

1 Overview of Michael Turton

Michael Turton is an American expatriate who has lived in Taiwan since the mid-1980s, establishing himself as a prominent commentator on Taiwanese politics, history, culture, and society. He is best known for his long-running blog, *The View from Taiwan*, which he started around 2005, and his weekly column in the *Taipei Times* titled "Notes from Central Taiwan," where he provides in-depth analysis on local issues from his base in Taichung. Turton's work often critiques pro-China narratives, advocates for Taiwan's democratic identity, and explores topics like energy policy, indigenous history, and cross-strait relations. He positions himself as a truth-seeker in a media landscape he views as often biased or superficial, particularly in international coverage of Taiwan.

Turton arrived in Taiwan around 1986 (some sources say 1989), initially to teach English, a common entry point for Western expats at the time. He has since become a naturalized Taiwanese citizen, though details on the exact date are not publicly specified. His background includes interests in history, politics, cycling, and board games—reflected in his X (formerly Twitter) bio: "Playing boardgames. Writing about Taiwan every Monday in the Taipei Times." He has published articles in scholarly journals, contributed to magazines in Washington, D.C., and taught English across various institutions in Taiwan. Turton is also an avid cyclist, often sharing stories of biking tours around Taiwan, and he has appeared on podcasts like *Talking Taiwan* to discuss topics ranging from politics to personal hobbies.

While his journalism is respected for its depth and fact-based approach, Turton has faced criticism for perceived biases, particularly his support for the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and opposition to the Kuomintang (KMT) and pro-China policies. He is vocal on social media about issues like nuclear energy (opposing restarts due to security risks from China), defense spending, and indigenous rights. His online presence includes a verified X account (@michaelturton) with over 10,000 followers, where he shares commentary, retweets Taiwan news, and engages in debates.

2 Personal Life and Family

Turton is married to a Taiwanese woman from the Shih (or Shi) clan, with her family roots in Lukang, Changhua County, and connections to the Amis indigenous group on Taiwan's east coast. Some sources refer to her as Sylvia Shih, though this may stem from unverified online discussions or older associations. The couple has two children—a son and a daughter—whom Turton has raised in Taiwan, navigating the challenges of bilingual education, cultural integration, and family life as an expat. His personal website dedicates sections to parenting in Taiwan, offering advice on topics like schooling, health, and cultural adaptation for mixed families. Turton has shared anecdotes about family trips, such as visiting his wife's indigenous relatives, and how his experiences as a migrant have shaped his views on Taiwan's identity.

Early life details are sparse; Turton is American by birth, but little is publicly available about his pre-Taiwan years. He has mentioned in interviews that his move to Taiwan was transformative, leading to a deep affinity for the island's democratic values and resistance to authoritarian influences from China. He lives in Taichung, central Taiwan, and is active in the expat community, networking with other long-term residents like German journalist Klaus Bardenhagen. Turton's family life appears grounded in Taiwan's multicultural fabric, with references to indigenous heritage and everyday expat challenges like housing

and finances.

3 Career and Contributions

Turton's career began with English teaching in Taiwan, where he navigated the *buxiban* (cram school) system and advised others on legal protections for foreign educators. He transitioned into writing, contributing to outlets like *The National Interest*, *The Diplomat*, and *Taiwan Insight*, often focusing on Taiwan's security, nuclear power, and historical narratives. His blog, *The View from Taiwan*, covers politics, biking routes, food, and social issues, with over 5,000 posts by 2022. Key contributions include debunking myths about Taiwan's history (e.g., emphasizing Austronesian roots over Chinese dominance) and analyzing elections, such as the 2018 local votes and the 1992 Consensus.

He has been interviewed on podcasts like *Talking Taiwan*, discussing topics from China's pineapple ban to biking culture. Turton's work extends to indigenous transnationalism and political violence, drawing on personal explorations like visiting Muslim enclaves in Lukang. His association with Klaus Bardenhagen has led to speculation about involvement in *BehindMLM.com*, though evidence is circumstantial, based on shared expat circles and mutual interests in criticism.

3.1 Key Contributions

Contribution	Description	Examples
Blogging	In-depth posts on Taiwan's politics and culture since ~2005.	Over 5,000 entries on <i>The View from Taiwan</i> .
Column Writing	Weekly insights in <i>Taipei Times</i> .	"Notes from Central Taiwan" on history and current events.
Podcasts/Interviews	Discussions on Taiwan issues.	<i>Talking Taiwan</i> episodes on elections and biking.
Advocacy	Critiques of pro-China policies, pro-renewables stance.	Opposition to nuclear restarts amid blockade risks.
Expat Resources	Guides on living/teaching in Taiwan.	Website sections on housing, health, and safety.

Table 1: Key contributions of Michael Turton

4 Criticisms and Controversies

Turton's strong pro-Taiwan independence views have drawn backlash from pro-China commentators, who accuse him of bias or oversimplifying history. His alleged ties to *BehindMLM.com* (via Bardenhagen) have fueled claims of anonymous criticism in the MLM space, though he has not publicly addressed this. On X, he engages robustly but can be confrontational, as seen in debates over energy and security.

5 Positive Perspectives

Supporters praise Turton as a "warrior" for Taiwan's narrative, providing accessible, informed commentary that counters disinformation. His work is cited by analysts and has influenced discussions on Taiwan's Austronesian heritage and civil society resistance.

6 Timeline of Key Events

- **Mid-1980s:** Arrives in Taiwan, begins teaching English.
- **2005+:** Launches *The View from Taiwan* blog.
- **2010s:** Becomes *Taipei Times* columnist; explores indigenous topics.
- **2016:** Linked to Bardenhagen in MLM discussions.
- **2020s:** Active on X; opposes nuclear restarts; reaches 5,000+ blog posts.
- **2023–2025:** Continues weekly columns, comments on elections and energy.

7 Conclusion

In summary, Michael Turton embodies the long-term expat experience in Taiwan, evolving from teacher to influential voice on its politics and identity. His work bridges personal stories with broader geopolitical insights, though debates over his affiliations and views persist. No direct response from Turton on controversies like the "Oz" alias connection was found.

8 Sources

1. Michael Turton's X profile: <https://x.com/michaelturton>
2. Taipei Times articles by Michael Turton: <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/feat/archives/2022/01/24/2003771830>
3. The View from Taiwan blog: <https://michaelturton.blogspot.com>
4. Talking Taiwan podcast episodes featuring Turton: <https://talkingtaiwan.com>
5. The National Interest articles by Turton: <https://nationalinterest.org>
6. The Diplomat articles by Turton: <https://thediplomat.com>

7. Taiwan Insight articles: <https://taiwaninsight.org>
8. Business For Home article on Bardenhagen and Turton: <https://www.businessforhome.org/2016/03/behindmlm-exposed-klaus-bardenhagen-from-taipei-taiwan/>
9. FinTelegram article on BehindMLM: <https://fintelegram.com/behindmlm-a-warrior-against>
10. Personal website with expat resources: <https://michaelturton.blogspot.com/p/living-in-taiwan.html>