

ABSTRACT

The Comparative Study on the Occupation Policies of the U.S Army Military Government in South Korea and Japan

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Though the U.S Army Military Government in Korea(USAMG) had lasted for only 3 years, from 1945 to establishment of Korea Government, there were great transformations under USAMG. So, the study on this period can be an indispensable gateway to understanding the Korean modern history.

This study aims to explore the general contents of the occupation policies of USAMG and GHQ(General Headquarters in Japan) and their changes from the viewpoint of Asia Foreign Policy of the U.S. i.e., Regional Integration Strategy. And then this study will compare the land reform policies between both countries.

After the World War II, the U.S divided the World into central area and peripheral area and executed the Eurocentric foreign policy. In contrast, in Asia the U.S were carrying out a Regional Integration Strategy in which the U.S developed a country as a strong, leading one and then tried to extend its political, economic hegemony through the country.

Since 1947, the Asia foreign policy of the U.S had been changed from the China-centric policy to the Japan-centric policy. This transition let the occupation goals of each country be changed. In case of Japan, The early occupation policies could be characterized as demilitarization, democratization and economic minimization, while in South Korea, the U.S had to follow trusteeship on which the U.S should cooperated with the Soviet Union. As a result, the USAMG did only keep the status quo, without social reforms. As the U.S replaced China as a leading country by Japan, the late occupation policies in Japan was changed from economic minimization to rapid economic reconstruction and democratization was recessed to make Japan as an Anti-Communist bulwark. In South Korea, the USAMG decided to establish the sole government of South Korea when the U.S. abandoned the trusteeship. In addition, it intended the South Korea economy to be reunited with that of Japan for the sake of the rapid economic reconstruction of Japan and to be involved into capitalism as soon as possible.

Now, each land reform policy which was executed by USAMG and GHQ came to be different one owing to the Asia foreign policy of the U.S. and the different occupation goals. Above all, the USAMG spent much more time on accomplishing the South Korea land reform policy than the GHQ. Besides, the South Korea policy proved more imperfect than the Japan's in terms of the rate of the remained tenant farming land. What could make the difference? As a matter of fact, GHQ thought of the land reform policy as a means to achieve the early occupation policies--demilitarization and democratization-- in the earlier occupation period. Therefore, it had hurried to formulate the land reform policy and continued to fulfill it without interruption. On the contrary, USAMG could not set up the policy in earlier occupation period such as GHQ because it had to follow the principles of trusteeship. In late occupation period, the U.S. decided to excite the land

reform policy in Korea; nevertheless, the policy could not but be suspended for a while because the general contents of occupation policies had been changed from direct rule ways into indirect rule ways.

While each land reform policy showed the differences, at the same time each one resulted in common effects and characters. First, the land reform policy could lead each of them to the capitalist state formation process producing many small-sized landed farmers with proprietary rights. As a result, they could become a bulwark against communism and the USAMG could obtain the ideological priority over the Soviet Union. Second, each occupation government expected that the produced independent farmers could increase food production in short term. Third, the reform policy came to make the landlord class demolished and the peasant movement weakened; so, these tendencies could disturb the formation of a class-centric society. Moreover, the small-sized independent farmers became supporters of the state; as a result, this had effect on increasing state autonomy over the people.

Key Words : USAMG(the U.S army military government in Korea), GHQ(General headquarters), foreign policy of the U.S., occupation goals, occupation policy, land reform policy, regional integration strategy, cold war, trusteeship