

Grains Regulation System in Japanese Colonial Empire: A Comparative Study between Taiwan and Korea (1937-1945)

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ABSTRACT

This essay aims to explore the special system established by Japan in Taiwan and Korea between 1937 and 1945, with the aim of maintaining regular supply of grains. It also compares the provision, production and allocation of grains in the two colonies as well as results of the implementation of the grains regulation system within the Japanese colonial empire.

Before the Sino-Japanese War, Japan had no worry in the supply of grains because Korea and Taiwan, two crucial rice-producing countries, were part of the Japanese colonial empire. Originally, Korea played the chief supporting role; yet the drought of 1939 disrupted rice production in Korea. This caused upheaval to Japan's wartime grains management policy. Consequently, adjustments were made including greater reliance on support from the South Pacific area, increase in production of grains other than rice, and the mobilization of the rural villages. Moreover, Japan frequently reorganized and established institutions related to grains supply and management. Towards the end of World War II, Japan introduced drastic reforms and integrated the agricultural societies of Japan, Taiwan and Korea to facilitate the mobilization of grains production and supply. In Taiwan, a parallel system was formed with social organizations of agricultural villages amalgamated under the Agricultural Society of Taiwan, which was responsible for grains production and procurement; while enterprises and companies formed the EIDAN (えいだん 営團) of grains to execute the allocation. On the contrary, Korea had a unified system with production/procurement and allocation of grains all centralized in the hands of the EIDAN. The difference in operation was attributed to the different governing experience in the two colonies. In comparison, the operation in Taiwan could maintain more steady grain production than that in Korea and the procurement and allocation were also more well-regulated.

Keywords: Colony, War, Grains, Rice