

The KMT's Archives: The Status of the Ryukyu/Okinawa:¹ -The Sovereignty over the Diaoyu/Senkaku² Islands-

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Background

The Liuqiu/Ryukyu Kingdom (today's Okinawa) remains a mystery to the modern world. The kingdom, an independent country until Japan annexed it in 1879, was a tributary nation for both the Chinese empires and the Japanese Shoguns over the years. After Japan's defeat in the Second World War in 1945, the United States occupied the Ryukyu until the 1970s. The historical development of the Ryukyu Islands has been the subject of much study. The majority of this research relates to the issues regarding the U.S. located on the islands. A few studies have focused on the status of Ryukyu during the period of 1879 or the 1970s.

Scholars of the Ryukyu can typically be characterized as falling under one of the two following groups. One group focuses primarily on historical developments starting when Japan annexed the Ryukyu in 1879 through 1895 when China and Japan signed the Shimonoseki Treaty. Scholars from Ryukyu Kingdom dominate this group of scholars often focusing on the sadness of losing an independent Ryukyu nation.⁴ The other group mainly focused on the period at the end of the Second World War when the U.S landed on the islands and when Japan fought U.S. forces in the war. This group primarily consists of Japanese, Chinese, and Western researchers,⁵ curious regarding development of the islands.

In recent studies of the Sino-Japanese territorial dispute over the East China Sea, discussions escalated from not only the sovereignty of the Diaoyu Islands, but also to the question of possession of the Ryukyu Islands after WWII. For instance, on 12 July 2012, Major General Jin Yanan, Head of the Strategy Research Institute at China's National Defense University in the People's Republic of China (hereafter PRC), stated in an interview with the Chinese media.

Regarding the Diaoyu issue, we must take necessary steps.... Regarding the status of Okinawa, we should not call the islands Okinawa. The name Okinawa has been used after 1879 when Japan colonized the Ryukyu and brought the imperial family of the Ryukyu to mainland Japan. So that the Ryukyans would forget the imperial family of the Ryukyu Kingdom, the Japanese government changed the name to Okinawa, replaced the Chinese calendar which was bestowed by the Qing Dynasty, and changed the currency from Chinese to Japanese.⁶

Similarly, Yung-Lo Lin (林永乐), Foreign Minister of Republic of China (ROC), characterized the status of the Ryukyu and the Diaoyu Islands following the Sino-Japanese War in 1894 as follows,

Unfortunately, when Japan annexed the Diaoyutai Islands in 1895, it placed them administratively under Okinawa Prefecture at the same time, and formally renamed them “Senkaku Islands” in 1900. These unilateral acts masked the islands’ original Chinese ownership and identity, which resulted in their omission from the post-WWII arrangements. When Japan returned Taiwan to the ROC, both sides adopted the 1945 administrative arrangement of Taiwan, with the Allied Powers (including the ROC) unaware that uninhabited “Senkaku Islands” were in fact the former Diaoyutai Islands. This is why the Diaoyutai Islands were mistakenly placed under U.S. trusteeship between 1945 and 1972.⁷

As a Japanese scholar observed when he had field trips to Taiwan, the name “Liuqiu” not Okinawa, is still currently using.⁸ Therefore, the status of the Ryukyu has not been totally forgotten by the Chinese people since Japan annexed the Ryukyu in 1879. Because the question of Ryukyu status since WWII relates directly to sovereignty of the Diaoyu Islands, the sovereignty of Ryukyu might influence current territorial disputes between China and Japan. Unfortunately, almost no research has been done to examine the period from the end of WWII to the 1970s when the US signed “the treaty to return Ryukyu” to Japan. Importantly, during this period, the Kuomintang (hereafter KMT) or ROC government represented the Chinese people as the legitimate government in the international community. It was not until October 1971 that the PRC took over power in the United Nations (hereafter UN).⁹

This research analyzes official documents of the KMT or/and ROC as they represented the Chinese people in the international community during this period. The article mainly discusses the KMT policy evolution about the Ryukyu issue after the retreat to Taiwan based on the document of the *Guomindang Wenhua Chuanbo Weiyuanhui Dangshiguan Dang'an*

(国民党文化传播委员会党史馆档案) [KMT Culture Communication Committee Party History Museum]. What was the position of ROC regarding the status of Ryukyu? Had KMT officials expressed an interest in possessing the Ryukyu after Japan's defeat in the war? What was the deal between the US and ROC regarding the status of Ryukyu after the war? Were KMT officials willing to give up the Ryukyu and return sovereignty to Japan in the 1970s? Based upon first-hand documents from KMT archives, this research demonstrates that the ROC government continued to claim sovereignty over the Ryukyu Islands after WWII.

In sum, even though the research of KMT policy relating to the Ryukyu issue is currently restricted with respect to the period between 1945 and 1952, some KMT declassified documents can be analyzed. On one hand, the declassifying archives showed that the KMT intended to reclaim the sovereignty over Ryukyu, as it failed, officials of the KMT agreed with the trusteeship of the UN. Available documents demonstrate, however, that the KMT set the long-term plan of reclaiming the Ryukyu Islands, hoping that the *Liuqiu Geming Tongzhi* (琉球革命同志会) [Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association] could achieve the purpose of reclaiming these islands.¹⁰ In the following five years, from the retreat of KMT to Taiwan till 1952, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of ROC was not capable of fighting for the sovereignty over Ryukyu; the issue of Ryukyu was not an important aspect in the general strategy of the ministry.¹¹ In fact, as the KMT retreated to Taiwan in 1971 when the US and Japan signed the "Ryukyu Restitution Agreement," the KMT continued its policy of reclaiming sovereignty over the Ryukyu Islands. However, the KMT had to make adjustments to reflect the international geopolitical situation (e.g., Cold War and others) at the time.

KMT's Policy in the Prior of 1949

When the Allies drafted the treaty after WWII, Lai Te-Cai (赖特才) from the Foreign Affairs Committee of National Government made a proposal to reclaim Ryukyu Islands to the ROC government, which stated that the Ryukyu "...was the territory of China since the Ming Dynasty," and noting that the because "Ryukyu has a similar culture to China, it's obviously part of overseas China." Moreover, "there is only a narrow strip of water between the interdependent Ryukyu and Taiwan, China should fight for Ryukyu," "from the national interest, it should be returned to China without disputes."¹² Lai Te-Cai emphasized that ROC sovereignty was supported by history, by national identity, by culture and was geographically well-founded,

he hoped the government of ROC could recover the sovereignty over Ryukyu. On 8 October 1947, at the seventh meeting of the Committee of National Political Council, the premier of the ROC, Jhang Chiun (张群) of Taiwan Executive Yuan presented a proposal arguing that because “Ryukyu has a special relationship with China the island should be reclaimed.”¹³ Otherwise, the ROC government intended that a trusteeship be created before the Cairo Conference, as a result of its national favor and the Sino-US relationship, but the trusteeship was not acceptable by the domestic mainstream media. As a result, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not find a solution to the Ryukyu problem. The seventh meeting of National Government’s Foreign Affairs Committee was held on November 13, 1947. At this meeting, “the opinions were exchanged and discussed again” regarding the proposal of Committee member Lai Te-Cai’s “Recommendations of Ryukyu to be reclaimed to China at the Sino-Japan Peace Conference.” It was decided that “the decision about reclaiming Ryukyu would be confirmed by the Sino-Japan Peace Conference.”¹⁴ As can be seen, there were a lot of voices in Taiwan supporting recovery of Ryukyu between 1947 and 1948. Meanwhile, the ROC Government intended to create a trusteeship based upon the current circumstance including pressure from the party as well as the social pressure. As a result, there was no verdict regarding this issue.

The establishment and the activities of the Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association provided the ROC Government with a new solution to the Ryukyu Policy. The predecessor of the Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association was originated from *Liuqiu Qingnian Tongzhihui* (琉球青年同志会) [Ryukyu Youth Comrades Association], headed by a Ryukyuan C: Cai Zhang (蔡璋)/J: Kiyona Tsugumasa (喜友名嗣正) (hereafter Kiyona Tsugumasa). After re-naming of the association, the association was active in both Taiwan and Ryukyu.¹⁵ The purpose of the Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association was “to come back to the arms of motherland.”¹⁶ In the post-war time, the group drew the attention of the National Government and was mentioned in a confidential telegraph on June 15, 1948 from Chiang Kai-shek (蒋介石) to the general secretary of the KMT headquarters Wu Tie-Cheng (吴铁城), noting that

According to a confidential report that Ryukyu, which is under the trusteeship of the US Army, is territory of China and the Chinese people intend to reclaim it. Please try to control the Ryukyu regime by the secret activities of Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association. Hopefully, the Ryukyu will be returned to China by voting at the Sino-Japan Peace Conference, in this way, our key of Atlantic would be safely kept. Please consider about the transportation of the weapons.¹⁷

Obviously, Chiang Kai-shek had certain degree of understanding about the Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association, as well as, the intent to be engaged in the secret activities of reclaiming Ryukyu by the Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association. On 25 July 1948, Cai Zhang noted in his petition to Chiang Kai-shek that

It is no doubt that Ryukyu should return to China.... According to the geographic relationship between China and Ryukyu, once the Ryukyu is lost, the Chinese coast will be threatened, which will be a passive situation for the peace of East Asia. Because of these reasons, the people of Ryukyu presented the petition to the ROC government several times to reclaim sovereign right of Ryukyu.¹⁸

Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association emphasized the strategic position of Ryukyu and presented their support and willingness to return to China, leading the decision-makers of the KMT to see some positive aspect about the Ryukyu issue.

The director of the committee of the KMT headquarters Ciou Nian-Tai (丘念台), the staff Li De-Song (李德松), the officer of East Asia Office from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had a meeting with Cai Zhang on July 27th and 28th 1948 to discuss the situation of Ryukyu.¹⁹ On August 6, 1948, a meeting was held by Huang Jheng-Ming (黄正铭) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jheng Zih-Yueh (郑资约) and Teng Ru-Gang (邓茹刚) from Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ciou Nian-Tai from the KMT Headquarters to discuss the Ryukyu issue, they came to the conclusion that

Ryukyu could possibly be put under Sino-US or even UN trusteeship at the Sino-Japan Peace Conference. However, Ryukyu is located in the East China Sea as a protection wall, which plays an important role in national defense. We should fight for it.... No matter what kind of situation it will be in the future, the Ryukyuan people who are willing to return to China should be supported and assisted as much as possible, this tendency will be in our favor on the Sino-Japan Peace Conference.²⁰

The results of this meeting indicated that the KMT intended to support the recovering activities of Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association as commanded by Chiang Kai-Shek, but the prediction of trusteeship was noted as well. Meanwhile, according to the secretariat of the KMT Headquarters mailed the director of Executive Yuan Wong Wun-Hao (翁文灏) and the director of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Wang Shih-Jie (王世杰), "The confidential telegraph was sent to inform about the nomination of some comrades to work for the Ryukyu revolution" and asked the heads of the related departments "to present their opinions about the strategic and attitude

concerning the Ryukyu issue.”²¹ The director of Executive Yuan Wong Wun-Hao expressed his opinion to the secretariat of the KMT Headquarters indicating that “to reclaim our territory by confidential cooperation with Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association could damage the relationship with the US and England. In my opinion, the significant issues like these should be discussed and handled by diplomatic negotiation.”²² Wong Wun-Hao obviously held the opinion that “the reclaiming” by the Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association would go against the tacit understanding of trusteeship with the US and England and would affect the diplomatic relationship with these countries. As a result, he intended to solve the problem of Ryukyu issue through diplomatic negotiations at the Sino-Japan Peace Treaty.

However, the decision-makers of the KMT decided to support the Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association’s efforts to reclaim the Ryukyu, the secretariat of KMT Headquarters mailed the director of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Wang Shih-Jie and the director of Ministry of Internal Affairs Peng Jhao-Sian (彭昭賢) to inform them about the decision of “the relevant authorities.” The most important point of this communication was that the “KMT headquarters of Taiwan contact the associations of Ryukyu confidentially; the ROC government and the security department should assist the activities of associations and individuals.”²³ This indicated that the national government in Taiwan intended to reclaim Ryukyu’s sovereignty through the Ryukyuan and its secret support for the Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association. This policy by the KMT is called “*Waixuan Tuoguan, Neixing Shoufu* (外宣托管，内行收复) [declaring trusteeship internationally, asking return of sovereign right domestically],” which was aimed at returning the sovereign right of Ryukyu to the ROC by campaigning activities through the Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association.

The KMT Policy Development after 1949

After the KMT retreated to Taiwan in 1949, its foreign and internal policy changed dramatically. The Ryukyu policy was no longer important to the KMT regime. Since the geopolitical environment and the ex- and internal environment of Ryukyu in Japan changed in the East Asian region, the KMT readjusted its policy concerning the Ryukyu issue and fought against the strengthened control and influence of Japan on the economy and culture of the Ryukyu.

1. The 1950s KTM’s Policy

On 20 October 1950, the US government informed the KMT that the Ryukyu and Bonin Islands would be administered by the US under the United Nations' trusteeship. The KMT was not happy. However, because the ROC had a relatively weak international position, the KMT chose to "remain at peace with Japan." "The ROC decided to cooperate with the administration of U.S. over Ryukyu policy; the U.S. policy toward Japan became 'generous' including the Ryukyu issue."²⁴ As a result, under the previous plan of Sino-US trusteeship the Ryukyu Islands became solely a US trusteeship. On September 4, 1951 the Sino-Japan Peace Conference was held in San Francisco. Neither the PRC nor the ROC governments was invited to the conference. The "Treaty of Peace with Japan" that resulted from San Francisco stated that the US is the only administration regime over the Ryukyu Islands. This was significant as the KMT gave up the initiative in the Ryukyu issue because the decision was made without KMT.

Since the 1950s, the KMT added some amendments to the Ryukyu policy in accordance with the foreign and internal situation. On one hand, the principle of "*Waixuan Tuoguan, Neixing Shoufu* [declaring trusteeship internationally, asking return of sovereign right domestically]," remained. This policy was implemented by the activities and campaigns of the Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association. On the other hand, the KMT revised its Ryukyu policy consistent with its goals of "recovering mainland China" pushing for anti-communist activities in Ryukyu. Because most of the implementation of the KMT Ryukyu policy was carried out by Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association, the activities of Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association in the 1950s indicated the strategic consideration of KMT's regime. The changes of Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association's activities were evident in the working report of the association in the second half of 1956, which was divided into three parts.

First, some activities and campaigns were organized to fight against Japan gaining sovereignty over Ryukyu. There was a push to introduce Ryukyu history through the media and to renouncing ridiculous arguments that Japan had "residual sovereignty" and to reject the requirement that the Ryukyuan in Taiwan obtain Japanese nationality etc. The **second** section concerned the cultural and economic communications between Ryukyu and Taiwan, such as the delegation of Ryukyuan relatives to Taiwan and exploited the psychological impact on the Ryukyu people, etc. The **third** section addressed the anti-communist activities directed by the anti-communist strategy of KMT, such as the public establishment of "Asia Anti-Communist Union," Ryukyu general committee developed to "instigate the people of Koza-shi (古座市) to

be active in expelling of the hidden communists.” Articles were published “against communist.” The group was also responsible for collecting information regarding communists in Ryukyu was, as well as, the Japanese communist party.²⁵

The three aspects noted above were the main activities of the Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association in the first half of the year 1958. Work concerning the recovery of Ryukyu’s sovereignty focused on the promotion of cultural and economic communication between Ryukyu and Taiwan, as well as, the “Independence Movement of Ryukyu Revolutionary.” In terms of the economic cultural exchange aspect, in Taipei, the establishment of the “Sino-Ryukyu Cultural and Economic Association,” which promoted communication between universities in Ryukyu and Taiwan, organized visits of a Ryukyuan baseball team and arts group to Taiwan, and created regular airline travel between Ryukyu and Taiwan. In term of the public media aspect, the Ryukyuan “Kuomintang” was organized. The publication of all types of campaign journals, which was meant “to win the assistance and support of Ryukyu people was created. The publication was established to inspire the national consciousness to fight against Japan gaining sovereignty on Ryukyu.”²⁶ While there may notable accomplishments relating to cultural and economic communication between the Ryukyu and Taiwan in the first half of the year 1958, no progress was made by establishing the “Ryukyu Kuomintang.”

In conclusion, the strategy of KMT in the 1950s focused on anti-communist and reclaiming. After the KMT’s retreat and migration to Taiwan, their goal was to win the support of the US and the other countries not to reclaim the sovereignty over Ryukyu.

2. The Adjustment Period for the KMT’s Ryukyu Policy, 1960-1971

Since the 1940s, the KMT’s policy regarding the Ryukyu was strategically influenced by the collapse of the Japanese colonial structure. As a result, Japanese issues were not considered when the KMT made the Ryukyu policy. However, with China separated in two parts by the Taiwan Strait, the US turned to support Japan in an attempt suppress the new socialist China. The San Francisco Peace Treaty did not disclaim Japan’s territorial claim to sovereignty over the Ryukyu Islands. Therefore, claim of Japan regarding the Ryukyu Islands became an obstacle for the implementation of KMT’s Ryukyu Policy. With the weakening of KMT’s power in the international community, this obstacle was difficult to conquer. The KMT Ryukyu policy was forced to revise its policy.

The KMT’s *Zhongyang Weiyuanhui* (中央委员会) [Central Committee] report on the

Ryukyu issued 1954 stated that Japan considered Ryukyu Islands as its territory and they would spare no effort to get it. During this period, there were many political associations who supported Japan's claim. The diaspora in Hawaii from the Ryukyu, Higa Shuhei (比嘉秀平), for example, established the "*Sheda Dang* (社大党) [Shada Party]" and started the "*Guiri Yundong* (归日运动) [Movement of Return-to Japan]." The other is "*Renmin Dang* (人民党) [People's Party]" movement, which emphasized the "Movement of Return to Japan" as well. In Ryukyu, the annual "*Qianshu Yundong* (签署运动) [Signing Movement]," and "*Fan Tuoguan Yundong* (反托管运动) [Movement of Anti-Trusteeship]," were organized by the "Japanese associations" in Ryukyu.²⁷ According to the report regarding U.S.'s decision to return the Amami Islands to Japan,

(t)he Japanese government takes the American decision as the success of all the Ryukyuan activities, which support and develop the "Movement of Return to Japanese Sovereignty" with the intention to retain entire Ryukyu Islands under the Japanese control. Japan achieved the restoration of the Japanese aggressive idea in the past.²⁸

Apparently, the division of mainland China and Taiwan was a major goal of the US, allowing Japan to be more active and successful in the Ryukyuan movement to return to Japanese sovereignty.

The Ryukyu Islands were deeply influenced by Japan in the 1960s. Jhao Zih-Ci (赵自齐), the member of central committee presented "The Current Situation of the Ryukyu Islands and Research on the required Position of KMT" a detail analysis on the current situation of Ryukyu in the post-war. The report first addressed the political situation noting that Ryukyu has

the Democratic Party, Socialist People's Party, People's Party, and Socialist Party. The Democratic Party has the majority to govern Ryukyu parliament as the governing party; the Ryukyuan political situation is very similar to the Japanese with limited differences. . . . The Ryukyu senators run their campaign with the support of Japanese parties, with such a harmonious mutual relationship, it could be said that the Ryukyuan Party is a branch party of Japan.²⁹

With respect to cultural and education, the report noted that

5 universities, 122 middle schools, 154 primary schools were taught by the Japanese textbooks. Most of the teachers regard themselves as Japanese. Moreover, the newspapers, TVs and broadcastings have a close relationship with the Japanese. . . . The amount of money provided by Japan to Ryukyu increased every year, from 8.7 million

to 16 million US Dollar after the visit of Premier Sato in April this year, which is the same as from the US. 72% of the imported products came from Japan, and 91.4% of the Ryukyuan exported go to Japan, obviously, the economy of Ryukyu Islands is depend on Japan.³⁰

The report pessimistically pointed out that “Ryukyuan people have taken Japan as their own country, the spoken and written language, the names, the clothes and the customs have been Japanized. All the Ryukyuan people including the politicians, businessmen, journalists and government staff stand by the side of return to Japan.”³¹ The report also analyzed the KMT’s role by saying

Because of the lack of efficient policy and execution from the KMT, the Ryukyu Islands were under control by the US and Japan. Therefore, it comes to the current situation that there was not preference in the economic, political, cultural, educational, or the overseas Chinese affairs in the Ryukyu Islands, keeping a certain distance from us. He (Cai Zhang, the leader of Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association), has no power in the Ryukyu Islands. . . . A very few achievements were accomplished during these twenty years with all these efforts, nonetheless Japan has achieved a lot of accomplishment. . . . We should reconsider about the relationship with Ryukyu Islands. The relevant departments should take actions to make some effective policy and ensure the implementation by specific measures.³²

The report of Jhao Zih-Ci was highly valued by the decision makers of the KMT who agreed that the lack of an effective policy regarding the Ryukyu Policy resulted in the passive situation. Policy changes were discussed in depth at the 6th meeting of KMT’s Central Executive Committee. The specific proposal was presented on the 262th meeting of the 9th Central Executive Committee of KMT in December 1966 as followed:

First, more support and assistance for the Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association are planned. Second, the work of contact and campaign for the overseas Chinese who are living in Ryukyu Islands will be supported. For example, “the assistance and support for the organization of overseas Chinese will be provided,” “to assist the overseas Chinese in Ryukyu to establish Chinese schools.” The report promised that “there will be financial support, and qualified teachers to help the local children to have education from motherland.” Third, the report promoted the economic and cultural communication with Ryukyu Islands. For example, the report recommended relaxing restriction for purchase of Ryukyuan products to “improve trade with Ryukyu.” The corresponding work of “Sino-Ryukyu Cultural and Economic

Association” would be supported as well, to invite more Ryukyu young people to study in Taiwan. Scholarships were established in Taiwan and Ryukyu for students. On the fourth aspect, to establish a KMT organization in Ryukyu by sending some party members of KMT to work for the party as “technical workers employed by Ryukyu,” was planned. In the final aspect, a special funding “for Ryukyu Islands” was proposed to assist the “Sino-Ryukyu Cultural and Economic Association.”³³

Chiang Kai-Shek paid close attention to the proposal on the Ryukyu issue and made the comment that

the reaction of the US and Japan should be considered in the work concerning Ryukyu issue. The work could be organized by the commercial chamber or the other non-government organizations instead of the Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association or any other establishment of organizations. If the US is against these ideas, it could be negotiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by establishing a consulate, to assist the affairs of our overseas Chinese and the commercial activities. Besides, more opportunities of exchange students could be provided, as well as, the special assistance for the students, to improve cultural communication between China and Ryukyu.³⁴

It can be seen from the comments that Chiang Kai-Shek agreed with the changes to the Ryukyu policy, but only in the consideration of non-government organizations.

Even the role of the Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association was not in his consideration. Obviously, it was not about the Ryukyu issue itself, but to avoid the conflict with the US and Japan. In other words, the Ryukyu issue was not an important point in the foreign affairs at that time. On the one hand, the KMT intended to add more impact on Ryukyu Islands, “to avoid the lost of Ryukyu Islands to Japan.” On the other hand, the KMT prevented the conflict with Japan, which might influence the cooperation with the US and Japan on “anti-communist” issue, therefore, the official organization of various communications with Ryukyu Islands were not supported by the authority.

Although the KMT paid attention to the Ryukyu issue and accomplished some amendments to the policy made after 1966, it was too late, because the Ryukyu people were “almost standing by the side of Japan.” On May 29, 1967, the Ryukyu issue was discussed on the 296th meeting of the 9th Central Executive Committee of KMT, it was confirmed by the KMT leaders that “the cultural and economic communication with the Ryukyu Islands should be improved

to win the support of the Ryukyu people. The work, which has been done in the past, was not effective, and this is a bad time for a referendum at the moment, as most of the Ryukyu people stand by the side of Japan.”³⁵ Actually it was clear to the KMT authorities that the lack of a powerful government resulted in the current situation where Japan had effective control over the Ryukyu Islands. “Despite the deficiency of power, once the mainland China is covered, it should change.”³⁶ But the “recovery of mainland China” was just an impossible illustration, the amendments and adjustments to the Ryukyu policy could not work.

On June 17, 1971, the trusteeship of Ryukyu Islands ended under the Ryukyu Reversion Treaty between the US and Japan. The entire administration over the Ryukyu Islands was transferred to Japan including the Diaoyu Island which is separate from the Ryukyu Islands. As Foreign Minister of the ROC, Yung-Lo Lin (林永乐), claimed it on October 18, 2012, the Ryukyu was unilaterally transferred from the US to Japan.³⁷

The Impact of Sovereignty of the Diaoyu Islands by the KMT's Ryukyu Policy

Over 70 years after WWII, one of the major issues between China and Japan that has not been solved is the territorial problem in the East China Sea. The Diaoyu Islands is directly related to the status of the Ryukyu Islands after the war. By 1968, the territorial issue between China and Japan has surfaced in the public.³⁸ Since the 1970s, many researchers whether they, pro-China irredentist or pro-Japan irredentist scholars, such as Inoue Kiyoshi,³⁹ Ying-Jeou Ma,⁴⁰ Midorima Sakae,⁴¹ Murata Tadayoshi,⁴² Okuhara Toshio,⁴³ and Yabuki Susumu⁴⁴ have contributed to the discussion of the Diaoyu Islands.

On the one hand, the pro-China irredentist scholars have emphasized that the Diaoyu Islands are Chinese territory based on historical evidence since the Ming times.⁴⁵ The Diaoyu Island is located on the continental shelf in the East China Sea as a subsidiary island of Taiwan and under the jurisdiction of Toucheng Township, Yilan County, Taiwan. According to the aquatic environment and the geological structure of Diaoyu Islands, they are an inherent part of Taiwan Islands and mainland China.⁴⁶ The Ryukyu Islands were an independent nation, paid its tributary to China since Ming Dynasty. Japan forced the annexation of the Ryukyu in 1879, thus establishing it as Okinawa Prefecture. In January 1895, Japan usurped the Diaoyu Island and placed it under jurisdiction of Ryukyu prefecture. Obviously, the Japanese Occupation of Diaoyu Island before World War II was illegal. As Zheng Hailin stated, “to solve the sovereignty

dispute over Diaoyu Island, the first issue should be the problem of Ryukyu, because, from the historical point of view, the dispute over Diaoyu Island is related to the Japanese annexation over Ryukyu Islands and the Japanese occupation of Taiwan.”⁴⁷

On the other hand, the pro-Japan irredentist scholars have concentrated on the historical development and the principle of “occupation” of international law.⁴⁸ Nowadays, there are disputes between China and Japan regarding the sovereignty over Diaoyu Island, the argument of Japan claiming of the sovereignty over Diaoyu Islands just referred to the “Preemptive Occupation of Terra Nullius” pre- World War II, or “Return after Trusteeship” post- World War II, both of them are related to the status of Ryukyu, it could be said that the legal status of Ryukyu have an important impact on the sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands.

After the Sino-Japanese War, the KMT set the target of Ryukyu Policy to reclaim the sovereignty over Ryukyu Islands. Besides, the territory of Japan that was under the strict control of the allies, only Hokkaido, Honshu, shikoku, and Kyushu were included as the territory of Japan. The other islands like Ulleung-do Island, Takeshima/Dokdo Island, Cheju Island; Ryukyu Islands under (southwest to) 30°00’ latitude north (including the Kuchino-shima), Izu Island, Southern Bonin Islands and all the other islands in Pacific (including Daito Islands, ChongBird Islands/ Okinotorishima, Minami-Tori-shima), Kuril(e) Islands and Volcano Islands were delimited out of the territory of Japan.⁴⁹

In the mentioned international background, the Ryukyu policy of KMT was aimed at the reclaiming of the Ryukyu Islands’ sovereignty, by administration of the Sino-US trusteeship or the US’ trusteeship, and implemented strategically by the support for the Ryukyu Revolutionary Comrades Association. If this strategy had worked, sovereignty of the Diaoyu Islands would be solved already. However, the decision makers of KMT did pay sufficient attention to the Ryukyu policy. The control over Diaoyu Island was ignored by the KMT resulting in the difficult situation of the Ryukyu Island. There was a typical example about the demarcation of China and Ryukyu; during the preparation for the negotiation with Japan. The KMT’s delegation in Japan suggested to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Yaeyama Islands and Miyako Islands, which were located to the south of Ryukyu Islands and near Taiwan, should be divided into the Chinese territory, even it was denied, the problem of the Diaoyu Island and Chiwei Yu should be considered.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, the territory issue of the Diaoyu Islands was strategically ignored, while the KMT’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who concentrated on the long-term plan of

reclaiming Ryukyu, focused on the different proposals of Ryukyu trusteeship.

After the retreat of KMT to Taiwan, Japan was included in the Cold War system of the US in East Asia, the restrictions on Japan was then gradually reduced. With the efficient impact and control of Japan on the Ryukyu Islands, the KMT authorities lost its initiative on the Ryukyu issue, in spite of all the efforts made for the policy implementation. Regardless there was nothing that could be done by KMT because of the lack of power. In the year of 1972, the trusteeship of the US over Ryukyu Islands was ended by the administration transfer to Japan including the Diaoyu Islands which does not belong to the Ryukyu Islands, following by the sovereignty dispute between China and Japan. In conclusion, this was the consequence of the Ryukyu policy of KMT in the post-war time.

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Endnotes

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- 1 The name Ryukyu (琉球), which is called Liuqiu in Chinese, is a Japanese name and is today's Okinawa prefecture. Hereafter, the article will use the name Ryukyu.
- 2 The Diaoyu, which is called Senkaku in Japanese, is the Chinese name using the Hanyu Pinyin system. The islands also are referred to as the Tiao-yu-tai under the Wade-Giles Pinyin system, which is widely utilized in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Hereafter, the Diaoyu Islands is used throughout this article. This is not intended to suggest that the Chinese claim is "correct."
- 3 Throughout the text, both the Japanese and Chinese convention in which the family name or surname precedes the given or personal name, has given (e.g., Tanaka Kakuei). Works published in English by the Chinese and Japanese authors are given in Western order, surname last (e.g., John F. Kennedy). In addition, Pinyin romanization for the Chinese is used unless the English language work cited has employed a different system of romanization. The double (e.g., Chinese/Japanese) using the pronunciation for Chinese characters, have been adopted in the following: C: Liuqiu/J: Ryukyu.
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