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78,000 sign against textbook changes

LARGE numbers of people, including some Japanese, came out to support a signature campaign yesterday to denounce changes in Japanese textbooks.

Members of the Hongkong Federation of Students, the organiser of the campaign, collected 78,835 signatures from 2 pm to 6 pm yesterday at five locations.

The activity was to coincide with the 37th anniversary of the unconditional surrender of the Japanese army in the Second World War.

It was also part of the six-day campaign for support to denounce "any form of attempt to whitewash the activities of war criminals and militarists," as shown by the rewritten version of Japanese high school textbooks, in which the Japanese invasion of China is described as an "advance."

A spokesman for the HKFS said the signatures, along with others that will be collected until Friday, will be submitted to the Japanese Consul General here next Monday.

The spokesman said the HKFS expected to get 100,000 signatures. But the number received yesterday



AU Chi-kwong, 60, said he came down to Tsimshatsui just to sign.

by
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was quite satisfactory.

She said campaign districts for the next few days will include Tsunwan, Central and other places.

The federation is also considering calling for a one-day boycott of Japanese goods on September 18 in memory of the Lugouqiao incident.

This was the day in 1937 when the Japanese army marched across the bridge into Beijing, in Japan's first act of open aggression against China.

The spokesman said the HKFS had not decided if it

would ask the Hongkong government to take a stand on the textbook issue.

Yesterday's campaign, involving 210 workers, was well-received by people from all walks of life, including a seven-year-old Primary One student, Ng Kwong-yip, and 80-year-old Wong Wai-ming, an army officer on Hainan Island when the Japanese invaded China in 1937.

Some foreign residents also took part. A Mr E. Jacques, from Western Australia, said he signed his name because "this is something I believe in."

The signatories yesterday included some Japanese, but the total number is not known.

Members of the HKFS, with arm bands for identification, handed out leaflets describing the motive behind the Japanese decision to change history.

The leaflet said that traces of militarism in Japan had never died since the end of the last war.

"Worse, the Japanese government seemed to encourage their activities... High ranking Japanese officials, on different occasions have paid tribute to dead war criminals who started the last war," the leaflet said.