

# **Japan - : Education ministry: schoolbooks will reflect the government's views on territorial disputes and historical accounts**

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## **Education ministry to require textbooks that hew to gov't views on history, disputes**

The education ministry decided on a new system of textbook screening reform on Nov. 12, in which descriptions in schoolbooks will reflect the government's views on territorial disputes and historical accounts.

According to sources close to the matter, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology will implement textbook screening reform mainly for history and geography courses at high schools. Textbooks will be required to give accounts based on the government's standpoint on territorial disputes such as the Northern Territories and the Takeshima islands, as well as clarifying its position on the Self-Defense Forces.

For historical events that haven't been confirmed or for which various theories exist, the government will request textbook publishers to write well-balanced descriptions rather than giving a definite account on the events.

On textbook screening system reform, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's educational revitalization committee published an interim report in June this year. The ministry is set to conclude the matter officially after consulting with the council of textbook examination.

Meanwhile, the ministry is looking to reform laws relating to textbook selection at a regular Diet session next year as the existing laws have triggered a dispute in Okinawa Prefecture.

Taketomi Municipal Board of Education unilaterally selected a civics textbook to be used at junior high schools, while the Yaeyama district council for textbook selection, to which the town of Taketomi belongs, decided on a textbook by another publisher. In response to this dispute in the district, education minister Hakubun Shimomura ordered the Okinawa Prefectural Board of Education to demand Taketomi education board adopt the use of uniform textbooks.

*Mainichi Shimbun*, November 13, 2013

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\* <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20131113p2a00m0na005000c.html>