

Academics on Sunday condemned the alleged use of high-school textbooks written and edited by Chinese and urged the Ministry of Education to assess and respond to the situation.

Several high schools — including Wanfang Senior High School and Daren Girls' High School in Taipei, the Affiliated Senior High School of National Kaohsiung Normal University and others — have this semester reportedly used teaching materials coedited by Taiwan's Chinese Cultural Education Institute and the Cross-Strait Cultural Development Collaborative Innovation Center and College of Chinese Languages and Literature at China's Fujian Normal University.

The textbooks — *Standard-Level High School Language and Literature* (標準級高中語文) volumes one and two — were published by Yu Pen Digital Publishing and edited by institute director Sun Chien-chiu (孫建秋) and others.

They passed reviews by the ministry's National Academy for Educational Research (NAER) in January and June respectively.

Sun, also vice president of the National Taiwan College of Performing Arts, said that the textbooks were originally compiled to target overseas compatriot schools in Southeast Asia and China and were submitted for review due to concerns that schools in Southeast Asia would not trust a textbook that could not be used in Taiwan.

Coediting with the Chinese school was done purely out of business considerations and was not part of China's "united front" strategy, Sun said, adding that the textbooks are in line with the curriculum and rules.

Wanfang Senior High School and others are only "selecting" this version, meaning that only some classes are using it, Sun said, adding that most classes are still using other domestic versions.

Academics blast China-edited textbooks

Written by Taipei Times

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China and Taiwan began coediting high-school language and literature textbooks in June 2014, Chinese media reported, adding that corresponding with the so-called “1992 consensus,” the team visited dozens of secondary schools and colleges on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to compile a total of 5 million words in 13 textbooks.

Every nation’s education system is independent and should not be directed by other regimes or countries, especially since China and Taiwan are still hostile toward one another, National Chengchi University Graduate Institute of Taiwanese Literature professor Chen Fang-ming (陳芳明) said.

It is important to not let textbooks deviate from the mainstream values of Taiwanese society, Chen said, adding that human rights and equality are core educational values.

Textbooks should not just think about benefiting the other side of the Strait, he added.

China is looking to use various “united front” tactics against Taiwan and will infiltrate as much as it can, Chen said, adding that China wants to transform the thinking of Taiwan’s younger generation.

Chen urged the ministry to not neglect the issue and asked it to set up a careful gate-keeping mechanism to prevent the introduction of ideas that deviate from those of democracy.

National Taipei University of Education professor emeritus Lee Hsiao-feng (李孝愷) criticized the ministry for allowing the situation to occur, asking: “Would US textbooks be cowritten by England?”

This has already caused serious damage to Taiwan’s national dignity and political subjectivity, Lee said, expressing surprise that this occurred under the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government.

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DPP Legislator Huang Kuo-shu (黃國書) also expressed concern that textbooks would become part of China's "united front" tactics if ideas from civil exchange become the standard at schools.

"Taiwan can engage in cultural, educational, academic and other forms of exchange with China, but civil exchange remains civil exchange," he said, adding that the ministry must not acquiesce.

The main focus of the review is whether the content contains mistakes or deviates from the curriculum, a NAER official said, adding that all the listed editors are Taiwanese.

Asked about the Chinese editors listed in the teacher's handbook, the official said that the handbook is not part of the review.

If the publisher hides this information, evidence is needed to investigate whether there has been a violation, she added.

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