). However, he afterwards argued: ‘It seems certain that, when Chinese history begins, the Chinese occupied only a small part of what is now China, along the banks of the Yellow River (*ibid*)’. He also highlighted the uniqueness of Chinese culture in that ‘the traditional civilization of China had developed in almost complete independence of Europe, and had merits and demerits quite different from those of the West’ (10).

In the early 1920s, *wailai shuo* had been criticized in some of the Chinese textbooks. For example, Jin Zhaozi (1925), in his work *chuzhongbenguoshi* (The National History Textbook for Junior High School), published in 1925, showed a clear critical attitude towards the claim that the Chinese originally derived from elsewhere. Another significant work on this topic was *Zhina tongshi* (The General History of China), written by a Japanese sinologist Naka Michiyo (1903). In *shangshishi* (History of the Last century), he pointed out that the Chinese enlightenment rose at a very early stage, compared to the rest of the nations in South-West Asia. The ancestors of the Hanese, who were a group of aboriginal people living in tribes, addressed themselves, as well as this land, as *huaxia* (8). Naka was convinced that the Han were the native residents, had an early Enlightenment, and were advanced well ahead of nearby groups, especially in their standard of manners and music, which formed its own style and mature civilisation. He therefore concluded that, the Han group was sufficiently equipped to be defined as a nation (9). However, there had not been enough attention paid to his argument. The theory of *tuzhu shuo* (nativeness) was not completely constructed until 1920s.

With respect to the origin of the Chinese, Chinese academics had identified two stages dominating the two distinct theories: *wailai shuo* and *tuzhu shuo*. Some scholars, who used to be firmly convinced of *wailai shuo,* shifted into support for *tuzhu shuo* after 1920s. For example, Lu Simian, who made a great effort in seeking for the evidence to support *wailai shuo* in his book *baihuabenguoshi* (A simple discussion on national history), published in 1923, later fundamentally changed his proposition to promote *tuzhu shuo*: ‘Han was the major *minzu* lived in the *zhongyuan* (the central plain of China), with the independence of its unique language, custom and culture. This *minzu* originally resided alongside the Yellow River and the Yangtze River, and afterwards explored towards all four cardinal directions’ (1987 [1933]: 1). He even felt guilty about having previously supported *wailai shuo* (8).

In the study of Chinese origins, one of the main concerns is the tracing of ancestors. Huang-di, also named as the Yellow Emperor, is a legendary Chinese sovereign and cultural hero presented in Chinese mythology. He was widely regarded as the ancestor of all *huaxia* Chinese.During the early period of the first republic, the idea of claiming that all of the Chinese nations shared the same origin, identifing the yellow race, as well as the ancestor of the Yellow Emperor, was widespread within the Chinese academy. For example, Zhong Yulong, in his *xinzhibenguoshijiaoben* (The Newly Edited History Textbook) (1914) argued: ‘all of Han, Manchu, Mongol, Hui and Tibet belong to the yellow race, with the same origin’ (1).

The process that reaches the confirmation of *wailai shuo* through its erosion and decline,to the construction of *tuzhu shuo*, demonstrates the consciousness and re-recognition of the national identity in Chinese society. Although *tuzhu shuo* gradually became a mainstream in Chinese academia especially after the 1930s, it is not the period I am going to mainly focus on in my project. In the next part of the report, I will investigate the reflections of and interconnections between the categories of nation, race and ethnicity in the content of school textbooks.

The appearance of the concept that the Chinese originated from the West is viewed by some Chinese scholars as the reflection of a feeling of failure among Chinese people. It is off-focus to argue whether the concept is reasonable; instead, the emphasis is laid on the collapse of the national confidence. The establishment of the idea that the Chinese came from the West was based on the belief and complete acceptance of the ideology of Western superiority, which was represented in national, racial and ethnical ways. It was considered by some Chinese scholars that the total acceptance of *wailai shuo* somewhat contradicted the basic idea of nationalism. This is because the representations of history can greatly impact upon a group’s social identity. Dresler-Hawke (2000) considers that the salience of a group’s history in both positive and negative aspects can create ‘feelings of collective a same or guilt and willingness to compensate the ‘wronged’ group’ (Liu & Hilton, 2005: 550). Branscombe *et al.* (1999) argues that the descriptive component in social representations forms the analogies which somehow echo the present social background. It should be noticed that the shift from theories of *wailai shuo* to *tuzhu shuo* happened in the early republican era, thus it was linked with the establishment of the authority and legitimacy of the new government. The weakness shown by the late Qing government created a feeling of failure among Chinese people, so that many of them tended to completely deny the long-lasting Chinese civilization, culture and customs (He, 1920: 80). Changes in the representation of history are a useful means by which a disadvantaged group can challenge the legitimacy of the existing social order.

5.2 The signification of *minzu* and the position of Han

The understanding of the term *minzu* in textbooks during the early Republic of China was closely linked to concepts of *wuzugonghe* (the Republic of Five Races) and *zhonghua minzu* (Chinese nation). *Wuzugonghe* was one of the major principles upon which the Republic of China was originally founded. This principle emphasized the harmony of the five major ethnic groups in China as represented by coloured stripes of the Five-Coloured Flag of the Republic: the Han (red), the Hui (white), the Manchurians (yellow), the Mongolians (blue) and the Tibetans (black). In most textbooks, the national groups within the Chinese territory, including all the five nations which have been mentioned, were conceptualized as *minzu*; meanwhile, the collection of all the nations within China was named as the Chinese nation, which was conceptualized into the category of *minzu* as well. On the other hand, the recognition of all ethnic groups in China as constituting the Chinese nation was established and widely accepted after the establishment of the Republic of China. Those textbooks published in the early republican era clearly criticized the existing textbooks written around Han centrality. For example, Zhong Yulong (1914) argued, ‘most of our national history works were focused on the Han, with obvious prejudices towards other nations. This book will view *wuzugonghe* as the principle, with equal attention to the development and integration of the Manchu, the Hui, the Mongol and the Tibet. Even for those conflicts between them and Han, I will not judge by preference, in order to strengthen the emotion between these five nations and Han, and to promote national integration’ (1).

Although the importance of national integration had been especially highlighted during this period echoing the corresponding political environment, the Han were continuously represented as a culturally superiority. For example, in ZhongYulong’s (1914) *xinzhi benguoshi jiaoben* (The Newly Edited History Textbook), he noted,

‘the Han, the Manchu, the Mongol, the Hui and the Tibet commonly belong to the yellow race, and shared the same origin. They were all immigrated from the West by groups, among which the Han was brought by the Yellow Emperor… Compared to the other four nations, the Han owned the best location of territory and the most brilliant culture, which can be never reached by any other minority groups’ (3).

Although Zhong admitted that the same origin was shared by the five nations, his argument was based on a concept of Han cultural superiority, which was very similar to the traditional ideas of Han’s domination in Chinese society. His discourse was not accepted by all scholars. Liang Qichao was one of those who disagreed with Zhong’s ideas and claimed a broader conception of the nation. Liang conceptually clarified the term nation and state by differentiating the two different degrees of nationalism: *da minzu zhuyi* (large nationalism) and *xiao minzu zhuyi* (small nationalism). He noted, ‘small nationalism is used to describe the opposition between Han and other national groups within China while large nationalism is used to describe the opposition between the united China consisted of all the nations and all the foreign nations (*guowai zhi zhuzu*) (1990 [1903]: 1069~1070). He thus advocated the adoption of large nationalism and the abandonment of small nationalism, as a means of confronting the threat of imperialism. According to him, whether or not the Manchu and Han shared the same origin was much less important than what he considered the inseparable national relationship between these two nations during the historical development. He claimed: ‘It is the fact that the Manchu has been fully assimilated into China … Indeed the construction of the Chinese state, has nothing to do with anti-Manchuism’ (*ibid*).

The theory of self-categorization helps explain this change, which posits a functional antagonism between identities at different levels of inclusiveness. Reicher and Hopkins (2001:38) explain the way it is accomplished. According to them, the mechanism of self-categorization is not only echoing a situational context; rather, it is able to represent the levels of inclusiveness and exclusiveness that mobilizes shared social identity with a socially constructed definition. It legitimizes the identity and standard behaviour of the group, and who owns the right to speak for the group, which defines who can be categorized as and who should be marked as Other; meanwhile, who should be the host of the group while the rest should be categorized as the supporters of the group. Indeed, the development of definition of *minzu*, which can be explained as a process of social identification, was not only promoting an identity, but also, constructing an identity with a particular agenda. This was reflected in China as a will to establishing a multi-ethnic national-state, with Han dominance.

5.3 The interpretation of minority groups

From the macro point of view of historical development, the conceptualisation of the Chinese nation experienced a change from radical Hanism to the claim of coexistence of Han and other minority groups from the late Qing period to the early republican era. With more weakness showed by the late Qing government, and the deepening national crisis, the importance of claiming Coexistism was increasingly emphasized and highlighted. These results are very close to the analysis on the discourse of Chinese intellectuals I have outlined in the previous report. Zhang Binglin and Sun Zhongshan were both radical in the discussion on the relationship between the Manchu and Han in their early stage. Both of them made an effort in seeking for various social markers in both racial and cultural ways to differentiate the Manchu and Han, and claimed that the Han was the unique representative of Chinese culture and civilization. However, their attitude changed to some extent at later stage, even though their conviction in the supremacy and leadership qualities of the Han prevailed. Most Chinese intellectuals showed a clear support for national integration among all groups involved, and some of them started to criticize some aspects of the long-lasting Han domination.

In regards to the origin of the Chinese, the theory of monogenism was gradually replaced by the theory of national assimilation. More attention paid to the significance of a collective identity of the various nations in China especially after the establishment of the first Republic.

The concept of national assimilation was understood and interpreted in different ways at different times. However, its main doctrine was that of Han’s cultural superiority. It was originally equated with the process of Hanization, in which minority groups were gradually included into Han by fully accepting and adapting its advanced civilization. The process of Hanization is monodirectional, which means that the Han cultural and moral system was the only social standard of ‘being civilized’. In short, whether and how much behave like the Han, was the only ruler measuring the level of civilization. On the other hand, the impact of minority groups to Han was almost described in a fairly negative way, including warfare and destruction. Those minority groups which had not been included in the Han, were therefore excluded from Chinese history. National assimilation was explained in various ways by Chinese scholars. Liang Qichao (1903) introduced and promoted the concept of nationalism in the early 20th century based on national assimilation. He had also seen the existence of assimilation between some Chinese nations over a long period of time and the fact that ‘China had an outstanding power of assimilation and had been approved by the Eastern and Western historians’ (13). It is the assimilation between nations that made up Chinese history. Liang summarized that between Chinese nations various kind of relations were established, Northern Wei nation was an exception and was hardly swayed by assimilation whereas Dong Hu nation virtually had no difference when compared to Han. Liang’s idea of national assimilation claims that a number of Chinese nations were assimilated by the Han.

Zhao Yusen (1913) listed six different nations in China in his *xinzhubenguoshi* (The Newly Edited National History), namely, Han, Mongol, Eastern Hu, Turkic, Tangut and Miao. The description of these nations was almost identical to that of historians from the Qing Dynasty apart from its emphasis on the status of being between Han and the other minority groups: ‘the interrelationship and organization among these nations contributed to the unity and formation of a unique country as a whole’ (2~3). He further prominently claimed the homology in regard to the origin of all the nations within Chinese territory. He argued that, all the existing nations in the world shared the same origin. They became distinct from each other by the differentiation of their physical appearance and skin colour after branching out and being influenced by various climates in different regions (3). For the people of China, ‘they are differentiated by being split into six different nations along with the ownership of different residential locations’ (4). However, those who read history should have a basic idea of that despite six separate nations; they were still closely related, densely populated and counted for nearly a quarter of the world population. The author further claimed, ‘it is the most glorious and fortunate to have all four hundred million people united as a whole to form a country’ (7). Zhan therefore concluded that, all the *minzu* within China were and should be sharing the same origin, and were only differentiated by the variation in their propagating locations. According to him, the six nations originated from the same source, which can never be separated. Based on this, the event of the *wuhu* uprising was evaluated in a distinct way during this period.

In Zhao Yusen’s (1913) *xinzhubenguoshi* (The Newly Edited National History), the author stated that the “ancient period” was the most crucial period for the formation of the Chinese nation and the assimilation of other nations with the Han. The “ancient period” was divided into four phases, among which the *wuhu* uprising happened in the fourth. According to the author, the *wuhu uprising* created substantial damage to Chinese culture; nevertheless, on the other hand it exerted a significant impact on the formation of the Chinese nation, promoting national integration (53). Moreover, ZhongYulong, in his *xinzhibenguoshijiaoben* (The Newly Edited History Textbook) (1914), narrated the event of the *wuhu* uprising as *wuhutonghua* (assimilation) and *Hanhua* (Hanisation). He noted:

after the *wuhu* uprising, Chinese language had been vitiated with the mixture and interlacement of languages of the Manchu, Mongol, Hui, Tibet and other minority groups, which marked the decay of the Han culture. However, the event of *wuhu* uprising simultaneously contributed to the interconnections and the national integration. Nevertheless, there was hardly any local and national culture of the Manchu, Hui, Mongol, Tibet and other minority groups, they had been therefore inevitably assimilated into the Han culture, which owned was definitely more powerful, after they entered into the mainland of China (57).

Hence, he concluded that the ‘invasion’ of the *wuhu* to the mainland, brought considerable catastrophe to the Han culture and resulted in the decay of Han; at the same time, it initiated and catalysed the integration of Han and the five minority groups. In other words, these five minority groups had been eventually assimilated into the Han (*ibid*). National integration during this period actually referred to the process of Hanization, which was monodirectional in only allowing the minorities to accept and follow the “superior” Han culture.

Contrary to the earlier theories that regarded the Han as the only pure Chinese, the contribution made by the minorities to national integration and the development of the Chinese nation was mentioned in the school textbooks during this time; however, national integration was mostly still limited on the Han-centre discussion. The authors of these textbooks started to notice the existence of ethnic and cultural minorities in Chinese history, though considered that the contribution made by these minorities to Chinese civilization was subordinate compared to the Han (Zhu, 2000). The national identity constructed by these scholars was borne out of the coexistence and aggregation of all the nations in China, which echoed the different needs of social conflicts and social background. Liu (2005) argues, ‘ethnic and national identities are often formed when disparate groups unify to achieve some shared goal, such as defending themselves against a shared opponent’ (544). The opponent for China at that time was described as Western imperialism in the text.

During this period, Chinese intellectuals were collectively influenced by the republican ideas of *wuzugonghe* claiming the importance of national integration, and promoted the idea that the traditional Chinese culture would be the culture of the Han, seen as the only representative and standard of Chinese civilization. The expression of identity proved somewhat controversial with the impact from politics, culture and other spheres. Prasenjit Duara (1995) made an argument in his view of the representation of Chinese history:

The history of China can no longer be innocently a history of the West or the history of the true China. It must attend to the politics of narratives – whether these be the rhetorical schemas we deploy for our own understanding or those of the historical actors who give us the world (26).

He therefore concluded that ‘nations emerge as the subjects of History just as History emerges as the ground, the mode of being, of the nation’ (27). The transformation in defining us and others in history school textbooks from the late Qing to the early republican era demonstrated the different levels of categorization chosen by the positioned group, which was the Han. Liu argued, ‘historical representations can be used as a means of positioning the identity of another group in relation to one’s own group’ (2005: 545). This was closely linked to the changes of Chinese intellectuals’ works, both of which were described as a ‘positive networking’ (Cinnirella, 1996), that ‘hegemonic representations of history, shared by all groups within a nation, facilitate a positive correlation between national identity and subgroup identities’ (Liu, 2005: 546). Facing the increasing social disorders and crises, Chinese historians and writers attempted to construct a new historical angle that allowed as many nations as possible to participate and be involved in the national agenda and the re-definition of the national identity, which was to some extent distinct from the traditional Han-centre cultural discourses, that had hitherto prevailed, while at the same time maintaining the doctrine of Han superiority and leadership.

However, these changes made no attempt to challenge the uniqueness of Han culture and its dominance in Chinese civilization. Instead, these representations were only used as a tool in positioning the identity of minority groups in relationship to Han nation, which was defined as the co-operators of the Han. Chinese intellectuals during the late Qing left no space for the minority groups to define themselves; instead, their position of identity and the level of their categorization were completely defined and legitimized by the Han. In the cases discussed above, categorization of being a member of a multi-ethnic united-state, was not voluntarily chosen by the minority group; rather, it was the necessity of Han intellectuals to promote an alliance in reaction to the Western threat.

However, although minority groups were described and categorized in different ways by scholars, it is not difficult to recognize that they made a potential agreement on vehemently believing that the non-Han are subjects of China, and should be grateful to be so. Moreover, combined with powerful political slogans, this even enhanced the legitimacy of the sense of superiority of the Han to all the primitive minorities to achieve a Han-defined national integration, with a celebration of those minorities being civilized. The effort made by the Han to achieve national integration was widely praised in history textbooks. However, the intent was to strip native peoples of their own culture and make them “civilized”.

Indeed, all these authors and intellectuals were making an effort to promote a nationalist ideology for the Chinese nation, which drew its strength from Han superiority at the political and cultural centre, with minority groups playing a supporting role. Despite the minus differences made by each author when they tried to conceptualize the perspectives of “race”, nation, ethnicity and *minzu*, admiration for Han civilization appeared centrally in all their writings. Although some writers encouraged equality between the Han and minorities, while the rest clearly promoted the unchangeable nature of Han dominance, all believed in Han superiority in cultural and moral spheres and all believed Han was the only standard of civilization in China.

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1. *Bingwu* is one of the branch year names in traditional Chinese calendar, which correspond to the year of 1903 in the Gregorian calendar. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Baguolianjun* (The Eight-Nation Alliance) was a military alliance made up of Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, which consisted of approximately 45,000 international troops. After the campaign, the Qing government was made to sign the Boxer Protocol in 1901 (O’Conner, 1973). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The West described the origin of *Hua* as that when immigrating towards the East, the founder of China was inspired by the Kunlun Mountain and addressed his nation as ‘Hua’ nation, which was kept and passed down, successively to his generations, and finally named “Hua”. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Xiongnu were a confederation of nomadic tribes from Central Asia with a ruling class of unknown origin. The identity of the ethnic core of Xiongnu has been a subject of varied hypotheses, since only a few words, mainly titles and personal names, were preserved in the Chinese historical sources. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The Xiongu was a confederation of nomadic tribes from Central Asia. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. For example, British Sinologist John Ross, who wrote the book *The Origin of the Chinese People* (1916), clearly claimed that the Chinese people originated within the Chinese territory instead of travelling there from elsewhere. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)