

Abstract

The thesis aims to study Japanese policy towards Korean reunification. Two principal objectives of the research are to comparatively study Japanese policy towards Korean reunification between cold war era (1950 - 1989) and post cold war era (1990 - 2000) and to search for factors determining Japanese policy making towards Korea during these two periods by mainly focusing on post cold war era. Researcher has applied the concepts of national interest, balance of power and the decision-making theories as frameworks for analysis.

From the research, it was found that during cold war era ,Japanese policy towards Korean unification could be divided into 3 periods; The first period (1945 - 1951) was the period which Japan did not want to get involved in Korean war, which was the attempt of North Korea to reunify the two parts of Korean Peninsula. Japan did not play any distinctive roles during this period. The second period (1952 - 1969) was the period which Japan had taken One-Korea-Policy. Japan had recognized South Korea as the only legal government on the Korean Peninsula and had ignored North Korea. The third period (1970 - 1989) was the period which Japan turned to Two-Korea-Policy. Japanese government wanted to establish relations with both North Korea and South Korea in order to reduce conflict and tension. Japan had supported the cross-recognition plan which meant that Japan preferred the status quo on the Korean Peninsula.

During the post cold war era, Japan has still continued the same policy as it was during the third period of cold war era. Japan has maintained good relations with South Korea while she has tried to establish diplomatic relations with North Korea. Moreover, Japan has encouraged North Korea and South Korea to rebuild relations so the two countries would be able to peacefully coexist. However, if the reunification would actually happen, Japan, as well as the United States of America, the Republic of China and Russia preferred the reunification to gradually happen. However, the end of cold war and the coalition government of Japan after cold war which Social Democratic Party of Japan could be considered as two supplementary factors effecting Japanese policy and influencing Japan to play more active roles than they had done during the cold war era.