Idea for a Class

The idea for this suggestion came about a few years ago with my parents of all things. For context, my parents are very traditional Chinese. This means a lot of things such as a strong emphasis on academics, friends must be approved by them, and more. However, if there was one thing my dad had trouble with, it was with Japanese culture. This was made extremely apparent one year when we went to Niagara Falls. I am a big nerd and back then, I was into a lot of idol gacha games. My dad was so mad, saying that the media would make me “violent”. As I grew up, I finally understood what he meant and why he would say that. When he was brought up in rural China, he was taught how the Japanese came to their country and killed hundreds of thousands, along with occupying territory and causing the whole problem with Taiwan. My dad from a young age was taught to hate the Japanese people for what they did to his country and how they were all savages for the brutal killings in the Rape of Nanking, the Sino-Japanese War, and invading Manchuria to list a few (“The Rape of Nanking.”, 2010). Looking into it, I was informed that from a young age, Chinese children are taught about the war crimes of Japan and the lack of any sincere apology (Fifield, 2011). This is because even though there are many apologies, they get contradicted by many different ministers who say otherwise and the creation of museums that immortalize war criminals (Fifield, 2011).

Along with this, I learned about the comfort women of Korea and how the Japanese invaded the country and took advantage of the women (Blakemore, 2018). The tensions are so severe that a bronze statue of a comfort woman was placed in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul to remind the Japanese of their crimes towards the country (Blakemore, 2018).

If I were to suggest a possible topic to talk about in this course, I would want to bring up the topic of the impact that Japan had on countries such as China and Korea in WWII and previous attacks on many countries. This would be an interesting topic because the impact of Japan’s actions can still be witnessed to this day, as many countries have animosity towards Japan. In addition to this, this class could allow for students to understand how the romanticization of Japanese culture is unhealthy since this gives them a pass for all the terrible atrocities they have committed and failed to apologize for. Adding on to this, the class can address the concept of Japanophilia and Japanophobia, which are terms that mean the love of Japanese culture and the fear/hatred of the Japanese culture, as many people have this fetishization of the culture and its people, which can be seen in otaku culture for example (Kuo & Hanaé, 2021). Japanophobia can be witnessed in people such as my dad, as they are taught to fear and hate the people for what their ancestors have done.

For the class assignment, I would recommend the students write a paragraph about how their thoughts have changed after the class. This is because compared to the other classes about religion and culture, it skips over a major part of the past 200 years of the country’s history. In addition to this, many students can talk about how their perspective have changed. Most of the beginning of the class is about religion and culture with topics that may seem foreign to many students. However, bringing up a topic that has caused many global impacts over the past two hundred years can allow for students to understand Japan on a global level and how their culture and many other cultures have changed.

I wanted to end this off by saying that I could not reference any course material for this since this was my own idea. In addition to this, I did not have to do much research this because I learned a lot about this on my own. This is very important and integral to the history of the country and answers questions such as why the Japanese do not have an army and are not allowed to.

Works Cited

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