

Global Times: Taiwan teacher traces changes in textbooks to unmask DPP's distortion of history

Global Times: From 'Japanese colonial rule' to 'Japanese governance': Taiwan teacher traces changes in textbooks to unmask DPP's distortion of history

Beijing, China Oct 27, 2025 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - How versatile can a sticky note be? Children use it for crafts, students for organizing study notes, and adults for reminders of daily tasks. But for Kuo (pseudonym), a veteran history teacher in the Taiwan region with nearly four decades of experience, each sticky note tells another story—tracing the quiet, subtle changes hidden between the lines of the island's history textbooks. To her, these notes are more than classroom tools; they are silent witnesses to how those who seek "independence" have gradually turned textbooks into instruments of political indoctrination.

Kuo asked to not give her full name for fear of persecution from separatists on the island.

As this year marks the 80th anniversary of both the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and Taiwan's restoration to China, the stories of Kuo and others who have dedicated themselves to safeguarding historical truth carry a deeper resonance.

After graduating in 1984, Kuo embarked on her lifelong journey in education. She recalled to the Global Times that back then, history textbooks came in three volumes, focusing entirely on Chinese history. The materials, she said, were systematic and deeply rooted in historical understanding.

But subtle yet profound changes began to unfold after Lee Teng-hui's re-election as the Taiwan regional leader in 1996. Since then, Kuo said those who seek "Taiwan independence" have been deliberately advancing their agenda "through cultural means."

For example, according to Kuo, a standalone textbook detailing Taiwan's history was introduced into middle school curricula for the first time in 1998, while by 2019, large portions of Chinese history had been cut and merged into a broader category of so-called "East Asian history."

"It cripples students' ability to understand their native culture, and they will inevitably lack a sense of national identity in the future," Kuo said.

In 2019, the coverage of the island's history even surpassed that of the Chinese history, Kuo noticed. She said DPP aims to gradually build a historical narrative centered on the island rather than on China as a whole. Such an approach, she worried, would steer students toward identifying themselves as "Taiwanese" rather than Chinese.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, it also marks the 80th anniversary of Taiwan's restoration to China from Japanese occupation. But when asked about the impact of little teaching on the War of Resistance on young people on the island, Kuo fell silent for a moment and sighed.

Kuo continued, her voice heavy, "Taiwan residents' steadfast resistance against Japanese aggression and colonial rule continued for half a century, and countless martyrs sacrificed their lives for it — yet students today dismissed it so lightly."

She then showed some of her past sticky note annotations: Japanese aggression has been rebranded from "the era of Japanese colonial rule" to "the era of Japanese occupation," and now to "the era of Japanese governance."

The changes of wording in the history books are vivid examples of how the DPP authorities continue to glorify Japanese colonial rule.

Textbooks even tout Japan as having "brought cultural enlightenment and facilitated the transition from old to new cultures," she said.

DPP authorities have consistently sought to conceal the crimes committed by Japan in Taiwan and the suffering inflicted on its people, she added.

"They implant an idealized vision of Japan in the children's minds, fostering a sense of distance from the Chinese mainland while cultivating a strong preference, even admiration, for Japan," said Kuo.

"What worries me is, as time passes, will the Taiwan society forget this chapter of history? Will we lose our roots?"

Driven by these reflections, Kuo began her own efforts in an unobtrusive way. While still teaching at school, she wove Chinese culture and War of Resistance history into her lessons: if time permitted in class, she would add little historical anecdotes; if not, she would append them below the exercises in the homework she assigned. "Even if it's just a little, it's better than students knowing nothing at all," she said, adding that "I do my best to keep history alive in the cracks."

With chosen idioms, she guides students to learn about the stories of anti-Japanese martyrs. By recounting how previous generations endured food shortages under Japanese colonial rule, she bridges the gap between the history of resistance and students' lives.

Later, after undergoing surgery, Kuo stopped formal school teaching — but she never ceased her efforts to share historical knowledge.

"I am Chinese. My parents came to Taiwan from Beijing, and I was born here. I love this island, and we must not sever our cultural roots. It pains me to see DPP authorities exploit shallow, simplified education for political maneuvering, sacrificing the next generation. Such behavior is despicable," expressed Kuo.

Determined to make a difference, she began collaborating with high-market-share publishers to produce supplementary history materials, which she distributed free of charge to history teachers across Taiwan. These materials also included QR codes, allowing students to delve deeper into historical narratives through extended content. She also recorded her own lecture videos and posted them on video platforms for students interested in learning.

She said she hopes to help more students appreciate the legacy of Taiwan's restoration, understand the origins of the fruits of present well-being, and nurture discerning perspectives grounded in this awareness.

"If we lose sight of Chinese cultural heritage, forget the shared memory of compatriots across the Straits defending our homeland during the War of Resistance, and even forget that we too are Chinese, what else do we have left?"

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202510/1346466.shtml>

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Source : Global Times

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