

## **Left-wing Views and Political Sentiments of Taiwanese Students in Immediate Post-war Japan**

I-lin Ho

### **ABSTRACT**

During the Japanese colonial era, students from Taiwan pursuing studies in Japan were considered imperial subjects. With the end of WWII, their status became overseas Taiwanese students in Japan under the jurisdiction of the Nationalist government. Such change had significant impact on their future. They were concerned about their employment prospects back in Taiwan and the attitude of the government towards them as graduates from Japanese universities. From the review of related literature and through personal interviews, it was found that most of them were unable to return to their home country due to the political turmoil in Taiwan.

Under the impact of the 228 incident in Taiwan, plus the widespread left-wing views in Japan and especially among the overseas Chinese there, the majority of Taiwanese students in Japan harbored negative sentiments against the Nationalist government. In 1949, the Communists won victory in the civil war of China and founded the People's Republic of China; while the Nationalist government was forced to relocate to Taiwan. In the beginning, many Taiwanese students in Japan had high expectations of the "new China", and even migrated to the Mainland in groups.

Analysis of students' newspapers and overseas Chinese publications reveals that the prevailing left-wing views among the overseas Chinese was the main reason for their preference of the Communists. Even though it was the overseas Taiwanese students who fostered such left-wing inclination, the influence of the communist propaganda should not be overlooked. The lack of a proper policy of the Nationalist government for these overseas Taiwanese students also drove them to be pro-communists.

In general, most Taiwanese students who went to Japan during the war and those who continued their studies in the aftermath of WWII eventually settled down in Japan. Among those who returned to Taiwan, some suffered persecuted and rarely did they get

important positions in the government. These post-war developments revealed that the left-wing inclination among Taiwanese students in Japan was one of the main reasons why Taiwan lost many local elites. This article focuses mainly on tracing the emergence of left-wing views among the overseas Taiwanese in Japan. Future studies will explore the development of left-wing thinking in individual students and the effects of the drain of local elites.

**Keywords:** Taiwanese Students in Japan, Taiwanese in Japan, The Chinese Students' Press in Japan, Overseas Chinese in Japanese, Press Campaign, Left-wing