

Doctoral Dissertation

Title: Inclusion and Exclusion of ZAINICHI Koreans by the Government of South Korea: Focusing on the Era of Lee Seung-man Regime

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This research is a study of the policy towards ZAINICHI Koreans of Lee Seung-man regime. ZAINICHI Koreans are Korean resident in Japan who arrived During the Japanese colonial period. Currently, a lot of researches of ZAINICHI Koreans have been focused on the stance of Japanese government, and that of GHQ. But, this research on ZAINICHI Koreans overlooks the policy regarding ZAINICHI Koreans of South Korea. Lee Seung-man regime and ZAINICHI Koreans shared the same problematic background related to the Japanese colonial legacy, so this research provides an important perspective.

The purpose of the South Korean government was to control and manage Korean residents in Japan under the South Korean government. But policy of the Korean government for ZAINICHI Koreans did not focus on life problems of them. The cause for that had a lot to do with the divided nationan system in Korean Peninsula. And South Korean elites did not think about the life problems of Korean residents in Japan. On the other hand, North Korean government recognized the life problems of ZAINICHI Koreans.

Consequently, there were many people who supported North Korea in the Korean community in Japan.

On the other hand, Japan-South Korea conferences aimed at solving the colonial problem focused on the issue of competition with North Korea, which was based on the system of division rather than the treatment of ZAINICHI Koreans. For example, Lee Seung-man regime had made the legal status favorable only to Koreans who were South Korean nationals. At first South Korea was not accepting ZAINICHI Koreans, but it turned to accepting them to prevent those who wanted to “return” to North Korea. It was difficult to control Koreans in Japan through Japan-South Korea conferences, so Lee Seung-man regime did not recognize the nationality of ZAINICHI Koreans who did not conform to the idea of South Korea as the single Korean nation. For this reason, many researchers criticized Lee Seung-man regime’s attitude toward Korea as ‘the starved people policy’.

Eventually, the interpretation of policies of South Korea for ZAINICHI Korean at the time was as follows. Because the Japanese colonial issues were to be solved by South Korean government, the treatment of ZAINICHI Koreans became a task related to the division of the Korean peninsula. As a result, South Korea became less sensitive to the treatment of ZAINICHI Koreans. Also, it is related to the problem of elites who had experienced the Japanese colonial system and then dealt with the ZAINICHI Korean policy. At that time, the problem of not properly approaching the problems of ZAINICHI Koreans was because the South Korean government could not relate to treatment of Koreans in Japan from the perspective of South Korean elites. So policies of Lee Seung-man regime for ZAINICHI Korean showed us limits of abilities of South Korean elites at that time.