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ABSTRACT

The causes and consequences that led to the habitation of the Korean community in Japan known as Zainichi which is Chongryon and Mindan together. And on a broader perspective the social dynamics, economic implications political conditions, socio cultural transition of the three sovereign countries, namely Japan, South Korea and North Korea but mostly focusing on the Chongryon community. When the tensions between these three countries are at its peak, the Chongryon community in Japan is not only a refuge for North Koreans, but also acts as a de facto embassy of North Korea in Japan. This research aims at briefly understanding the conditions of living for people of the Chongryon community when their chosen leader Kim Jong un threatens the world and the region of nuclear annihilation.

Keywords: Zainichi, Chongryon, De Facto, Embassy, Mindan.

1. INTRODUCTION

The first generation of Koreans in Japan was brought as cheap labor during the colonial era, most against their will. This was the advent of the Korean community in Japan. By the end of World War II, the total number of Koreans in Japan increased to 2.3 million. This sizeable community had no identity after Japan had to give away its territory of Taiwan and Korea. The Korean community in Japan lost their Japanese citizenship after the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty. This led to the community being stateless. The options at hand for the community were (a) to return to either North or South Korea, (b) to become a naturalized Japanese or (c) to stay in Japan without the citizenship and rights are given to Japanese citizens. About three-fourth of the Koreans in Japan would return to the Korean peninsula, many stayed back because of the devastation caused by the Korean War or they had no one to receive them in Korea. And accepting the Japanese citizenship would mean disowning the Korean culture which they were very much proud of. So, the remaining people of the community chose to stay back in Japan without a citizenship and entitlement to rights.

Koreans in Japan came to be known as Zainichi community. Some people of the community accepted Kim Song Il as their leader, whereas some pledged their allegiance to South Korea. In order to command a strong influence internationally and especially in Japan, the North Korean leadership over the years sent aid to the community in Japan. The part of the Zainichi community that pledged their allegiance to North Korea came under the name organizational name of Chongryon. Chongryon built many schools and institutions from the aid received from North Korea. These institutions basically became the means of North Korean propaganda in Japan.

Chongryon became the unofficial embassy of North Korea in Japan when the political relations between the countries were not good after the abduction of Japanese nationals by North Korea. This was the time when the Zainichi community and Chongryon, in particular, had to face a lot of problems. It is also allegedly said that the Chongryon officials have been over the years acted with the North Korean intelligence agency. Chongryon has also been accused of sending money and procuring materials needed for weapon production for North Korea. Surely, the links between Chongryon leaders and Pyongyang have been deep but lately there have been issues.

With the rising political unrest and concerns about North Korea around the world, many of the Chongryon followers or members have left the organization. Not only has the international community raised its concerns about the rising military potential of North Korea, but also Japan, being its neighbor has serious concerns about its safety. With Prime Minister Shinzō Abe, being the right wing patriotic leader that he is, has made the laws even stricter for the Chongryon and the community. Chongryon has been facing a lot of legal problems lately, also the financial aid given to them for education has also been ceased. This chaos surrounding the community raises serious social, political and economic concerns. (Sertic) (The Japan Times)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Author(s): Erin Aeran Chung

Source: Asian Perspective, Vol. 24, No. 4, Special Issue on Dysfunctional Japan: At Homeland in the World (2000), pp. 159-178:

Korean residents make up over forty percent of all resident aliens in Japan. Although naturalization procedures have become less restrictive for permanent residents, only about 30 percent of the total Korean population has been naturalized in the past forty years. Rather than attempting to become Japanese which the Japanese government discourages, elements in the Korean community have experimented with new forms of "citizenship" based on membership and participation in civil society. And according to this author, there were around 217000 North Koreans in Japan, this community is most often referred to as "Korean residents in Japan" or "ethnic Koreans in Japan" (which would include Japanese nationals of Korean ancestors). Eventually, Koreans in Japan were denationalized under the Alien Registration Law of 1947 and were required to carry alien registration cards that identified them as belonging to Chongryon. (Korea was called Chosen by the Japanese until Korea's liberation from Japan). The existence of Koreans in Japan most of who initially registered by claiming North Korean nationality became a security threat to the otherwise politically stable and economically dynamic post-1955 system. Nationality thus became the primary source of social identity for Koreans in Japan. It is also the basis for political organization within the community itself. The first post-war

Korean organization in Japan, Chongryon or "League of Koreans in Japan", was established in October 1945 with the primary purpose of repatriating all Koreans in Japan to Korea. (Chung, Erin Aeran, 2000)

Greimel, Hans. Seattle Times; Seattle, Wash. [Seattle, Wash] 25 Oct 2006

A6.

What effected the North Korean society in Japan was some of several outbursts putting people on edge, including protests outside chongryon facilities, threatening phone calls to North Korea-backed private schools and a severed pinkie finger mailed to the group's headquarters with a note promising "Punishment from heaven." Japan, within easy range of North Korean missiles, is especially nervous. After the Oct. 9 test, Japan banned North Korean imports, barred port entry of North Korean ships and prohibited most North Korean nationals from entering the country. The current backlash began in July after North Korea conducted internationally condemned missile tests. Since then, there have been 130 cases of harassment and intimidation against North Korean students, (Chongryon) said. The pace quickened after the nuclear test, with two arsons at Chongryon facilities. (Greimel, 2006)

Financial Transfers from Japan to North Korea: Estimating the Unreported

Flows, Nicholas Eberstadt; Asian Survey, Vol. 36, No. 5 (May 1996), pp.

523-542;

This organization of Koreans living in Japan-estimates of whose number ranges from about 100,000 to roughly 250,000-has been described as North Korea's "money pipeline". In the view of most specialists, this "money pipeline" funnels very substantial volumes of aid to North Korea every year. In a presentation before the Japanese Diet in March 1994, for example, the director-general of the Japanese Agency for Public Security and Investigation stated that Chongryon was believed to be remitting Y60 billion to Y80 billion a year to Pyongyang equivalent to \$650 million-\$850 million at then existing exchange rates. Those estimates are consistent with figures widely cited in the international press, although other published reports refer to even higher levels of remittances-Y100 billion (US\$1 billion) or more. By way of perspective, North Korea's total imports from abroad in 1993 are typically estimated at about \$1.8 billion. The research on which this article is based provides a new, and significantly different, assessment of the range and trend in hard currency remittances to

North Korea from abroad based on unclassified data and reports. Unlike previous approaches, which have concentrated upon the question of how much money North Korea might be capable of extracting from its supporters in Japan, according to this authors method, he examines instead the DPRK's international spending patterns, and the means by which Pyongyang's foreign purchases might be financed. More specifically, his method focuses upon the DPRK's longstanding balance of trade deficit with non-Communist countries, as reported by those trade partners.

(Eberstadt, 1996)

3. DISTINCTIONS IN ZAINICHI COMMUNITY

The term Zainichi means "permanent residents", which is used to refer the Koreans living in Japan. And in present state, there are two possible origins of Koreans- Northern and southern Koreans but the term Zainichi does not specify it and it is usually shorthand for Koreans who came here during Japan's colonial rule, and their descendants. There is a split of loyalty of theses Koreans between North Korea and South Korea. The Koreans who supported North Korea founded The General Association of Korean residents in Japan or Chōsen Sōren or called chongryon and the organization for south Korea is called the Korean residents union in Japan or mindan, and there are more than about 6, 00, 000 Koreans in Japan out of which about 65% are members of mindan and about 25% are members of Chongryon. (Arv14)

Chongryon has lived through four generations of Zainichi community, in the part which was aided by the Korean ethnic schools continuing their ideology of political association with North Korea among the Zainichi community, as well as their ethnic unity of Koreans who must maintain their own and separate community from the Japanese society. And their focus is on ethnic education

on learning about the home land and gives new strength to ethnic culture. Both Korean cultures are thought in schools but for Chongryon, there is an importance to Kim Il-sung's philosophical teachings and the need for the Koreans in Japan to support North Korea financially and patriotically. (Kylie, 2017)

4. POLITICAL ASPECT OF CHONGRYON COMMUNITY

Their community, which long faced discrimination in Japan, now faces a backlash because of North Korea's nuclear test. Mun Gwang Woo, the group's international bureau deputy director, says the Chosen Soren supports the political, foreign and economic policies of North Korea.

Chosen Soren members see themselves as allied with the communist government of North Korea - considered one of the most repressive and isolated nations in the world. And many of them support Pyongyang's recent open resistance of United Nations sanctions in launching missiles and testing nuclear weapons. The Chongryon has received funding from North Korea (Pyongyang) to run Korean-language schools in Japan. And for decades, members sent money back to North Korea, including to family members. The news about the son of the pro-Pyongyang chief who was found guilty of importing mushrooms from North Korea and some other incidents but after Tokyo imposed penalties on trade with Pyongyang, much of the cash flow and trade activities have been cut off. In the past, the ethnic Koreans were looked down by the Japanese and they found it hard to get admissions in Top Schools and denied decent jobs, but the image about the Zainichi has been improved in Japan because of the popularity for the pop culture of South Korea. However, these communities received unwanted attention when ever North Korea made the news. Japan has a long-running dispute with Pyongyang over its kidnapping of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s. Japan, within easy range of North Korean missiles, is especially nervous. After the Oct. 9 test, Japan banned North Korean imports, barred port entry of North Korean ships and prohibited most North Korean nationals from entering the country. And many Japanese feared for their safety when North Korea launched a rocket into the Pacific Ocean and tested a nuclear device in May.

5. SOCIAL ASPECT

After the World War II, the Zainichi community was stateless and it seemed help from its native land - Korea, but Korea was no more one country, but two countries with two different ideologies and against each other. The Chongryon supporters were supporters which got financial aid from North Korea and aligned themselves with the North Korean ideology. The North Korean ideology has been the Juche ideology from the very advent of North Korea. The word 'Juche' roughly translates to 'self-reliant'. Therefore, all the supporters of Chongryon became ideologically aligned with the Juche ideology.

The financial aid received from North Korea to Chongryon was used in opening schools and institutions, also businesses by the community. This community has been attempting to be self-reliant in Japan. Chongryon supporters send their kids to these schools opened by the financial aid from North Korea. These kids are taught about the culture of North Korea, its ideology, language, a way of life etc. And like all of the North Korean propaganda videos and articles, these schools also paint a very beautiful and ideal picture of North Korea in the minds of the young students. Chongryon also arranged trips to North Korea for the students.

After passing out of these schools, most of the students are given jobs at firms that are run by Chongryon itself, which makes the community self-reliant in a way. And the people in the community are surrounded by the North Korean propaganda at all times. Over the years, this has gained the trust and loyalty of Chongryon supporters towards North Korea. And also, these firms have managed to earn money enough to send back to Pyongyang to support the regime.

In the recent years, Chongryon has been under pressure and attack from the Japanese government and also from the top leadership of Pyongyang, which has led the organization and its supporters to make a lot of mistakes. With Japanese government ceasing aid and investigating its operations over different charges of misconduct, it has led to a lot of problems for its supporters. The educational expenses for Chongryon supporters have been drastically increased.

Also, social discrimination has been a big problem for the community. The community has seen several attacks on them. Especially there have been attacks on kids going to Chongryon run schools, which is why the adults have to keep an eye and protect the young ones from being bullied, at all times. Also, Japan has seen several rallies and violent protests against such schools and kids. These kids have to change out of the traditional Korean outfit before they can head out to the streets in order to be safe from bullying. Such is the life of the Chongryon supporters, with the rising tensions between North Korea and the world, it will only get worse.

(Vox, 2017) (Sertic)

6. ECONOMIC ASPECT

Before the end of World War II, the Korean residents in Japan were basically slaves forcefully brought to the Japanese mainland. The men were brought to work in the army whereas the women were brought to work as sex workers for the Japanese soldiers. So economically, the community was not given the financial freedom. Although things changed after World War II, the community although free from the human rights violations by the colonial power, had many problems of different kinds to face.

As the community was left stateless, they were discriminated and were not welcomed to take up jobs at Japanese firms very easily, so it was necessary for the community to become self-reliant. That is when the leader of the North Korean regime, Kim Il-sung, came to the rescue of the community, he sent in financial aid for the community and helped them built their own schools and

businesses so that they could become self-reliant. In return, the North Korean regime got the loyalty of some of the Korean residents in Japan which formed the Chongryon.

Chongryon used the financial aid received from North Korea to build schools, colleges, businesses, banks and also some gambling businesses. With time they became a financially significant community. At their peak time, Chongryon was worth 25 Billion dollars which could be very helpful in buying political influence. Chongryon also started sending millions of dollars back to North Korea to support the regime. This transfer of money was done partly through legal sources and the rest without.

In the recent years, Chongryon has been put under a lot of political pressure. Chongryon's properties have been ceased by the Japanese government, their operations are closely looked at and their financial aid has also been ceased, which has brought the organization into a financial disaster.

Presently, the organization does not have enough money to pay its teachers. It can only pay out about 25% of what they used to pay them before. The organization has had to sell off its school and college buildings in order to work the finances.

This condition not only affects the organization but also its followers that were in a way dependent on the success of the organization for their daily life. Also with the deteriorating conditions, the matters seem to go south. (Vox, 2017) (Sertic)

7. ABOUT THE FUTURE OF CHONGRYON COMMUNITY

The easiest route to the managerial posts is to acquire Japanese citizenship, a choice that more Zainichi has been making. In 2003, there were only 470,000 officially recognized Zainichi, a drop of about 100,000 since 1993. Naturalized Japanese are no longer counted as Zainichi. They have sent tens of thousands of repatriates to North Korea and have continued to financially support relatives in North Korea. Those Chongryon members who remained in Japan and their children have been educated by North Korean standards and infused with nationalist sentiment toward North Korea. The organization has also provided a pool of people who could assist with illegal activities, not the least of which are the alleged Chongryon members who helped with the kidnapping of Japanese citizens. The situation for Chongryon has rapidly declined since the start of the twenty-first century, however, as the actions of the organization as a whole and individual members have come under suspicion in relation to North Korean activities. Like any organization, Chongryon is going to have to face the future and decide how they will continue to function. At the turn of the millennium, Chongryon began to face far more scrutiny from the Japanese authorities than they had experienced in past decades. As tensions grew between North Korea and Japan, and Japan's security ally, the United States, Chongryon, as the representation of North Korea, became a target of investigation and the future of the organization is in flux, but to outward appearances, Chongryon is not making strides to adapt to new situations or to face the future with adaptive new perspectives. (Kylie, 2017)

8. CONCLUSION

While Chongryon remains tied with North Korea it remains a potential threat to the security of Japan. The significance of the Chongryon community has reduced among the Zainichi community but it still remains in the picture, the organization has continued to exist despite the problems and the pressure it faced from the investigations from the Japanese governments, being a target in the view of Japanese nationals and bankruptcy. Even the bankruptcy and the selling of their organization's headquarters did not stop the functions of their organization, but bankruptcy acted as a hindrance to its activities.

At the initial stages of the Korean community in Japan Chongryon had the majority of support in the Zainichi community but in the present, it is one quarter of the population. In the future, Chongryon will probably remain, though as a minor part of the Zainichi community. Chongryon acts as a medium of communication between North Korea and Japan. And increasing pressure on the Chongryon could provide possible leverage against North Korea or could backfire and North Korea could withdraw from talks and become a possible threat which it is as of now. And balancing Chongryon between the two governments might be the only way to come to a resolution.

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