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#3 What is History?

1. In terms of personal experience and personal life, history is the recorded events of the past known to present day people. The information might not be completely accurate, but the truth may never be known. The true history may even be indistinguishable from false, but widely believed facts.

2. In the "Introduction to the Study of History" by Peter Landry, he describes four theories of history. The first theory he describes is the biblical theory, which is the theory that the events in history are the works of God. For example, God would chastise the Jews for their sins by using the events of history, such as defeat by neighboring nations. The second theory Landry describes is Hegel's theory of history. Hegel viewed that there are laws which move the development of cultures and countries. These cultures and countries have their lives essentially. The third theory he describes is the Marxist theory that the events of history were motivated by economic reasons and that these economic reasons play the unavoidable progress of history. The fourth theory Landry describes is his own. He states that history is a series of events that happened by chance that some people have gained knowledge of. I find Landry's theory to be the most acceptable because history is a chain of events and what caused those chain events and their significance seems to occur by chance. For example, according to Greek historian Herodotus, Lydians and Medes were engaged in battle, but a solar eclipse occurred during the battle. Both sides took this as a sign of angry gods and made peace with each other. In addition, during the siege of Vienna in 1529, the Ottoman army was forced to abandon their artillery because the ground was too wet from the particularly wet summer. As a result, the Ottoman army lost. Had it not rained too much that time of year, the Ottoman army could have won and it might still exist today, pushing back some of the European population at that time further west. Therefore, I find Landry's theory to be the most acceptable.

3. The articles, "Japan Revises History Texts" and "Hong Kong Protests China Patriotism Class" suggest that the true meaning of history lies in what is taught in schools. In "Japan Revises History Texts," Japan is attempting to leave out the mistakes the government made with downplaying 'comfort women,' the Nanjing Massacre and Okinawa's mass suicides. The people educated by these revised textbooks would not learn the truth about what happened for the sake of Japan restoring their reputation. The people in Japan might learn history, but they will not learn the whole thing. In addition, in "Hong Kong Protests China Patriotism Class," Hong Kong citizens show disapproval about mainland China's patriotism classes as they draw the Communist Party as being better than what they really are and leave out history about issues like the Tianmen Square crackdown or Ai Weiwei. By leaving out history, the mainland is attempting to change the thoughts of the children learning this material to provide overall support to China. Based on these texts, history is suggested to be what the government or people in power want others to think happened in the past.