

Human Rights, NGOs, and Foreign Policy

**Case Studies of Japanese Foreign Policy
Toward Indonesia and Myanmar
and Efforts of Human Rights NGOs**

Atsuko Yokobori

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**Deborah J. Milly, Chair
Timothy W. Luke
Jeff J. Cornassel**

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(ABSTRACT)

One of the elements that have often been neglected in the study of foreign policy is the role of norms and ideas. While human rights standards were formalized and became to be recognized as an international norm, it is still not clear whether or how human rights affect the foreign policy of specific states. In the case of Japan, its foreign policy is often characterized by hesitance to take decisive action for human rights and its dictation by economic interest. In this paper the influence of human rights on Japanese foreign policy is examined through the study of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Japanese politics, as new political actors that speak for the norm of international human rights in Japanese politics. Japanese NGOs have achieved a dramatic development in the 1980s and 1990s, and today they are recognized as important entities in Japanese society. NGOs adopt various strategies and tactics to influence Japan's decision making in foreign policy to challenge the political environment that consists of Japan's hesitance in the area of human rights and the strong influence of the business sector. Case studies examine active NGOs networks in Japan that work for human rights and democracy in East Timor and Burma and include an in-depth analysis of their operation styles, foci, and organizations.

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List of Japanese and Abbreviated Words

<i>Amakudari</i>	The system (or custom) in which a former high-ranking government official takes a well-paying job at a private company
APCET	The Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BRC-J	Burma Relief Center – Japan
Burma Info	Burma Information Network
BYVA	Burma Youth Volunteer Association
CNRM	National Council of the Maubere Resistance (East Timorese nationalists organization)
FETJC	The Free East Timor Japan Coalition (<i>Higashi Chimoru ni Jiyu wo! Zenkoku Kyogikai</i>)
FRETILIN	The East Timor Independence Revolutionary Front
JAC	The Joint Action Committee (of Burmese resident groups in Japan)
JANIC	Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation
JCIE	Japan Center for International Exchange
JEC	Japan Environmental Corporation
JETRO	Japan External Trade Organization
<i>Koeki hojin</i>	(or <i>Koeki shadan hojin</i>) Public benefit organization
<i>Kokusaika</i>	Internationalization
Keidanren	The Federation of Economic Organizations (of Japan)
MITI	The Ministry of International Trade and Industry
MOFA	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MOF	The Ministry of Finance
MPT	The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications
NIES	Newly Industrialized Economies
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NLD-LAJB	National League for Democracy, Liberated Area Japan Branch
NPO Law	The Law for the Promotion of Specific Nonprofit Activities (in Japan)
ODA	Official Development Aid (of Japan)
PARC	Pacific Asia Research Center
PD-Burma	The International Network for Politicians Promoting Democracy in Burma
PFB	The People's Forum on Burma (Biruma Shimin Foramu)
<i>Sei-kan-zai</i>	Politics-bureaucracy-business
<i>Shimin Undo</i>	Citizens' movements
<i>Shukko</i>	Temporary transfer
SLORC	The State Law and Order Restoration Council (the military regime of Myanmar)
SOLB	The Student Organization for Liberation of Burma

Chapter 1: Introduction

After World War II, human rights standards were formalized in the Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and came to be recognized as central to international politics. However, it is still not clear whether or how human rights affect the foreign policy of specific states. In this paper I examine the influence of human rights on Japanese foreign policy. More specifically, I study the role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Japanese politics, as new actors that speak for the norm of international human rights. Although Japanese foreign policy is said to be dictated by economic interest, closer observation reveals that Japanese policy is not static, but it undergoes many changes and subtle adjustments at times. Those shifts in Japanese foreign policy are the result of the government's effort to accommodate and compromise among different interests that exist in Japanese politics. NGOs have become a part of this dynamic decision making process, as agents to give voice to human rights, which otherwise lacks tangibility in domestic politics.

Scholars of international relations and foreign policy have articulated various explanations for why a state makes a certain decision. For example, one of the traditional approaches to foreign policy analysis is that of realists. In the realist school of thought, a state's primary concern is security and survival in the international system. Thus, all other issues are subordinated to military power and security issues in the realist's perspective. Likewise, liberalism focuses on economy as the decisive factor for a state's decision making of foreign policy. While tangible factors, such as economy and security, explain certain cases of a state's decision making, there are other cases that cannot be explained so easily.

In this sense, constructivist arguments provide important additional aspects in the analysis of international politics, in which norms and ideas have influential power over states' behavior and non-state actors play an crucial role. In their study of international activists, Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink state, "profound changes in Eastern Europe, the end of slavery, or the granting of women the right to vote throughout the world" cannot be explained only by security or economy (Keck and Sikkink, 1998, p. 213). Norms and ideas that do not necessarily have tangible forms have power to influence a state's decisions and to change the course of international relations. As Finnemore states, "... normative context influences the behavior of

decisionmakers and of mass publics who may choose and constrain those decisionmakers" (Finnemore, 1996, p. 2). In this respect, constructivism provides an important perspective on the analysis of a state's foreign policy. Furthermore, discussion of international norms and human rights, the role of NGOs becomes important. In their study of human rights in state politics, Thomas Risse, Stephen Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink examine NGOs as the key actors who raise a normative issue in politics and make it heard by the wider public. In particular, their "spiral model" enables in-depth analysis of the impact of human rights and the role of NGOs in both domestic and international politics. Their study recognizes the importance of NGOs and their efforts to pressure the state on the basis of human rights (Risse et al., 1999). In addition, William Korey finds in his study of NGOs and human rights that NGOs play the role of "ombudsmen" who monitor and pressure a government (Korey, 1998, p. 19). The power of NGOs' information and communications networks also has begun to be recognized, and their impacts on a state's policy making can no longer be neglected (Keck and Sikkink, 1998).

In the case of Japan, economic interest has been the major focus of many studies to explain the state's behavior in international politics (Arase, 1993, 1994; Hook, 1995; Hook and Zhang, 1998; Nester, 1992; Schraeder, 1998). The Japanese business sector has a strong connection to the government, and its influence over foreign policy is considerable. For instance, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry's (MITI) rigorous support for Japanese business interest and the ministry's substantial influence over Japan's foreign policy are well known (Arase, 1993, 1994; Murai, 1984; 1998; Murai and Hanabusa, 1987; Nester, 1992). However, analyses focused on economic interest oversimplify the reality of international politics and a state's foreign policy making. The reality is more complex and involves multiple objectives and interests.

Moreover, in the discussion of Japanese politics, NGOs and their contributions often have been ignored. NGOs in Japan are said to be less developed than in the West, and their ability to influence politics is considered minimal (Arase, 1993; 1994; Murai and Hanabusa, 1987; Yamakoshi, 1994). However, the recent development of Japanese NGOs has established civil society groups as a legitimate 'third sector.' Japanese NGOs have expanded in their scale and number, and this has led the government and society to recognize NGOs' ability to operate independently and to contribute to society and politics. NGOs have become more influential and their presence in society has become more visible and stronger than ever before. Furthermore, cooperation between the government and NGOs has started to develop. Today, NGOs have

started to play a role in various spheres traditionally viewed as the government's responsibility. The government supports and encourages NGOs with increasing funding, and NGOs are now perceived as important partners of the government particularly in the area of international cooperation and assistance. NGOs have started to get serious attention, and their ability to influence the government's policy is greater than at any time before. In chapter two, I examine the historical path of Japanese NGOs through different stages of post-war Japanese society. The chapter also discusses their recent development, which has established their presence in today's Japan and has changed their relationship to the government.

While the NGOs' position in the Japanese political system has been established, their impact on foreign policy is not easily assessed. To simply observe policy outcomes would lead to an oversimplification of the relationship between influence and policy decisions, because foreign policy is a product of interactions among numerous groups and individuals with different motivations and interests. Thus, to appreciate the contributions of NGOs in foreign policy making of Japan, it becomes important to closely examine the process of how political actors interact and negotiate with each other while pursuing their interests.

For close observation of political processes, case studies are appropriate, because they allow us to examine details of actors' behaviors and their relationships to one another. However, case studies also have a negative side, as details sometimes blur the broader picture and single case studies are of limited use for making generalizations. To balance this, two cases are selected for my research. The comparison between the two cases provides a wider perspective to assess the operations of NGOs by revealing crucial factors in both case that affect their behaviors.

Case Studies: Japanese Foreign Policy Toward Indonesia and Myanmar

Japanese foreign policies toward two Southeast Asian countries are selected for the comparative study: Indonesia and Myanmar. Indonesia and Myanmar have historically held special positions in Japan's foreign policy. Both located in Asia, Indonesia and Myanmar are 'neighbors' with which Japan has close historical and cultural ties. They also have been important destinations for Japanese foreign aid since the time of war reparations. In addition, the two countries share a similarity important to this study, in that they have experienced very visible and extreme cases of human rights violations that have attracted great attention from the international community.

Indonesia has been often criticized for its human rights violations, especially regarding the controversial issue of East Timor. Since the end of 1975, when the Indonesian government sent its military forces to East Timor and annexed the island by force against the will of the people, Indonesia has periodically come under criticism for the suppression of pro-independence activists and treatment of citizens in East Timor. Although the Indonesian government was relatively successful in keeping the East Timor issue away from international attention in most of the 1980s and 1990s, it received strong criticism from the international community in 1991 when a massacre occurred in Dili. It was reported that more than one hundred people, who were participating in the funeral of an East Timor activist, were shot to death by the Indonesian government's military. The incident was widely reported, because of the presence of foreign journalists at the site.

In Myanmar, major civil unrest occurred in 1988, and a democratic movement against the military government was attempted. The government suppressed this by coercive means, which led to a massacre of civil demonstrators, many of whom were students. It is estimated that a thousand civilians were shot and killed, and hundreds more were injured, arrested, and imprisoned (Nemoto, 1992, p. 149). After the incident, Prime Minister Ne Win placed the country under the rule of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) composed of 21 military commanders. The leader of the democratic movement, Aung San Suu Kyi, and her followers were imprisoned or placed under house arrest. While Burmese activists have been struggling to bring about democracy in their country, no visible success has been achieved so far. Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest this year, but many contend that democratization in Myanmar has not made progress in any concrete way, as the military government continues to stay in power and controls the people's political and social lives.

While Indonesia and Myanmar have problematic records of human rights, the two cases share factors that make Japan reluctant to take decisive action against their human rights violations. Historical and cultural ties as Asian neighbors and the memories of war in which both countries were Japan's colonies put Japan in an uncomfortable position to insist on human rights in its diplomacy with Indonesia and Myanmar.

While those are important similarities, the two cases also bear some crucial differences. Economic ties between Japan and Indonesia are significantly stronger than Japan's ties with Myanmar. The amount of Japanese aid to Indonesia steadily increased through the 1980s and

1990s, and Indonesia has become one of the top recipients of Japanese Official Development Aid (ODA). There is also a considerable amount of Japanese investment in Indonesia today, not to mention the large amount of bilateral trade between the two countries. Even after the Dili incident, Indonesia remained one of the top recipients of Japanese aid for the following years.

In contrast, Myanmar poses only a limited economic interest for Japan. The scale of the economy in Myanmar is much smaller than that of Indonesia, and the country has been struggling under the government's poor performance in its economic development projects. While Japan perceives some potential in Myanmar, the current situation in the country does not present a bright outlook for the near future.

In addition, the two cases reveal different patterns in Japan's foreign policy. In the case of Indonesia, Japan has maintained a relatively consistent, friendly policy, in which the human rights issue of East Timor is set aside for the most part in its diplomacy. However, the Japanese government also has occasionally addressed its regret and concern over East Timor issues to the Indonesian government and requested early solutions to the situation ("Jakarta Reiterates Hope," 1996; "Japan May Link," 1991; "Japan Seeks," 1994; Urakami, 1994). When the Dili incident occurred in 1991, the Japanese government did not take any firm action to condemn the Indonesian government, but instead it took the side of the government by not admitting the credibility of the report of the incident which was released by the international media. Thus, Japanese foreign policy toward Indonesia can be characterized by its consistency in overall friendliness and neglect of East Timor's human rights, with occasional criticisms that are limited to rhetoric.

On the other hand, Japan's diplomacy toward Myanmar is often described as "inconsistent" because of a series of policy shifts the Japanese government made in the past (Saito, 1992). Japan's initial response to the Myanmar incident in 1988 was to halt its aid¹. Japan almost immediately announced this decision after the military's crackdown of demonstrators, and it strongly condemned the military government. In September of that year the Japanese ambassador expressed Japan's "concern" and made a statement in which he urged "a democratic political solution that reflects the national consensus" (Saito, 1992, p. 20). In January 1989 when the military government organized an event to celebrate statehood under the new regime, the

¹ Consequently Myanmar, which was the number seven recipient of Japanese development assistance in 1986, disappeared from the major recipient list by 1990.

Japanese ambassador left the country in protest, along with officials from other industrialized democracies (Seekins, 2002). Teruko Saito, a scholar of Burmese studies who has studied Japan's diplomacy toward Myanmar, explains that at the point of the Japanese government's decision in January 1989 to postpone 927 million yen grants, "it had been made clear to the [military] junta [in Myanmar] that an opening up of the economy and the achievement of a political solution based on popular consensus were conditions for resumption of Japanese aid" (Saito, 1992, p. 20).

While the Japanese government took a relatively firm position against the SLORC at the beginning, later its diplomacy went through some shifts, and Japan's stance has been ambiguous from an outsider's view. On February 17, 1989, Japan recognized the SLORC, and in July 1989, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) announced its adoption of "Myanmar" as the official name of the country ("Japan Switches," 1989). Japan was among the first to recognize the military government and to adopt the country's controversial new name, which was decided without the consensus of the Burmese people. In 1989 some of the on-going aid projects were resumed. While the Japanese government continues to withhold new aid to Myanmar to this day, its policy changes from time to time, and it is not clear exactly where Japan stands in the relationship. Japan's foreign policy toward Myanmar involves frequent shifts between critical and accommodating diplomacy.

Japan's different courses of foreign policies toward those countries, in addition to the difference in degree of economic interest, provide comparative grounds for examining NGO operations in the two cases. The cases have important similarities as well as differences that affect Japan's approaches to human rights problems. The comparative study makes it possible to examine NGO activities in the different types of political environments in which they operate.

NGOs and the Political Environment

Traditionally, Japanese foreign policy on human rights has been analyzed in terms of two major characteristics. One is its hesitance and reluctance to take a stand on human rights (Kawabe, 1994; Ogata, 1987; Yokota and Aoi, 2000; A. Watanabe, 1997), and the other is the dominance of economic interests in policy making (Arase, 1993, 1994; Hook, 1995; Hook and Zhang, 1998; Murai, 1984; 1994; 1998; Nester, 1992; Schraeder et. al., 1998; Washimi, 1989). In

this paper those important factors of Japanese politics are examined as elements that compose the political environment for Japanese NGOs. In chapter three, the traditional pattern of Japanese foreign policy on human rights is discussed with examination of events and factors that have affected the Japanese government's behavior. The Japanese government has traditionally been hesitant to take decisive action for human rights, and as a result human rights NGOs face an overwhelming task to challenge the established pattern of Japanese foreign policy. NGOs that I discuss in my case study of Indonesia and Myanmar perceive the Japanese government as the target whose behavior must be shifted and are critical of the government's current policy and diplomatic practices. While the government has taken different approaches to Indonesia and Myanmar, both NGO groups I discuss share the perspective that the government is an adversary.

Another element that comprises the political environment with which human rights NGOs in Japan interact is the strong presence of business that promotes friendly diplomacy with foreign governments despite their unfavorable human rights record. In chapter four, I examine Japan's economic interests in Indonesia and Myanmar, the different actors involved, and the political decision making process in which these actors interact. The business sector, which perceives economic benefit from free trade and investment with and in those countries, has a close cooperation with the government, and this creates a further challenging environment for NGOs working to promote human rights consideration in foreign policy making.

The cases of Indonesia and Myanmar, however, differ slightly. Japan has a substantial economic and business interest in Indonesia, while such interest is relatively limited in Myanmar. Business dealing with Indonesia is officially recognized by the government and by the public, and companies have been able to conduct business freely with the country. Contrarily, there is only a small presence of Japanese business in Myanmar, because of that government's extremely negative image in the international community. The Japanese government does not expressly encourage business with Myanmar. However, at the same time, there have been cases that show that the Japanese government was engaged in behind the scene negotiation with the military government in Myanmar and that the Japanese business sector also has been involved in this process. In addition, in the case of Myanmar, influential politicians who have personal ties with Myanmar officials have been active to promote friendly diplomacy with the SLORC government.

The difference in political processes in the cases of Indonesia and Myanmar provides different environments for NGOs working for East Timor and Burma respectively. In chapter

five, Japanese NGOs working for Indonesia and Myanmar are examined as the focus of this study. In those political environments, NGOs have developed different strategies and operational styles. Involvement of different types of leadership in each NGO group also contributes to the difference between the two NGO groups, setting climates for their organizations and providing necessary skills to conduct different types of activities. Two active NGO networks working for East Timor and Burma's human rights and democracy are examined to develop an in-depth analysis of their operations. NGOs' efforts, strategies, and organizations are observed. What do they do and how? Who are they? How are they organized? These are some of the basic questions that I address in my study.

Further, NGOs are analyzed from two perspectives. First, I examine the effectiveness of NGOs' activities in relation to the outcome - the Japanese government's policy toward the two countries. I study individual incidents in which NGOs' efforts led or did not lead to shift Japan's foreign policy. Second, I consider NGOs activities within the context of the political environment and political decision making process, in which the respective NGO groups are placed. NGOs' operational styles and goals are shaped in the political environment, while NGOs as new political actors also contribute to shaping further this environment.

Research Method and Limitation

The study relies on primary and secondary sources that I have been able to obtain in Blacksburg. The physical distance between Japan and the United States sets limitations on getting access to certain materials; however, thanks to the development of electronic communications systems and databases, I was able to obtain a reasonable amount of material I needed to complete the study. In addition to scholarly works, I searched newspaper and magazine articles to follow the policy of the Japanese government and NGO activities in the 1980s and 1990s.

To study NGOs in depth, I used publications and interviews. I have had access to numerous articles by NGO leader-activists published in popular magazines, newspapers, Internet publications, and NGOs' websites. Direct communication with the activists was beneficial, not only for obtaining factual information, but also for learning about the dynamic leadership of those individuals who are the driving forces of the NGOs. I contacted approximately thirty

NGOs in Japan and received replies from about half of them. Many of the individuals who replied to my inquiry helped me in selecting the organizations on which to focus and by providing me with information and advice on organizations and individuals to contact. Three individuals accepted my request for interviews (two of them by phone; one by email). I was also able to exchange correspondence with some other NGO leaders by email. This research of human rights in Japan's particular political and cultural settings helps us to understand the efforts and contributions of those who dedicate themselves to international human rights.

Chapter 2: The Development of Japanese NGOs

The development of Japanese NGOs in the last several decades has been remarkable; they have not only increased in number, but also have established their presence in Japanese society as the new third sector that challenges the government and business. The contention that NGOs in Japan are less developed than in the other industrialized democracies and lack the ability to influence politics is less and less defensible. Today NGOs' influence can no longer be ignored in Japanese politics. While the government was unenthusiastic about NGOs' causes and activities in earlier days, the dramatic development of civil society organizations in the 1980s and 1990s has changed the government's perspective. The Japanese government has started to recognize NGOs' contributions in many areas, including foreign aid and human rights, and it has established a system to support NGOs legally as well as financially. The MOFA is especially eager to promote cooperation with NGOs, setting up more funds and holding regular meetings with NGO leaders.

Early this year, a controversy arose when the MOFA reportedly 'banned' two NGOs from attending an international conference on Afghanistan's reconstruction. The NGOs that were initially denied participation in the conference filed a complaint, and they were able to attend the meeting later on. However, the controversy led to a turmoil involving the foreign minister and high ranking officials in the ministry, as well as an influential politician; this resulted in the resignation of the minister and the reshuffling of the ministry ("Still No Clear Answers," 2002). This incident is important in that it symbolizes the impact that NGOs have started to have on Japanese politics. First, the incident indicates that NGOs are now recognized as independent entities from the government, and the government and influential politicians are no longer able to control NGOs behavior. Furthermore, this incident indicates that not only does the legal system guarantee the independence of NGOs, but the public also acknowledges NGOs as legitimate civil society groups which are capable to operate at their discretion. Second, the fact that those influential individuals attempted to ban certain NGOs from representing Japan in an international event indicates that those government officials and politicians recognize or even fear the potential impact that those NGOs may have when they participate in the conference. The incident, which led to delay of the budget session at the Diet, signifies the increasing impact that NGOs have in Japanese politics today.

In this chapter I examine the origin of Japanese NGOs and their recent development. The

shift in government-NGO relations is examined as an important indication that NGOs have begun to have a considerable impact in Japanese politics and on decision making by the government. Furthermore, I discuss the contributions and concerns of NGOs, particularly in the area of human rights, as active actors in Japan's policy making.

The Historical Path of Japanese NGOs

We may trace back the origin of the nonprofit sector in Japan to the Edo period (1603-1868), when Buddhist monks were engaged in charitable activities to help the weak in the society (Yamamoto, 1998, p. 12). During the same period, there were also community-based groups, which were in charge of providing emergency relief to the people hit by famines and natural disaster (Yamamoto, 1998, p. 21). However, those groups were not completely private, but rather semi-public, in the sense that they were operating under the government's support and supervision. Later in the Meiji era (1868-1912) organizations that served society's common good were given privileges from the government, such as tax exemptions, which were granted upon obtaining the legal status of *koeki hojin* (public benefit organization) (Yamamoto, 1998, p. 24).

In the past two centuries, Christians have been active agents who have contributed to the development of the nonprofit sector in Japan. During the Meiji era, Christian groups established facilities such as orphanages and hospitals to help the needy in the society (Yamamoto, 1998, p. 24). They were also enthusiastic in the area of education and established many schools and colleges in Japan. In the 1960s and 1970s, NGOs that were international in nature emerged, and many of them were established by Japanese Christians who sought to serve people in need regardless of their nationality. The Japan Overseas Christian Medical Cooperative Service opened in the early 1960s, and the Asian Rural Institute, in the early 1970s, were some of the organizations set up by Japanese Christian groups to provide services to people outside of Japan (Japan Center for International Exchange [JCIE], 1998; Wanner, 1998).

The 1970s also marked the beginning of international NGOs operating in Japan. Groups that were engaged in issues such as human rights and environmental protection started to open their offices in Japan. Amnesty International Japan was founded in 1970, and World Wide Fund for Nature Japan was organized in 1971 (Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation [JANIC], 1998, p. 75). In the late 1970s, when a large number of Indochina refugees settled in Japan, Japanese NGOs that focused on international issues increased dramatically. The incoming of the

refugees raised public awareness that led to the flourishing of volunteerism among the Japanese people. Many NGOs with international perspectives were established during this time, including the Japan International Volunteer Center, Caring for Young Refugees, and the Japan Sotoshu Relief Committee (JCIE, 1998, p. 201; Umahashi, 1998; Wanner, 1998).

The most remarkable development of Japanese NGOs in terms of number and scale came about in the 1980s and 1990s. The number of organizations operating in Japan increased from less than one hundred in the 1980s to over 360 by 1996 (JANIC, 1998, pp. 2-18). Among all NGOs operating in Japan today, over 40 percent were established after 1986 (JCIE, 1998; Nakamura, 1999; Wanner, 1998). The rise of NGOs paralleled the trend for “*kokusaika*,” or “internationalization,” that Japan faced in the midst of booming economy and the expansion of Japanese business to overseas (JCIE, 1998, p. 205; Seekins, 1992, p. 247). Internationalization became the most popularly used term in the 1980s and 1990s. While no one has defined the exact meaning of the term, internationalization has become the norm and the goal for education, business, and many other social activities. In his study of Japan’s foreign policy, Seekins explains “[the process of] ‘internationalization’ involves the [gradual] opening of Japanese society to the outside world and the growth of a cosmopolitan perspective among previously insular Japanese people” (Seekins, 1992, p. 247).

The fever of volunteerism and the rise of NGOs in Japan came from two sides in this *kokusaika* period: business and the public. Japanese corporations located abroad, particularly those in the United States, faced pressures from the local communities to be engaged in more philanthropic activities. This led the corporations to support NGO activities, as we see in the example of Keidanren’s One Percent Club, which was established in 1990 (Wanner, 1998). The Club consists of corporations and individuals who pledge to contribute one percent of their revenue to public services, and it promotes cooperation between the business sector and NGOs (Keidanren, 2002). The amount of corporate donations, which was 267.5 billion yen in 1984, was more than doubled in six years, reaching 549.1 billion yen in 1990 (JCIE, 1998, p. 18).

On the other hand, the Japanese public was caught up in the debate over the country’s contribution in the international community, and NGOs started to receive more attention from society as the third agent to represent Japan in the international community (JCIE, 1998). In 1985, the word “NGO” appeared only 21 times in three major national newspapers. The number

quickly rose to 173 in 1990, 720 in 1993, and 2157 in 1998 (Mouju, 1999, p. 150)². Likewise, the media started to report on “*shimin undo*” (citizens’ movements), more frequently during the same time period (Nakamura and Nihon NPO Center, 1999, p. 31). Reflecting the trend of internationalization during this time period and the increasing contact with NGOs abroad, the number of Japanese NGOs engaged in international issues dramatically increased between 1989 and 1994 (Nakamura, 1999, p. 54; Reimann, 2000).

In his study of Japanese NGOs and their development, Yamakoshi suggests that Japan is facing a time for changes, as “[the traditional] ‘*sei-kan-zai*’ (politics-bureaucracy-business) cooperative system” shifts to one that “[reflects] today’s popular political demands” represented by the rise of NGOs (Yamakoshi, 1994, p. 9). NGOs have established their presence in today’s Japanese society, and their role and relationship with the government and the business is a topic frequently discussed among Japanese political commentators today. Indeed, the relationship between the government and NGOs has changed in recent years, from one that used to be conflictual to one that involves cooperation and communication.

NGOs and the Japanese Government

As Japanese NGOs have developed, their relationship to the state has changed, and the government has started to recognize NGOs as independent groups that are able to carry out operations in certain fields. Some governmental ministries, notably the MOFA, enthusiastically support NGOs, by setting up funds and involving them in the government’s aid projects. However, this is a new trend that has emerged in the last twenty years. Traditionally, the nonprofit sector in Japan was regarded as supplement to the welfare system provided by the state, and the relationship between the government and the nonprofit sector in Japan was characterized as a “patron-client” relationship (Yamamoto, 1998, p. 122).

Before the end of the world war, more independent citizens groups started to emerge in Japan, but those organizations were often perceived negatively by the government. This was because many of the early NGOs targeted pollution and health issues, which stemmed from the government’s mismanagement, and they took a critical position against authority, demanding a political solution to their issues. Thus, NGOs were often considered as “dangerous leftist elements,” and the government tried to suppress those organizations, rather than encourage them

² According to the JCIE, the numbers are: 178 in 1990, 850 in 1992, and 2410 in 1997 (JCIE 205).

(Wanner, 1998). Later in the 1950s and 1960s NGOs that advocated for human rights continued to be considered “leftists” or political radicals (Hayashi, 1998, p. 64). There was no legal recognition or governmental support for NGOs before the 1980s (Reimann, 2000), and their size and activities were kept rather limited until recently.

As NGOs’ presence has become more visible, the Japanese government has begun to recognize their role and importance in society. The MOFA was one of the first governmental agencies to recognize the contributions of NGOs and to set up a system to promote collaboration between the government and non-governmental sector. The MOFA started to provide NGO operational grants in 1989, and the partnership between the government and NGOs has developed over the last two decades (Nakamura and Japan NPO Center, 1999, p. 189). Consequently, the amount of governmental funds to NGOs and the number of their projects have steadily and rapidly increased. In addition to the MOFA’s NGO grants, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) started an “International Volunteer Savings Fund” in 1991, which allocates 20 percent of the interest to NGO funding. The fund raised 2.8 billion yen in 1995, which was distributed to 235 NGOs in Japan (Mouju, 1999, p. 151). Similarly, Japan Environmental Corporation (JEC – a quasi-governmental agency) set up a fund for NGOs working in the specific area of environmental issues (Reimann, 2000).

Table 2.1

Government Funding for NGOs From 1991 To 1998

Gov’t Program	Hosting Ministry	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
NGO Subsidies	MOFA	280	340	440	540	760	1000	1200	1150
Grassroots Grants	MOFA	500	700	1000	1500	3000	4500	5000	5700
POSIVA	MPT	1014	2596	2306	2483	2811	1579	1062	1242
Fund for Globl Env.	JEC			405	630	650	670	726	733
Total (yen)		1794	3636	4151	5153	7221	7746	7988	8825
Total (US million\$)		16.3	33.2	37.7	46.8	65.6	70.4	72.6	80.2

(Unit: Million yen)

Source: Kim Reimann, (2000). “Civil Society and Official Development Assistance: International Politics, Domestic Structures and the Emergence of International Development NGOs in Japan,” *Columbia International Affairs Online* (Columbia University Press).

The amount of those funds has steadily increased over years. In general those governmental funds are more accessible for private NGOs than any public funds previously administered by the government (Reimann, 2000). In the 1990s, the legal status of NGOs and the tax system became controversial. As a response to mounting calls for change, in 1998, the Diet passed the NPO (nonprofit organization) promotion bill that enables NGOs to obtain legal status more easily and allows them to operate as legitimate organizations in the eyes of government and society.

Today the MOFA regularly meets with NGO leaders to discuss issues of foreign assistance and aid projects. NGOs have become active agents to implement Japan's aid projects in the Third World countries. NGOs have also been invited to major international conferences, such as the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, and the Women's Conference in Beijing, to represent Japan along with government officials.

While financial support from the government and the business is generally perceived as a positive change, NGOs perceive the new situation with mixed feelings. While some welcome such a cooperative relationship with the government, others are still skeptical of the government and business's involvement in their activities (Yamakoshi, 1994). As Shuto, who studies Japanese human rights NGOs, explains, funds from the governmental ministries may result in a mere "extension of the delivery system of aid," thus resulting in the threat to NGOs' independence (Shuto, 1998).

While there are different perspectives on the government's support for NGOs, those policy changes indicate the government's recognition of NGOs as legitimate organizations and their ability to execute operations in certain fields of activity. NGOs are particularly well regarded in areas concerning people's wellness and environment, and human rights have been one of the issue areas in which NGOs have made important contributions in Japanese politics.

Policy Shifts and Human Rights NGOs in Japan

The discussion of human rights came into Japanese politics during the time of the US occupation (Burks, 1985). The notion of human rights laid out in legal language was a new concept for the Japanese people, and still today, the majority of the Japanese public is not very clear what they exactly mean by the term 'human rights.' Average Japanese consider human rights as a technical and legal matter which they are not very familiar with in their daily lives. At

the same time, numerous social movements use the idea of rights as a central symbol in pursuing their causes (Feldman, 2000).

Furthermore, some argue that human rights are not new concepts for the Japanese and they comply with Japanese traditional culture. John Peek, who has done numbers of studies of human rights in Japan, asserts that "human rights have deep roots in Japanese culture," particularly in Japan's Buddhist tradition. According to Peek, Japanese culture shares many of its beliefs with the notion of human rights that ensures the equality of people, and the dignity and freedom of an individual (Peek, 1995, p. 527). While the majority of the Japanese population remains relatively less vocal in the human rights debate, Japanese society generally accepts human rights as a 'good thing' that ensures quality of life and democracy that today's Japan enjoys.

Japan's adoption of international human rights as legally protected rights of all people particularly encouraged minority groups and immigrants who had been marginalized in Japanese society. NGOs whose activities originate from civil movements in the post-war period have contributed to bringing about the government's policy shifts as active and vocal advocates for human rights in Japanese society. For many of Japanese NGOs in the past and the present, human rights are the goal as well as justification of their activities, and NGOs generally support the universality of human rights as the way to protect the dignity of individuals regardless of their national, ethnical, and cultural background.

In the 1950s Japan joined the United Nations upon its adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, after years of domestic debate. In the late 1970s, Japan ratified major international treaties on human rights, and slowly, Japan started to accommodate international standards of human rights. Behind those policy shifts were social movements and efforts of various domestic NGOs. Amy Gurowitz, who has studied the role of the civil society and the impact of human rights in Japanese politics, states, "norms do not automatically proliferate to government. Had the Japanese government not been pushed to ratify [the international covenants of human rights in the 1970s], it is reasonable to assume that it could not have done so..." (Gurowitz, 1999, p. 432). In contrast to the position taken by the Japanese government, many in the Japanese public favored the idea of human rights introduced to the country after the world war. Minority groups, including women, Christians, Burakumins, Ainu, Korean and Chinese immigrants supported the US occupation force's stance to promote human rights in Japan's new political system after the war (Peek, 1991, p. 4). Those groups formed organizations that became

forerunners of current Japanese NGOs. The Japan Civil Liberties Union, the Burakumin Liberation League, the Japanese Association of University Women, and the YWCA were some of the major groups that critically assessed the government's undertaking of human rights issues (Peek, 1991, p. 13).

Amnesty International is one of the oldest human rights NGOs that has been operating in Japan. The organization's Japan office now has 7,500 members, who belong to 140 local groups (Lindsay, 1999). However, it was not until September 2000 that the Japan branch finally acquired the status of *koeki hojin* (public benefit organization), which requires sponsorship of government ministries. Amnesty International negotiated with the Japanese government for over seven years until the Ministry of Justice and the MOFA finally agreed and coordinated co-sponsorship. This was only the second case in which a human rights NGO was granted such status, since the Japan Civil Liberties Union in the 1950s (Amnesty, 2000). It is considered to be one of the major achievements of Amnesty, as the *koeki hojin* status implies the government's official recognition of the organization's cause as for the public good; in other words, the Japanese government has recognized international human rights as a public good for society.

In 1989 the International Human Rights Network was established as the first NGO network in Japan for human rights. The network evolved through the time of the World Human Rights Conference in Vienna in 1993, and it came to be called "International Human Rights Network Tokyo." The network consists of 13 major human rights organizations, including Amnesty International Japan Branch, Japan Civil Liberties Union, International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism, and Zainichi Kankoku Minshu Jinken Kyogikai (Democratic Human Rights Association of Koreans in Japan). The network is engaged in various activities, such as lobbying the Japanese government, cooperation with the United Nations, and exchanges of information among NGOs (Hayashi, 1998, p. 64). The network's leaders also regularly meet with the MOFA and discuss human rights issues and their handling by the government. For instance, during the meeting in March 1998, the group discussed problems of East Timor and Burma in relation to Japan's foreign policy and aid policy to Indonesia and Myanmar (Hayashi, 1998, p. 65).

NGOs have become regular participants in international events to represent Japan; however, their continuous effort is not limited only to during the events. In 1996 when the Swedish government hosted a world conference as a part of the International Campaign to End Child

Prostitution and Trafficking, Japanese NGOs participated with the government's delegates. After the conference, a group of the NGOs continued lobbying in Japan, until the ruling coalition party proposed a bill to the Diet in 1998. The bill was to strictly regulate child pornography and prostitution and to punish those involved in such activity. The impact of NGOs' campaign was considered to be strong in this case; without the persistent effort of the NGOs, the government would not have introduced such a bill to protect children's human rights (Hayashi, 1998, p. 65).

Despite such examples of NGOs' inclusion and impact, human rights can be a difficult area for NGOs to undertake activities. Today there are about 185 NGOs in Japan that are engaged in global issues, among which 68 groups work in the area of emergency relief, such as providing refugee supports and disaster relief. Many others are engaged in activities to improve the living conditions of local people in developing countries, often by providing materials for medical or educational uses, or by being directly involved in development projects (Shuto, 1998). Many of those NGOs share the idea that "poverty hinders the fulfillment of human rights," and motivation for their activities may often originate from "human rights problems" and "humanitarian concerns." However, only a limited number of organizations get engaged in active political advocacy to promote human rights in the government's policy. Shuto explains that not many NGOs "have sufficiently informed personnel to address human rights issues, comprehensively ... to link human rights issues with the legal and political system in which they are involved." Shuto points out the difficulty in taking a part in the human rights advocacy movement, stating that without sufficient information and knowledge, an organization does not know "what should be changed and how" (Shuto, 1998). Moreover, some NGOs are afraid to lose their freedom to operate in a developing country by getting involved in political issues. In particular, those engaged in relief activities are cautious not to disturb the government of their target country, so that they are able to maintain their physical access to the local areas. Thus NGOs adopt different strategies, while motivations may have come from the shared concern for people in developing world.

In this sense, the NGOs that I focus in my case studies are in the minority group among Japanese NGOs that target their activities to East Timor and Burma. While the majority of the NGOs are engaged in less controversial activities, such as assisting development projects and providing relief aid, the Free East Timor Japan Coalition and the People's Forum on Burma, the two NGO networks which I discuss in chapter five, are heavily involved in political activities,

including petitioning, lobbying, and staging demonstrations. They play a role as vocal advocates for human rights in East Timor and Burma in Japanese politics, and their goal is to shift Japanese foreign policy to accommodate more human rights considerations.

Japanese NGOs have come a long way toward being recognized as legitimate groups in Japanese society and politics. Human rights NGOs in Japan are still at a developmental stage and their organizational size and scale of activities are smaller than those in Western countries. However, Japanese society and the government now recognize NGOs' presence and contributions in many areas that used to be considered as exclusively the government's jurisdiction. Particularly, the cooperation between the government and NGOs in the area of foreign aid has developed considerably in a short time period. It is time to bring NGOs into the picture as new actors of Japanese politics.

Chapter 3: The Historical Pattern of Japanese Foreign Policy Over Human Rights

With the above remarkable development, the relationship between the Japanese government and NGOs has become a more cooperative one. However, for NGOs that aim to promote human rights in foreign policy, the Japanese government is not necessarily a cooperative partner. Observation of historical patterns of Japan's foreign policy provides a view of a crucial part of the environment in which Japanese NGOs operate. Particularly, the reluctance of the Japanese government to take decisive action in the area of human rights becomes a challenge and frustration for NGOs that try to promote human rights consideration in foreign policy. Because of the Japanese government's tradition of hesitance in promoting human rights in its policy, Japanese NGOs tend to perceive the government as an adversary whose course of actions they aim to alter. This chapter discusses the tendency of the Japanese government to ignore or avoid human rights as a consideration in its foreign policy, which becomes the subject of NGOs' criticism and challenges. The factors that I discuss in this chapter, such as avoidance of side taking, position as a mediator between the West and Asia, and memories of the war, apply to the case of foreign policy toward Indonesia and Myanmar and are major challenges for human rights NGOs to overcome.

Japanese foreign policy since the 1940s reflects the hesitance of the government to be involved in human rights debate within Japan and in the international community. From the 1950s to the 1970s, when Japan was in the transition to a new democratic state, the Japanese government went through controversy over whether or not Japan should accept the international standards of human rights. Those who were in political and economic power feared foreign intervention. Furthermore, concerns arose over whether Japan would have to alter its traditional legal and social system as a result of accepting international human rights standards.

More recently, the Japanese government's debate has focused on international aspects of human rights issues. This is reflected in Japan's foreign policy toward Indonesia and Myanmar, in which Japan has not taken decisive action. Politicization of human rights and disagreement between Western nations and some Asian countries has made it difficult for Japan to act decisively over human rights. In addition, the memories of the war and Japanese atrocities discourage Japan from being vocal in the human rights area. Particularly, Japan is hesitant to strongly criticize its former colonies, including Indonesia and Myanmar, where people became

victims of inhumane treatment by the Japanese military during the war. Furthermore, Japan has been cautious not to damage relations with its political allies and economic partners in both the West and Asia and avoids making a clear commitment for human rights. Japan's hesitance over human rights is a challenge for NGOs working for East Timor and Burma in promoting human rights consideration in foreign policy toward the two countries.

Japan's involvement in international human rights began upon its defeat in the world war. The US occupational forces emphasized promotion of human rights, however, this produced a great deal of debate and controversy among different parties in Japan. After the occupation, in the early 1950s, Japan was caught in domestic debate over whether Japan should seek application to the United Nations. In 1957, Japan finally joined the United Nations, upon adopting the Declaration of Human Rights; however, Japan's hesitance to commit to human rights was still clear, and it took over a year after acquiring UN membership to establish the United Nations Bureau in the government. The bureau was understaffed with only one or two people in charge to deal with all human rights related issues (Peek, 1992, p. 218). Furthermore, Japan again took a long period of time to ratify the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Japan signed the covenants in 1978, and it ratified them in 1979 (Peek, 1991, p. 6).

During the debate over the application for the United Nations, the Japanese government made a claim that resembles those made by some contemporary Asian governments that western concepts of human rights are incompatible with Asian values. The Japanese government criticized the UN human rights declaration as it placed individual over the family, and rights before "the duties." While this was the official stance of the government, in his study of the development of human rights in Japan, Peek suspects that the real concern of the Japanese government was that the UN Declaration would undermine privilege and benefit of those in political and economic power at that time (Peek, 1991, p. 4; 1992, p. 222). Peek points out that the resistance against international human rights was particularly strong in the conservative ruling party, who feared minority groups would gain means to justify their claims to bring about changes in Japan's social and legal systems (Peek, 1991, p. 8; 1992, p. 228). Peek asserts that the ruling party was also afraid of foreign intervention based on the claim of international human rights, and concerned that such intervention would undermine the system that benefited the party and "big business" (Peek, 1992, p. 226).

... it is hard not to conclude that the efforts of the Japanese government to postpone as long as possible ratification of the political covenant reflected a desire to deprive the demands of these groups of additional legitimacy. Delay in ratification [of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights] also foreclosed the possibility of domestic critics seeking a new channel of access to the top of the political hierarchy. The ruling party continues to recognize that it can more easily control the pace of social change when demands are filtered through the bureaucracy than when more direct access is gained through UN agencies such as the Human Rights Committee. (Peek, "Bill of Rights" 8)

Others point out that Japan's hesitance to ratify the international covenants of human rights was because of its traditional legal system, which was problematic from a human rights perspective. Treatment of foreign nationals, women's rights, and the death penalty were some of the issues that put Japan in an unfavorable position in the area of human rights (Yokota and Aoi, 2000). Japan was concerned that signing the international treaties on human rights would lead to strong pressure from the international community to change the political and social system at that time.

In the 1980s Japan began to make somewhat more visible efforts to be a part of the "human rights mechanism" in the international community (Yokota and Aoi, 2000). The Southeast Asian refugees who settled in Japan in the late 1970s created a critical situation in which Japan had to adopt some changes to improve its handling of refugee and human rights issues. Partly in a response to international criticism and domestic pressure, the Japanese government established the Human Rights and Refugee Division in 1984 as a part of the MOFA. Ten people were initially assigned to the division, including Sadako Ogata, who later became the UN High Commissioner for Refugee (Peek, 1992, pp. 218-219). In 1982, Japan joined in the United Nations Human Rights Commission for the first time (Ogata, 1987, p. 968; Yokota and Aoi, 2000), and in 1984 two professors joined the Committee on Anti-Discrimination/Minority Protection to represent Japan in the committee for the first time (Takagi, 1995, pp. 180-181; A. Watanabe, 1997).

In the 1990s Japan began to support universality of human rights more actively (Yokota and Aoi, 2000), and this was clearly expressed in the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993. During the meetings in Vienna and its preparatory meeting in Bangkok, the Japanese delegations confirmed Japan's support for universal human rights, and its negation of the claim of cultural relativism and insistence on Asian values advocated by some Asian countries (Yokota and Aoi,

2000; Takagi, 1995). Also some argue that the Official Development Aid Charter that was adopted in the early 1990s was another indication of Japan's efforts to express its interest in human rights (Takagi, 1995). This optimistic view is that Prime Minister Kaifu's ODA principles in 1991, which pledged to consider human rights conditions of a recipient country for aid, indicate Japan's shift in its foreign policy for human rights. Donald Seekins states in his study of foreign aid and Japan's relation to Myanmar: "While skeptics may view such changes as superficial or the result of foreign pressure, human rights and democratization have at least become part of *tatemaie* (public language) of aid policy" (Seekins, 1992, p. 262).

In contrast to the optimistic analysis of Japanese foreign policy in the 1990s, the government's general reluctance in foreign policy over human rights has been persistent, and it can be observed in many cases. The Japanese government's initiatives in the area of human rights have been only rhetoric at the best, and few actions follow. For example, Steven Hook studies Japan's foreign policies after the Cold War and concludes that despite the government's pledge in 1991 to consider the human rights situation of a recipient country, no substantial change has been observed in its allocation of aid (Hook, 1995). Similarly, Peter Schraeder, Stephen Hook, and Bruce Taylor conduct a study on Japanese aid to African states in the 1990s and conclude that there is no correlation between conditions of human rights of a recipient country and the allocation of Japanese aid (Schraeder et. al., 1998).

Besides its aid policy, Japan's reluctance for human rights also has been evident in its behavior at the United Nations. Peek characterizes Japan's approach in the United Nations as "a low profile," because the Japanese government has been a quiet member in most of the UN human rights meetings, with minimal speeches and frequent abstention on controversial issues (Peek, 1991, p. 12). Similarly, Ichiro Kawabe, scholar and researcher who has been following Japan's actions at the United Nations, criticizes the inconsistency in Japan's "excuses" to avoid taking a firm stance against countries with unfavorable human rights conditions (Kawabe, 1994, pp. 154-180). Kawabe points out that Japan has ratified only one third of the human rights treaties that Scandinavian countries have, and Japan has opposed or abstained on more resolutions for human rights than most of the other industrialized democracies have (Kawabe, 1994, pp. 183-190). Contrary to the earlier time when opposition against human rights arose from domestic interests and those who were in political power, Japan's hesitance in the 1990s and after comes from consideration of the international situation in which Japan is placed. In

particular, Japan often faces difficulties between the West and Asia, the two sides that represent different perspectives on human rights.

As Ogata and Yokota and Aoi indicate, the reluctance of the Japanese government is greatly attributed to the desire to escape taking a position in human rights issues, which are often highly politicized. Over human rights, Japan often has to play a subtle role between the West and Asia over human rights issues, so as not to damage any important security, economic, and cultural ties with either side (Ogata, 1987; Yokota and Aoi, 2000). Its strong economic and political relations to the other industrialized democracies in the West, and its historical and cultural ties with its Asian neighbors, put Japan in a unique place politically, socially, and culturally. In recent years, some Asian countries, which have been accused of human rights violations by the West, started to fight back by posing the claim of Asian values and cultural relativism. The governments in those countries claim that the notion of human rights is essentially a Western concept which is based on individualism, and it does not coincide with Asian culture, which emphasizes the importance of family and group consensus. As the disparity between Asia and the West grows greater, it becomes more difficult for Japan to balance relations with the two sides, and thus Japan tends to avoid taking one side over the other. As a result, Japan maintains an indecisive attitude over human rights.

In this sense, its relationship with China illustrates Japan's position very well. In his study of Japan's foreign policy after the Tiananmen incident, Takagi discusses the "dilemma" that Japan faced in its diplomacy with China and the rest of the world. While Japan recognizes itself an ally of the West, its geographical, historical, and cultural proximity to China were important factors in Japan's calculation (Takagi, 1995). There is no doubt that economic interest existed. It is not hard to imagine that Japan did not want to damage its friendly ties with China, the region's greatest potential market (Yokota and Aoi, 2000). Furthermore, Japan was afraid of isolating China completely as it might lead to destabilizing the region's biggest military power. In addition Japan was in an uncomfortable position in taking a firm action against China based on human rights issues, because of the legacy of the world war in which the Japanese military committed atrocities against the people of China (Takagi, 1995, p. 178). Japan is not considered to be "morally qualified" by other Asian countries to actively promote human rights, and this leaves Japan more hesitant to punish other Asian countries based on the accusation of human rights violations (Ming, 1998). With those concerns in mind, Japan broke off from the rest of

industrialized democracies and resumed its foreign aid to China by 1990.

Those factors of Japan's international relations apply to the cases of Indonesia and Myanmar. As an Asian neighbor, the Japanese government is in an uncomfortable position if it rigidly insists on human rights protection in its diplomacy. Moreover, the fact that both countries are Japan's former colonies makes the Japanese government even more hesitant to pursue human rights issues with Indonesia and Myanmar. As in the case of Tiananmen, the Japanese government tends to choose a course not to aggravate the situation in those countries, nor to offend any parties involved. Thus, NGOs working for East Timor and Burma, which seek more determinant policy stance of the Japanese government, are facing an overwhelming task to challenge the historically established patterns of Japan's international relations.

Chapter 4: Japanese Foreign Policy and Business Interests

Just as Japan's historical pattern of dealing with human rights in its foreign policy is a major piece of the political environment with which human rights NGOs must contend, Japanese interests, especially business, that promote friendly diplomacy are another major element in that political environment. The purpose of this chapter is to further the discussion of the political environment in which NGOs operate and with which they interact. Specifically, the chapter discusses the roles of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), Keidanren (Federation of Economic Organizations), and traditional mechanisms that push Japan's policy toward an economic orientation. From this perspective the discussion considers significant differences between the cases of Indonesia and Myanmar in Japan's economic interests in those countries and in patterns of Japanese decision-making processes toward them. First, Japan's business interest is much greater in Indonesia than in Myanmar, because of the difference in scales of economy in those countries. On the other hand, there is a group of individuals in Japan who wish to promote friendly ties with the military government in Myanmar, and their influence over Japanese foreign policy cannot be neglected. Second, patterns of policy making are different in the cases of Indonesia and Myanmar. While the Japan-Indonesia relations can be characterized by existing strong economic ties, a great amount of aid flow, and official encouragement of business exchanges, Japan-Myanmar relations involve many behind-the-scene dealings and informal negotiations between the two governments. Thus, NGOs face slightly different environments in each case, which affect their strategies and organizations that I discuss later.

Since Japan achieved its remarkable economic development between the 1960s and the 1980s, its tactics and rigorous strategies to pursue its economic interest have attracted attention from the international community and those who study Japanese foreign policy (Hook, 1995; Hook and Zhang, 1998; Nester, 1992; Schraeder et. al., 1998). In particular, the role of MITI in foreign policy making is frequently discussed, and it often becomes the subject of criticism from those advocating for human rights. Until 2000 when the government was reorganized, MITI, which played an important role in Japan's economic development, was the governmental organ that represented economic interests of Japan and considerably influenced policy making in the country. For example, in his study of Japan's foreign aid policy, Steven Hook examines the distribution of its ODA in Third World countries, and concludes that Japan's policy is to serve

the interests of business and industry articulated by the discourse of the MITI, whose aim was to expand Japan's market into the world (Hook, 1995; Hook and Zhang, 1998). As well, Peter Schraeder et al. study the distribution of Japanese foreign aid to African countries and point out that its aid is strongly connected to economic conditions of the recipient country in which Japan perceives potential benefit (Schraeder et al., 1998). Similarly, in his study of Japan's foreign relations to the Third world, William Nester discusses Japan's policies as "neo-mercantilist" ones that greatly emphasize economic gain in international relations. Nester suggests that policies of influential ministries, particularly the MITI and the Ministry of Finance (MOF), have been one of the crucial factors driving Japan onto the course of neo-mercantilist policies (Nester, 1992). Yoshitaka Murai, scholar and leader of a human rights NGO in Japan, also believes that Japan's foreign aid has been strongly influenced by MITI's policy, which emphasizes profits for Japanese business and industry. Moreover, Murai claims that Japanese aid, which is given in the name of economic development and industrialization, often leads to destruction of the environment and violation of human rights of local residents (Murai and Hanabusa, 1987, pp. 114-160).

Besides the role of the MITI as the governmental entity articulating business's interest in Japan's policy making, the influence of Keidanren is another factor that maintains the close connection between the government and business. Keidanren, or the Federation of Economic Organizations, one of the most powerful interest groups in Japan, consists of major corporations and financial firms in Japan. The board members of Keidanren are CEOs and executives of large corporations, and they are regularly invited to meetings and study groups with the government. The connections between the government and Keidanren developed during and after Japan's economic development and the federation's influence expanded to foreign policy and aid policy of Japan. David Arase, who has done a number of studies on Japanese foreign aid, points out that during Japan's rigorous pursuit of economic growth in the 1970s and the 1980s, the structure of foreign aid decision making and implementation developed to involve Keidanren to a great degree (Arase, 1994).

Moreover, the tight connection between the government and the private business sector also has been developed through traditional systems of *shukko* and *amakudari*, in which individuals are temporarily transferred between governmental agencies and private companies or retired bureaucrats get positions at private corporations (Arase, 1994, pp. 184-185).

The strong government-business connection is one factor that greatly influences Japan's policy making, and this condition applies to its foreign policy toward Indonesia and Myanmar. Japanese business interests are present in both countries, whether for direct investment or aid projects. However, the two cases also pose important differences, in relation to business interests and patterns of decision making of the Japanese government. In addition, other interest groups also exist, and this factor becomes important particularly in the case of Myanmar.

East Timor

Such economic interest plays a particularly great role in the case of Indonesia. Despite the problematic human rights record of the Suharto government, Japan has remained the major aid donor for Indonesia for the last fifty years, and this indicates that the Japanese government's interest lies somewhere besides the human rights of East Timor's people. In his study of Japanese foreign aid, Kazuo Washimi suggests that the structure of Japanese aid promotes the interest of Japanese business. According to Washimi, Japanese aid to Indonesia was decided upon the advice of Japanese corporations and industry, which send their own 'specialists' to study the feasibility of projects funded by aid. Since the time of the war reparations in the 1950s, a great part of Japanese aid has been concentrated on large-scale projects, such as dam and road constructions, from which Japanese corporations could benefit as contractors. Major corporations, such as Kashima Construction, Sumitomo, Mitsubishi, Mitsui, Itochu Shoji, Nichimen, Nishoiwai, and Marubeni, have been involved in aid projects in Indonesia in the past (Washimi, 1989, pp. 105, 170-174). According to Washimi, many projects have been funded despite the opposition of the local communities and potential damage to the local environment. People are forced to leave their own land without adequate compensation and support, when an aid project does not accommodate residents or a 'development' project creates a disastrous situation in the local environment, making the area inhabitable.

Despite those negative effects of aid experience at the local level, the Indonesian government continues to be enthusiastic about Japanese aid and cooperative with the Japanese government and business to promote aid projects in its country. Japanese aid flows to Indonesia increased from \$350 million in 1980 to \$966 million in 1996. By this point, Indonesia had become the top recipient of Japanese aid, receiving over 11 percent of Japan's total foreign aid (Ichimura, 1998,

p. 110). In addition, aid is sometimes used to benefit particular individuals involved in aid decision making. Murai points out that there is a suspected connection between some influential politicians and businessmen in Japan and the former Indonesian president, Suharto, and Japanese aid has been used to benefit certain individuals, such as Michio Watanabe, a late high ranking politician of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. Watanabe was the chair of the Japan-Indonesia Friendship Association, and some of his personal friends and secretaries were involved in projects funded by the Japanese government. Murai states further that those particular individuals had personal connections with politicians in Indonesia, such as the governor of Jakarta. The project to develop the site of the former Kemayoran airport in Jakarta was a controversial decision that is believed to have been arranged personally by Watanabe's secretary and the governor of Jakarta, based on their personal connections (Murai, 1998, pp. 74-85).

Besides aid giving, Japan also has developed strong trade and investment ties with Indonesia. Indonesia followed the trend of rapid economic growth of Asian NIEs (Newly Industrialized Economies) and ASEAN countries (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). The annual economic growth rate of Indonesia averaged seven percent between 1965 and 1995. Gross national product per capita has more than quadrupled from \$230 in 1975 to \$ 980 in 1995 (Ichimura, 1998, p. 27). Concurrently, Indonesia became one of Japan's major trading partners. By 1996 Japan's imports from Indonesia reached over \$14 billion, which placed the country in fourth place among Japan's trading partners, following the United States, China, and South Korea (Ichimura, 1998, p. 106).

Over the same time period, Indonesia has become one of the top destinations of Japan's foreign direct investment. The cumulative direct investment from Japan to Indonesia reached almost \$17 billion by 1994, making Indonesia the top recipient of Japanese investment (Ichimura, 1998, p. 111). In 1996 and 1997 the average Japanese foreign investment inflow to Indonesia was over \$6.5 billion, \$1,000 million more than second-ranked Thailand, and over \$5,000 million more than third-place Malaysia (Basu and Miroshnik, 2000, p. 158). Japanese investment in Indonesia has emphasized mining, for which the total invested between 1951 and 1994 reached close to \$7.5 billion; however, Japan has invested in a wide range of industries, with \$2 billion in chemical manufacturing, \$1.5 billion in iron manufacturing, and \$1.5 billion in banking and insurance (Ichimura, 1998, p. 108).

Today many Japanese manufacturing companies have factories in Indonesia. As a result, 23 percent of Japan's imports from Indonesia are products made by Japanese companies, and assembled in factories in Indonesia (Basu and Miroshnik, 2000, p. 88). Major Japanese multinational corporations, such as Matsushita, Sanyo, and Fujitsu, have been investing in Indonesia (Basu and Miroshnik, 2000, pp. 120-123). Indonesia has become an important site for Japanese business, and it has been integrated in the complex web of the Asian economy and international division of labor led by Japanese corporations.

The economic tie between Japan and Indonesia has been well established. The Japanese government encourages business with Indonesia, while it continues the large amount of aid flow to the country. NGOs working on behalf of East Timorese face a difficult task in this environment in challenging the strong tie between the government and business and the publicly established economic tie between the two countries.

Myanmar

Compared to Indonesia, Myanmar has attracted only limited economic interest from Japan, as the scale of Myanmar's economy is much smaller than that of Indonesia; however other interests substitute to promote friendly ties. The relationship between Japan and Myanmar is often characterized by emotional rather than practical factors. Personal ties among influential individuals in the two countries and historical and cultural memories of the war play a crucial role in Japan-Myanmar relations.

After the Myanmar government's failure in economic development planning in the 1970s, the country became one of the poorest states in Asia. Myanmar's total exports in 1992 were \$590 million, which grew to \$700 million in 1993, \$910 million in 1994, and dropped to \$890 million in 1995. The amount is substantially smaller than that of Indonesia. Over the same time period, Indonesia's exports amounted to \$33.9 billion in 1992, \$36.82 billion in 1993, and \$40.05 billion in 1995. Similarly, Myanmar's total imports from 1992 to 1995 were \$1.01 billion, considerably smaller than Indonesia's \$27.28 billion. While Myanmar's imports increased to \$1.52 billion in 1994, the gap remained, as Indonesia's imports also increased further to \$40.64 billion in 1994 (Japan External Trade Organization [JETRO], 1997).

However, this does not completely deny Japanese business interest in Myanmar. Japanese

business has perceived business potential in the country's abundant natural resources, including oil, natural gas, gemstones, silver, and teaks, as well as its educated cheap labor (Seekins, 1992, p. 256). This interest has grown greater in recent years as Japanese corporations perceive Myanmar as "the last big market in Southeast Asia" (Nemoto, 1995, p. 24). While the interest is based only on the potential of Myanmar's economy rather than its current performance, Japanese companies have been keen not to miss an opportunity to start business with and investment in Myanmar.

From the end of 1994 to early 1995, there was some movement in the Japanese business sector. Keidanren and other commercial groups set up study teams and sent missions to investigate Myanmar's economic potentials and investment opportunities ("Mitsui Delegation," 1994; "Keidanren," 1995; "OCCI," 1995). Some Japanese corporations, such as Mitsui, Mitsubishi, and Itochu, started making deals with the Myanmar government around this time, by investing in joint projects with the Myanmar government and getting contracts for development projects ("Mitsubishi, 1995"; "Itochu," 1995; "Mitsui to Help," 1994). What is interesting about this series of events in 1994 and 1995 is that those actions in the business sector took place prior to the Japanese government's decision to resume a part of its aid to Myanmar and to give a series of grants for humanitarian purposes ("Foreign Ministry Confirms," 1995; "Japan to Give Food Output," 1995; "Japan Donates," 1995). At the same time that Japan announced its decision on aid, Myanmar started showing some signs of policy shift, releasing some thirty political prisoners and suggesting the release of Aung San Suu Kyi in the near future ("Ex-NLD," 1995; "Myanmar Hints," 1995).

Scholars of Japan-Burma relations, such as Nemoto and Saito, often point out "quiet diplomacy" between the Japanese and Myanmar governments, in which agreements are made before any information becomes public (Nemoto, 1995; Saito, 1989; 1992). The sequence of events in 1994 and 1995 indicates that there was a behind-the-scenes agreement between the governments of Japan and Myanmar before the decision became public. Furthermore, the movements in the business sector prior to the government's announcement suggest that Japanese companies were informed of the government's on-going negotiations with Myanmar.

While business interests play some role, Japan-Myanmar relations cannot be explained only by economic factors. In their respective studies of the Japan-Myanmar relationship, Nemoto, Saito, and Seekins characterize Japan's policy toward Myanmar as "non-rational." Japan had

been the biggest aid donor for Burma since the end of the war; as well, the amount of aid was more generous in proportion to the size of Myanmar's economy than its aid to other countries (Nemoto, 1995; Saito, 1992; Seekins, "Forgotten"). Despite General Ne Win's unsuccessful economic development plans, Japan's aid continued to flow into Myanmar. The amount of aid reached as high as \$295 million, and the country was one of the top ten recipients of Japanese aid in the 1980s until the crisis in 1988 (Seekins, 1991).

According to Nemoto, "Japan's special consideration for Burma" is based on emotional ties built upon historically since the war period (Nemoto, 1995, p. 22). In Indonesia, memories of Japanese occupation trigger feelings of resentment and anger because of Japanese military's brutal treatment of the Indonesian people. The period of Japanese occupation has been perceived as "the darkest hour" in Indonesian history (Goto, 1997, pp. 16-26). On the contrary, Myanmar has been one of the most Japan-friendly countries in the post-war period, and Burmese political leaders have maintained close connections with Japanese politicians. During the Second World War, Japan supported the independence of the Burmese from Great Britain. The Thirty Comrades, the army of young soldiers for Burmese independence, was formed in 1942 and trained by the Japanese military, the Minami Kikan, stationed in China's Hainan Island. The Burmese national hero and father of Aung San Suu Kyi, General Aung San, was one of the Thirty Comrades who fought for the country's independence, and many elites in Burma studied in Japan or at Japanese-run Mingalador Cadet School during the war (Saito, 1992, p. 24). Because of this historical background many individuals in military and political power in Myanmar today have maintained strong ties with Japan, including General Ne Win himself, who was also one of the Thirty Comrades (Saito, 1992, p. 24; Seekins, 1991). Japanese ambassadors to Burma since the 1960s have been granted the privilege of access to Ne Win more easily than any of their counterparts from other states (Nemoto, 1995, p. 23; Seekins, 1992, p. 254). The existence of influential individuals and politicians, such as Yoshiko Otaka, wife of former Japanese Ambassador to Yangon (Rangoon), and Yoshiko Yamaguchi, a personal friend of Ne Win, has also strengthened Japan's tie with Myanmar (Seekins, 1992, pp. 255-256).

The Japan-Burma Association (currently, the Japan-Myanmar Association), which was established in 1933, has been an active organization to promote trade and cultural exchanges between the two states. Powerful politicians, such as Nobusuke Kishi, Shintaro Abe, Michio Watanabe, and Yasuko Yamaguchi were engaged in lobbying activities in Japan to promote

relations with Myanmar (Seekins, 1991). When Japan recognized the SLORC government on February 17, 1989, Saito suspects that the decision was greatly influenced by a petition submitted by the Japan-Burma Association (Saito, 1989, p. 89). According to her study, the Japanese government's justification for its recognition of the military government of Myanmar was closely related to what was suggested in the petition. The petition requested the government to take into account the likely damage to the people of Burma as the result of Japan's economic sanctions, the fact that the SLORC government was successful in keeping order in the country, as well as the importance of Myanmar officials attending the funeral of Emperor Showa. The Japanese government suddenly changed its position after it received the petition. Japan became the first industrialized democracy to recognize the military junta as the legitimate government of Burma, and the Japanese government used the exact factors requested in the petition to justify its decision (Saito, 1989, p. 90).

In addition, Myanmar has been an important political ally and the friendliest toward Japan of Southeast Asian states since the end of the war. Unlike Indonesia and the Philippines, Burma accepted the reparation amount that Japan initially offered, and it became the first country to sign and receive Japan's war compensation in 1954 without any major complaint (Saito, 1992, p. 25; Seekins, 1992, p. 249). Moreover, in contrast to most of Japan's former colonies in Asia, Burma never criticized the Japanese government's position expressly for its handling of the Prime Minister's visit to Yasukuni Shrine and history textbook which have been sensitive issues reflecting the war's legacy (Seekins, 1992, p. 254). Thus, Japan's relations to Myanmar can be characterized by Japan's minor economic interest, favoritism based on historical and personal ties, and an informal negotiation style that exist between the two governments.

This chapter addressed two points concerning similarities and differences in economic interest and Japan's foreign policy toward Indonesia and Myanmar. First, business has great influence over Japan's foreign policy making. MITI, Keidanren, and personal connections play an important role in of Japan's foreign policy making. This poses a great challenge for NGOs working to promote human rights consideration in Japan's foreign policy. Second, there are differences between the cases of Indonesia and Myanmar. Economic interests predominate in Japan's relationship to Indonesia, while interests in Myanmar include both economic and non-economic factors. Furthermore, the two involve different types of foreign policy decision making processes. The case of Indonesia is much more open and public than in the case of Myanmar,

which often involves secrecy and behind-the-scene negotiations. NGOs are left out of this process, while business seems to be informed of the government's decisions before they become public.

Those differences come from the types of actors involved, as well as from differences in the nature of human rights problems and the extent of international criticism toward the two countries, in which Myanmar has been under much more severe criticism from the international community than Indonesia. The differences in interest combined with Japan's established patterns of dealing with human rights in foreign policy, pose various hurdles for NGOs in their struggle to promote human rights in Japanese foreign policy.

Chapter 5: NGOs and Their Political Environment

In the political environment discussed above, NGOs are striving to pressure the Japanese government to take human rights into account in its foreign policy and take a firm stance toward the governments of Indonesia and Myanmar. In this chapter, I examine NGOs' organization and activities by focusing on two groups of NGOs working on East Timor and Burma issues respectively. The two models of NGOs reflect different decision making processes discussed in the previous chapter that involve the government, business, and other interest groups. The two NGO groups that I examine in this chapter share the perspective that the Japanese government's policy should be altered to take more serious consideration for human rights in its foreign policy toward Indonesia and Myanmar.

Unlike many NGOs engaged in development assistant projects in those countries, the East Timor and Burma NGOs I discuss here have very critical view of the Japanese government and do not receive any governmental funding for their activities. In their political activities, the two groups of NGOs utilize similar strategies, but with different foci. While East Timor NGOs have a strong emphasis on public activities, such as raising public awareness and formal petition toward the government, Burma NGOs are engaged in both high and low profile activities, from holding public events to political lobbying. Differences in their leaderships, political environments, and involvement of immigrants contribute to the differences between the two models of NGO networks. In-depth observation of the two NGO groups reveals details of their operational systems to answer the questions: what do they do and how; how are they organized; and who are involved. Petitions, alliance with politicians, raising public awareness, and political lobbying produce outcomes that are sometimes visible, but that often result in indirect and/or subtle changes in Japan's foreign policy.

East Timor NGOs and Their Network

The political environment in which East Timor NGOs are situated can be characterized by Japan's great business interest in Indonesia and the established economic ties between the two countries. The East Timor NGOs face the task to challenge this publicly recognized relationship with Indonesia to pressure the Japanese government to take a position on human rights of East

Timor. Moreover, Japan's reluctance to be involved in human rights issues of other Asian countries makes the NGOs' task an even more difficult one.

The Free East Timor Japan Coalition, on which I focus in this case study, is one of the most active NGO networks for East Timor in Japan. Their strategies and organizations are discussed to assess the effectiveness of their activities in influencing Japan's foreign policy and to analyze their operational style in relation to the political environment in which East Timor NGOs are placed.

There is little information on the movement in Japanese civil society over the East Timor question in the 1970s. There were only several groups in Tokyo and Osaka that supported the independence of East Timor in 1975. Those groups engaged in some political activities, such as presenting petitions to the Indonesian consulate. However, after 1976, East Timor issues did not attract much attention from the Japanese media, and this led to the declining interest in East Timor among the Japanese public (Kitayama, 1985, p. 279). In the early 1980s, more active East Timor focused NGOs started to emerge. Kure YWCA in Hiroshima was one of the organizations established around this time engaged in East Timor issues. The group released its first newsletter "*East Timor Tsushin*" (East Timor Correspondence) in 1983, which was the first and probably the only periodical that regularly carried East Timor news in Japan at that time (Kitayama, 1985, p. 279).

In February and March 1985, the UN representative of the Fretilin party of East Timor, Jose Ramos-Horta was invited to Japan, and he toured around the country to give talks on East Timor. His visit attracted some attention from Japanese media (Kitayama, 1985, p. 278), and this "speaking tour" gathered human rights NGOs, church groups, and schools, in organizing the event in different parts of the country. Out of the efforts to arrange the speaking tour, the Free East Timor Japan Coalition (FETJC) was created in 1987, by the groups that took an active part in the event, including Kure YWCA. In 1990 the FETJC had nine NGOs as members ("Coalition Petitions," 1990), and by the end of the 1990s, the membership of the coalition increased to as many as thirteen organizations located from Hokkaido, the northern island, to Kyushu, the southern island of Japan.

Since its establishment, the FETJC has been one of the most active NGO networks in Japan working on East Timor issues. The coalition has been actively engaged in political advocacy

activities, such as presenting petitions and staging demonstrations³. In the past the coalition has prepared and delivered numerous letters to the Japanese government, demanding more decisive action against the Indonesian government, based on East Timor's human rights problem. Petitions are presented quite frequently whenever an incident occurs. Some have been delivered to prime ministers and foreign ministers of Japan, to request the reconsideration of Japan's foreign policy toward Indonesia. Others have been sent to the United Nations and the Indonesian government to express the coalition's support for democratization of Indonesia and the independence of East Timor. For example, in January 1990, the FETJC sent a petition to the MOFA to contact the Indonesian government to inquire about an incident in which the Indonesian military allegedly shot participants of the student demonstrations staged during the visit of American diplomats. In the petition, the coalition requested the Japanese government to consider the Indonesian government's violence against civilians and to support the referendum of the East Timor people (Furusawa, 1990, p. 93). In 1990 when Indonesian foreign minister Ali Alatas was visiting Japan, the FETJC presented a petition to the minister, in which the group demanded the support for the national referendum in East Timor under the UN supervision ("Coalition Petitions," 1990). The most recent case occurred in 2001 when the coalition presented a letter to the Japanese government to protest the dispatch of Japanese troops to the UN Peace Keeping Operation in East Timor.

Generally, those petitions are initiated by central figures of the coalition and sent out to its member organizations through emails and faxes. In some specific cases, other NGOs outside of the coalition also participate, if the topic is related to their issue foci. NGOs interested in general human rights issues, including women's groups and/or groups working for Third World issues, frequently work with the FETJC. For example, in the petition against the dispatch of Japanese troops to the UN Peace Keeping Operation in 2001, 24 organizations and 43 individuals signed the letter addressed to the Japanese government. This includes the FETJC, the Pacific Asia Research Center (PARC), church groups, and some other organizations that support human rights, and democratization, as well as anti-war/peace movement groups.

To raise the awareness of their cause in the general public is an important activity for NGOs.

³ Discussion in this section is based on interview with Akihisa Matsuno, leader of Osaka East Timor Association and central figure of the FETJC on 24 January 2002), the FETJC website, the FETJC newsletter "Higashi Timor" (since October 2000), Shikoshiko Net website, and articles by Furusawa and Matsuno. Otherwise specified.

For the FETJC, the Annual Speaking Tour was a major event, which the group arranged as a joint effort with Amnesty International Japan Branch. This event served as the means to publicize the issue and to recruit new members to the group. According to Akihisa Matsuno, scholar of Indonesian studies and leader of Osaka East Timor Association, many of the current members joined his organization after they attended one of the talks in the speaking tour (Matsuno, email correspondence, January 2002). Since the speaking tour of Ramos-Horta, which was arranged for the first time by the coalition in 1986, the group has invited about forty speakers. Many of them were activists from East Timor, family of victims, and volunteers working for East Timor's human rights and democratization, who experienced or witnessed human rights violations by the Indonesian government. Talks were held at various locations. Every year speakers visited over fifty locations, which included local NGOs, Christian churches, universities, and high schools, until East Timor's independence was achieved in 1999.

In addition to the speaking tours, the NGOs also play an important role as information sources. In his discussion with an MOFA official, Yoshitaka Murai, scholar and director of the PARC, points out the importance of NGOs as an "alternative channel" of information (Murai and Hayabusa, 1987, p. 156). East Timor NGOs have certainly played this role. In the 1980s, Kure YWCA was the first and only group in Japan that provided information of East Timor on a regular basis, while Japanese media was not paying any attention to the issue, partly because of successful obstruction by the Indonesian government (Kitayama, 1985, p. 279). Today, more NGOs publish newsletters and magazines, including Osaka East Timor Association and Sapporo East Timor Association, both of which are members of the FETJC. Furthermore, with the recent development of the Internet in Japan, many NGOs have set up websites and homepages, which provide information on their activities, as well as news related to East Timor. Through those websites, it has become much easier to access updated information, and the NGOs have become able to reach a larger number of people at once. The FETJC has its own website that serves as an important information source on East Timor, providing links to political, journalistic, and academic works. In their publications and websites, the NGO network provides first hand information collected by their members and expresses their critical views on the Japanese government foreign policy.

Activists and East Timor NGOs

One of the important elements in studying NGOs, especially those in Japan, is the role of the individuals who take leaderships. Many Japanese NGOs are established by the initiative of individuals who are motivated to work in a particular issue area. Sasaki-Uemura studies citizens groups that participated in a major political turmoil in Japan in the 1960s. Those groups, which were predecessors of Japanese NGOs today, were established in an attempt to raise issues of peace, labor, and freedom of self-expression in Japanese post-war society. Sasaki-Uemura describes those early NGOs as having been organized by the effort of particular individuals, and their operations and policies were centered around the ideas and beliefs of the leaders (Sasaki-Uemura, 2001).

Such characteristics that Sasaki-Uemura observed in early citizens groups are very much alive in today's NGOs in Japan. The FETJC was established by the initiative of a couple of scholars of Indonesian studies; this role of academics greatly influences the type of the NGO activities and their focus. As experts of Indonesian studies, they provide information and opinions in NGO newsletters, as well as in scholarly journals, newspapers, and popular magazines. Their critiques often target the Japanese government, particularly, Japan's aid, which is believed to assist the Indonesian government to suppress the anti government groups, including the movement for independence in East Timor (Matsuno, 1989, pp. 108-109). They also point out Japan's support for Indonesia at the United Nations, in which Japan has opposed most of the resolutions for the independence of East Timor since 1975 (Furusawa, 1993a, p. 96; Matsuno, 1989, pp. 108-109).

In 1988 and 1989 Kiyoko Furusawa, scholar of Indonesia and leader of an East Timor NGO in Tokyo, represented Japanese NGOs at the UN Special Committee on the Implementation of the Declaration on Decolonization, where she presented a report regarding the situation of East Timor. Furusawa also conducted an interview with a leader of the CNRM (National Council of the Maubere Resistance – East Timor nationalists organization) in September 1991. The message of the leader was first broadcast in Japan and England. After the incident in Dili in 1991 the tape was passed to a press conference held at the United Nations (Furusawa, 1996, p. 75). She also works as an advisor for Satsuki Eda, who is a politician at the core of human rights actions taking place in the Diet, creating a strong connection between the NGO network and the politician (“Diet Members,” 1991).

Akihisa Matsuno is another scholar and advocate of East Timor, who is one of the main organizers of the coalition and the leader of Osaka East Timor Association. He has initiated and drafted many of the past petitions presented in the name of the FETJC, and represented the coalition in meetings with government officials. Matsuno also was a central figure who organized the speaking tours, in which he invited East Timor activists every year and accompanied them on the tours.

Nobuo Soma, a Japanese Catholic bishop and leader of the Japanese Catholic Council for Justice and Peace, was another active leader in NGO activities⁴. As an advocate for East Timor, he engaged in various activities, inside and outside of Japan. Christian churches have been one of the major locations for the speaking tours of the FETJC, and his presence represents the cooperative relationship that exists between NGOs and Christian churches in Japan over the East Timor issue. In 1989, prior to the Pope's visit to Indonesia, Soma took the initiative to organize the support of 1,250 church leaders in Asia for a petition that requested the United Nations to send a fact-finding mission to East Timor to investigate the human rights situation ("Japanese Bishop," 1989). Soma was also the honorary chairman of the Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor (APCET), a major NGO network in Asia for East Timor. In November 1996 when the APCET held a conference in Kuala Lumpur, Soma took five individuals from Japan to attend the conference, including two members of the FETJC (Shikoshiko Net). Unfortunately, the group could not attend the conference because the Malaysian government intervened and arrested some of the international participants of the conference, including Soma and five other delegates from Japan. They were detained for a day or two, then deported back to Japan ("Int'l Activists," 1996; "One Deported," 1996), but the Japanese government did not take any specific action regarding this matter ("Japan Noncommittal," 1996).

Japanese Politicians and East Timor NGOs

Besides formal petitions and demonstrations, NGOs also pressure the government through cooperative politicians who are willing to bring the issue to the table for direct discussion at the governmental level. Coordination between NGOs and certain politicians has been developed over time, and it has become an important strategy for NGOs to have their voice reflected in discussion at the Diet. Some individuals, most specifically, Satsuki Eda and Yasuko Takemura,

⁴ Bishop Nobuo Soma died in October 1997 at the age of 81 (Kyodo).

appear to have been playing an important role.

In 1986 the Suprapartisan Parliamentary Forum on the East Timor Issue was formed through the leadership of Eda, who was one of the most vocal politicians for human rights issues in Japan. Some 70 legislators joined Eda's effort and became members of the forum (Ikushima, 1987, p. 91). Over the years, the group has developed to become an important channel between NGOs and the parliament. In 1986, 75 Japanese legislators in the forum presented a petition to the United Nations to pressure the Indonesian government regarding East Timor's human rights situation ("Eda a Noted Advocate," 1993). In August 1988, Kozaburo Yamada, a member of the forum, was sent to the UN special committee's session to represent the forum's policy in support of an early resolution of the conflict in East Timor ("Japanese Forum," 1988).

The biggest movement in the Diet over East Timor occurred in December 1991, when 262 legislators out of 764 members⁵ in the Diet signed a petition and presented it to the Miyazawa administration. The petition was initiated by Eda and presented in reaction to the incident in Dili, in which the Indonesian military allegedly shot civilians attending the funeral of a pro-independence activist. In this petition, the group called for revision of Japan's aid to Indonesia on the basis of human rights violations of East Timor people and the Japanese government's effort to "work for a council resolution on the shooting" in East Timor at the UN security council, in which Japan was an elected member at that time ("Diet Members," 1991).

Besides Satsuki Eda, Yasuko Takemura has been an enthusiastic politician in the area of human rights. In 1994, prior to the visit of prime minister Tomiichi Murayama and foreign minister Yohei Kono to the meeting of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation in Indonesia, a group of five legislators requested the ministers to "express their regret" over human rights violations by the Indonesian government in East Timor. The group consisted of Tomiko Okazaki, Seiichi Kaneda, Yasuko Takemura (three are from the Social Democratic Party), Banri Kaieda (the New Democratic Club) and Koki Chuma (Liberal Democratic Party) ("Murayama, Kono Urged," 1994). Similarly, in 1995 when the APEC meeting was held in Osaka, Japan, Takemura took the initiative to lead a campaign on behalf of East Timor. The CNRM requested to participate in the meeting, but the request was denied. A group of 67 Diet members of the suprapartisan forum, led by Yasuko Takemura, demanded to MOFA that the CNRM's request to be circulated as a

⁵ After the electoral system reform in 1994, the total number of legislators in the Diet has changed to 732. The current number of seats is 252 in the upper house (*Sangiin*) and 480 in the lower house

reference for the other APEC members. However, the ministry declined the request (Furusawa, 1996, p. 74).

Eda and Takemura have been active in the area of human rights, and they have made various contributions personally, as well as in cooperation with NGOs. Particularly Eda has been a well-known politician for his advocacy for human rights and the peace movement, as a son of a political activist who was imprisoned under the rule of imperial Japan during the world war (“Eda a Noted Advocate,” 1993; Eda, 1993). Eda is not only a leader of the East Timor suprapartisan group, but also the founder of the Amnesty International Parliamentarians League, which consists of 72 legislators. In addition to his leadership in organizing petitions and campaigns in the Diet, Eda joined in the international team in Lisbon in 1988 to investigate the situation of East Timor refugees (“Eda a Noted Advocate,” 1993). This fact-finding mission was organized by Eric Avery from Britain, Tony Lamb from Australia, and Eda from Japan, who formed an “international network of parliamentarians” to promote an early solution of the East Timor issue (“Parliamentarians,” 1986).

For NGOs trying to bring their issue to the government, those politicians play a key role. Individuals such as Eda and Takemura initiate activities or bring the issue to the discussion in the Diet and help NGOs to deliver petitions or to meet with government officials directly. Those politicians who are vocal over normative issues, such as human rights, democracy, and peace/anti-war movement, are often sympathetic to NGOs and enthusiastic to cooperate with those civil society groups. As mentioned, Kiyoko Furusawa, scholar and leader of an NGO in the FETJC, works for Eda as an adviser (“Diet Members Urge,” 1991), and such personal connection is an advantage that makes it possible for NGOs to promote discussion of human rights at the government level.

Analysis of the East Timor NGOs

East Timor NGOs adopted three major strategies in their political efforts: First, formal petitions and written requests; second, public awareness education, such as the speaking tours and seminars; and third, cooperation with politicians. The government has ignored petitions presented by the coalition, and in this sense, the coalition’s efforts have not directly led to a shift in Japan’s foreign policy making. Japanese foreign policy toward Indonesia has remained

(*Shugiin*).

generally friendly and the economic tie between the two countries has grown stronger than before. Furusawa recalls the 1991 massacre in Dili as an especially regrettable event, which, she believes, could have been prevented if the Japanese government had taken any action upon the request of NGOs (Furusawa, 1993a, p. 97). In 1990, when the FETJC delivered the request to the MOFA and demanded the government to investigate the alleged assault on student demonstrators by the Indonesian police, the ministry immediately rejected the request, stating that such incident did not alter Japan's position toward the Indonesian government (Furusawa, 1990b, p. 93). Also, prior to the tragic event in Dili, the FETJC and a group of Diet members, who were concerned about the tense situation in East Timor, petitioned the Japanese government to file a request to the United Nations to send observers to monitor the situation in East Timor. However, the Japanese government did not take any action, and only contacted its embassy in Jakarta to observe the situation (Furusawa, 1993a, p. 97).

While formal petition has achieved very limited effects, actions initiated by some politicians in the Diet have led to some immediate effects that can be observed. Demands by politicians to consider human rights of East Timor have pressured the government to adopt subtle, although mostly rhetorical, diplomatic tactics in its dealing with the Indonesian government. In the past campaigns initiated by politicians, such as Eda and Takemura, saw a certain immediate effect on the government's behavior.

In 1991, when 262 legislators led by Eda petitioned the government for the revision of aid to Indonesia based on the human rights situation of East Timor, Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa made a statement to indicate Japan's intention to take human rights in East Timor into account when making decisions on foreign aid ("Japan May Link," 1991). Likewise, in 1994 when a group of Diet members including Takemura requested Prime Minister Murayama and Foreign Minister Kono to bring up human rights issues during their meeting with Indonesian president, Kono expressed "his hope for a peaceful settlement of the East Timor issue" to his counterpart, Alatas ("Japan Seeks," 1994). Similarly, during his meeting with president Suharto, Murayama "indirectly called for ... an early solution of the East Timor issue" by referring to human rights issues in relation to Japan's foreign policy (Urakami, 1994).

However, the frustration of politicians and NGOs who try to promote human rights consideration in policy making comes from the fact that those statements made by the administration often are not accompanied by any concrete actions. While prime ministers in the

past responded to claims made by groups of politicians, Japan's foreign policy remained more or less the same. For example, Prime Minister Miyazawa made a statement in 1991 about considering human rights conditions of aid recipients; however, when Japan's parliamentary vice foreign minister, Koji Kakizawa visited Jakarta less than a month later, he made it clear that Japan would not halt its aid to Indonesia over the issue of East Timor ("Japan Will Not Cut Aid," 1992).

Publicity is another way to create pressures on the government. The FETJC especially has an emphasis on this area of activity, as we see in the coalition's major annual event of the speaking tours. From the end of the 1970's the Indonesian government was restricting the access of international media on the island, and only little was known about the struggle of the East Timorese people. At the beginning of the 1980's NGOs were the only ones who carried news of East Timor in any publications. However, in the last two decades, East Timor started to receive more attention in Japan

It may be suspected that the increasing publicity creates an atmosphere that makes it more difficult for the government to completely ignore the issue of East Timor and human rights in its diplomacy to Indonesia. Moreover, the wider publicity of the issue motivates more politicians to take a part in campaigns to bring up human rights and democratization of East Timor at the parliament. However, its effect on Japanese policy is subtle, and only by inference. East Timor enjoyed the highest publicity when two East Timor activists received the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1996, when Bishop Carlos Belo and Jose Ramos-Horta were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the news was widely reported in Japan ("Ramos-Horta, Belo," 1996), and when Ramos-Horta visited Japan in 1997, his visit attracted quite a lot of attention from the Japanese public. A press conference was held and his statement, in which he expressed his hope for Japan's support, was carried in major national newspapers. Corresponding to the rising publicity, when foreign minister Yukihiko Ikeda met his Indonesian counterpart, Ali Alatas in 1996, Ikeda brought up the issue of East Timor and warned the Indonesian government about the international attention over its handling of East Timor ("Jakarta Reiterates," 1996). However, in 1997 when Ramos-Horta visited Japan, Prime Minister Hashimoto declined the Nobel Peace Prize laureate's request for a meeting. The Japanese government was concerned that such a meeting with the East Timor activist would disturb relations with Indonesia. Moreover, during a meeting with president Suharto, Hashimoto emphasized that Japanese officials were not meeting with the Nobel Prize

laureate out of consideration for the Japan-Indonesia relation (“No Japanese Officials,” 1997).

The above case study can be analyzed from two perspectives. First, I focus on the outcome of Japan’s policy making to determine the effectiveness of the NGOs’ activities. However, this is not an easy task. The subtle movements we have observed in Japan’s foreign policy toward Indonesia depend on subjective judgment as to whether one considers them as a ‘success’ or not. An optimistic analysis may conclude that NGOs have successfully influenced Japan’s foreign policy, as the result of a combination of different factors stemming from NGOs’ efforts that have contributed somewhat to a decision made by the government. Furusawa considers efforts of NGOs and the advocacy group of the Diet members to have been effective in that Japan abstained from the referendum on East Timor at the UN Subcommittee of Human Rights in 1993, instead of opposing as in the previous years (Furusawa, 1996, p. 77). In 1996 the Japanese government responded to the proposal submitted by the former UN official, Yasushi Akashi and the Diet member group, and funded a conference of East Timor leaders in 1996 (Furusawa, 1996, p. 75). Likewise, in March 1996 when Portuguese foreign minister Jaime Guma asked Japan to help to solve the conflict between Portugal and Indonesia over the East Timor issue (“Portugal Urges,” 1996), Japan announced its financial support for the UN hosted dialogue between Portugal and Indonesia. The amount of aid amounted to \$100,000 (“Japan Gives,” 1996). In addition, the number of expressions of ‘regret’ and ‘concerns’ by the Japanese government may be perceived as the result of NGOs activities, which pressure the government to bring up the East Timor issue in its diplomacy toward Indonesia.

On the other hand, it is clear that the NGOs’ efforts are overshadowed by other factors, notably economic relations between the two countries. While the Japanese government expresses its concerns and regrets over East Timor, these are mainly limited to rhetorical expressions unaccompanied by any action or policy shift. The current amount of bilateral trade is higher than any time in the past, and more companies invest in Indonesia today. The fact that NGOs and individuals have only been able to produce subtle movements in Japanese foreign policy toward Indonesia, while economic ties between the two countries is stronger than ever, confirms overwhelmingly the influence of business interests, which NGOs have not been able to overcome.

Second, NGOs’ operations also may be analyzed in the context of the decision making process. One of the characteristics of East Timor NGOs is their ‘openness.’ The FETJC emphasizes high profile activities, such as formal petitioning and public education. The coalition

presented numerous petitions and held meetings with the government officials. Those are open activities, held in public. Likewise, the coalition's speaking tours were to educate the public for better understanding of the East Timor issue.

This style of activities coincides with the political environment, which is characterized by the government's official encouragement to promote business relations with, and aid to Indonesia. Indonesia has been acknowledged by the public as a legitimate trading partner and destination of aid. NGOs' task is to challenge the established relation between the two countries.

Burma NGOs and Their Network

In contrast to the case of Indonesia, Japan's diplomacy with Myanmar has been less predictable, in the sense that Japan occasionally shifts its policies between being critical and accommodating. Moreover, negotiations between the two countries often take place behind the scene. The business sector is informed of secret dealings between the two governments before they are opened to the public, but most of civil society is not. In this context, Burma NGOs adopted different strategies from the East Timor NGOs. Burma NGOs are engaged in both high profile/public activities, such as seminars and formal petitions, and low profile/informal activities, such as lobbying. In this section, I focus on the People's Forum on Burma, one of the most dedicated Burma NGO networks based in Japan. As in the section on East Timor, I discuss the effectiveness of their activities and operational style in relation to the political environment they confront. The Burma NGO network's focus, organization, and leadership provide an interesting contrast to those of the East Timor network.

After the 1988 incident, many groups in Japan have taken actions in support of democratization and protection of human rights in Burma. Those groups cooperate with each other in establishing a network to undertake political and social activities. Some of the first NGOs that reacted to the crisis in 1988 were groups of Burmese residents in Japan. There are approximately 10,000 Burmese immigrants in Japan⁶. Many of them are political activists, who fled their country after taking part in the democracy movement (Sugawara, 1996i). During the political turmoil in 1988, some 200 Burmese residents in Japan organized a "council" to assist the democratic movement in their country ("Burmese Residents," 1988). The Burmese

⁶ According to Tanabe, about a half of those are illegally staying in Japan (Tanabe, 2001).

Association in Japan (BAIJ) was created around this time to support the democratic movement in their home country, by being engaged in political activities, such as staging demonstrations and presenting petitions. The association's membership grew to as many as 1,000 in the following years, although the BAIJ has shown some signs of declines in recent years (Tanabe, 1997, p. 245). As of 1998, the association had 134 members (Saito, 1988a, p. 168).

Recently, the younger generation of Burmese immigrants in Japan have taken over the activities. The National League for Democracy, Liberated Area Japan Branch (NLD-LAJB), Burma Youth Volunteer Association (BYVA), and the Student Organization for Liberation of Burma (SOLB) are some of the groups that have been active in Japan. They compose the Joint Action Committee (JAC) to establish solidarity and a communication network among Burmese groups (Tanabe, 1997, p. 245). As those groups continue to be vocal critics of the Myanmar government, activities of Burmese immigrants have been troublesome for Myanmar. The SLORC tried to damage the groups' reputation, by accusing some well-known Burmese activists in Japan of being responsible for the terrorist bombing in Myanmar that killed a daughter of a high ranking military official in 1997 (Tanabe, 1997, p. 245). Moreover, Burmese immigrants are not completely free from the control of the Myanmar government, even after they fled out of their country. Despite the fact that many of the immigrants have obtained legal status in Japan, Burmese residents are required to pay tax to the Myanmar Embassy in Tokyo, in the amount of over 10,000 yen (\$80) per month or 10 percent of their income. It becomes a burden for the Burmese immigrants who often do not have financial luxury. While the legality of such action by the foreign embassy in Japan may be in question, the Japanese government has not taken any measures to solve this issue (Tanabe, 2001; Sugawara, 1996j).

Besides Burmese groups, international NGOs were among the first to undertake advocacy activities for Burmese human rights and democratization. Asia Watch, Amnesty International, the International Network for Democracy in Burma, and Free Burma Coalition are some of the major international organizations that have been operating in Japan.

In addition, some Japanese citizens groups took actions after the crisis in 1988 to support the refugees, many of whom were victims of political and ethnic oppression by the Myanmar government. Japan Sotoshu Relief Committee was one such group. This Buddhist group, founded at the end of the 1970s to help Indochinese refugees, joined international NGOs in relief activities for Burmese refugees at the Thai-Myanmar border ("Meeting," 1990). In addition,

many women's groups were engaged in the Burma issue from early on. The International Women's Network for the Freedom of Aung San Suu Kyi, chaired by Takako Doi, and Women's Studies Association, led by Kuniko Funabashi, were some of the organizations that started action in the early 1990s. Those organizations brought the issue before the public and initiated political activities, including petitions to the Japanese government ("Japanese Women," 1991; Tanabe, 1995, p. 119).

Many Japanese NGOs that target their operations specifically to Burma emerged as the result of the 1988 crisis. Burma Relief Center - Japan (BRC-J) and Karenni Rainbow Foundation were, for example, established to help those who were victims of the violent oppression by the military government. Those organizations have been working to provide assistance at refugee camps. Their activities are generally independent from the government's support, and the groups fund their activities through private donations from their members and the general public.

While those organizations were established to provide relief assistance for the people, they also take part in activities that have political implications. Often they co-sponsor seminars and talks with human rights NGOs and advocacy groups, such as Amnesty International. They also participate in petitions and release public statements, often initiated by other NGOs which are active in political advocacy activities. One of the difficulties and dilemmas that those organizations face is how to balance their relief activities and political engagement. As the Myanmar government screens organizations and individuals that enter the country, groups who wish to maintain physical access to the country may have to be cautious about getting involved in political activities. Some organizations that focus on refugee relief or development programs, intentionally choose not to associate themselves with NGOs that are vocal in political matters of the country.

Among the NGOs working on the Burma issue, the People's Forum on Burma (PFB) is one of the most active groups today in Japan⁷. Since its establishment in 1996, the PFB has developed to be the most active Burma group as well as the most organized network of individuals and groups working in the issue area. Presenting petitions is one of the major activities that the organization undertakes. It has delivered numerous petitions to the Japanese

⁷ Discussion of this section is based on interview with an NGO leader activist on 28 January 2002, the Burma Information Network website and its weekly newsletters since January 2002, the PFB website, the PD-Burma website, and articles by Sugawara, Tanabe, and Watanabe. Otherwise specified.

government to protest Japan's lenient attitude toward the SLORC government. Those petitions are often presented as joint efforts of the PFB and other human rights and Burma NGOs. Seminars and public events are also held to raise awareness of the issue in Japanese public. Political activists, refugees, and other victims of human rights violations by the military government of Myanmar are invited to talk about their experiences at the seminars. In addition to formal seminars, social events are held to promote cultural exchange between Burmese immigrants and Japanese people. Many of those events are organized through the collaboration between the PFB and other NGOs, such as Amnesty International, the BRC-J, and Karenni Rainbow. Other political advocacy groups that are critical of Japan's foreign aid policy frequently join the PFB's events and activities. As in the case of East Timor NGOs, Burma NGOs use raising public awareness of the issue as an important strategy to create pressures on the Japanese government to take policies more supportive of human rights and democratization in Burma.

However, one of the differences from East Timor NGOs is the PFB's emphasis on political lobbying. The group has set up a separate fund specifically to support its lobbying activity. The forum sends its members or supports individuals who lobby the Japanese government and politicians to stop the flow of Japanese money to Myanmar or to alter Japan's accommodating diplomacy with the SLORC government.

Activists and Burma NGOs

One of the factors that enables the PFB to be engaged in political lobbying is that the forum includes individuals who are capable of undertaking such activity. As in the case of East Timor, the role of NGO leaders is crucial, and these leaders affect the nature of NGO. One of the characteristics of the PFB is the involvement of journalists. The board members of the PFB include reporters, freelance journalists, and photographers who have been rigorously following issues of Burma, human rights, and democratization in their professional careers. Their articles appear in popular magazines and newspapers, and many of their works provide information that those journalists obtain first hand. In many of their articles, the journalists criticize Japan's policy toward Myanmar, and they attempt to expose involvement of particular politicians and individuals who attempt to promote friendly diplomacy with a country with such an unfavorable human rights record. Efforts of those journalists contributed to publicizing the struggle of

Burmese activists. Journalists in the PFB have interviewed Aung San Suu Kyi, and have published her story in popular magazines and books. One of the journalists in the forum introduced Aung San Suu Kyi's writings in a major newspaper as a series, which was later published as a book (Nagai, 1997)⁸. This courage strengthened her popularity in Japan. The strong presence of those journalists and reporters in the PFB and their rigorous work in the area of publication gives a great advantage to the group in raising the public awareness of the issue. In addition, their background as journalists gives an advantage to engage in low profile activities, because of their connection to political circles and their skill in working in that type of environment.

One of the confusions that I ran into during the research on the Burmese groups came from an activist's overlapping membership in multiple organizations. For example, a journalist who serves as an executive member of the PFB also works as the coordinator of the International Network for Politicians Promoting Democracy in Burma (PD-Burma). His tasks include collecting information and building connections among people who are influential in decision making related to the Burma issue. The same individual is also involved in operation of the Burma Information Network (Burma Info), one of the major information sources on Burmese issues in the Japanese language today. In addition, as a journalist, he is also active in writing and publishing articles on Burma, as well as other human rights issues.

Burma Info is operated by several other members of the PFB. Those individuals also have dual memberships with other Burma NGOs, such as Free Burma Coalition and Earth Rights. Burma Info's internet site serves as an information hub for various Burma NGOs, including the PFB, Karenni Rainbow Foundation, and the BRC-J, to reach a greater number of recipients and to communicate with each other efficiently. Thanks to the contributions of those individuals, information released from those international NGOs becomes available in Japanese through the website. As in the case of East Timor NGOs, the internet and email systems have developed to be an important tool for spreading information to a large number of people and speeding up communication among NGO members.

In addition, the presence of a large number of Burmese residents in Japan is an important factor that influences motivations and operational styles of the Burma NGOs. The PFB does not

⁸ The series was carried in Mainichi Shinbun from 1995 to 1997 and was later published as *Letters from Burma (Biruma kara no Tegami)*, Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1996).

only promote protection of human rights and democratization in Burma, but also are engaged in activities to support Burmese residents in Japan and to ensure human rights of those immigrants. Furthermore, the fact that many of those immigrants are undocumented and are not recognized as legal residents affects the NGO's strategies, in the sense that one has to be cautious whether and to what extent a certain information or issue may go public.

Shogo Watanabe is an immigrant lawyer who serves as an executive member of the PFB. He advocates himself for Burmese immigrant issues and assists those who seek asylum in Japan. His Burmese immigrant defense group helps Burmese residents dealing with legal and social problems that they encounter during their stay in Japan, and while working as an immigration lawyer, Watanabe also takes a part in advocacy activities of the PFB with other Japanese and Burmese members of the forum (the PFB; Sugawara; Watanabe). Those individuals who serve for multiple organizations contribute to create an intertwined web of NGOs, particularly among Japanese and Burmese groups.

The close connection between the PFB and Burmese immigrants is also distinctive characteristic of the PFB. Leaders of major Burmese NGOs, such as the SOLB, the NLD-LAIB, and BYVA also represent the PFB as executive members. Partly, because of the involvement of Burmese groups and the intentional efforts of the PFB's leaders, many of the organization's activities are done in collaboration with Burmese immigrants in Japan. Burmese activists often take a part in petitions, demonstrations, and social events organized by the PFB. Furthermore, public events for cultural exchange between Burmese residents and Japanese participants are often organized, not only to raise the political issue of Myanmar, but also to create a more favorable environment for Burmese immigrants by promoting understanding among the public.

Japanese Politicians and Burma NGOs

As to the connection between Japanese politicians and Burma NGOs, some traits overlap with the case of East Timor. First, the connection with politicians is an important measure for Burma NGOs to effectively bring up their issue at the higher level of Japanese politics. Second, the politicians who are sympathetic to the NGOs are essentially the same individuals that I discussed in the section of East Timor. More specifically, Satsuki Eda and Yasuko Takemura are the ones who have been most actively engaged in the issue of Burma both inside and outside of the Diet.

The formal organization of Diet members for Burma was formed in 1994 as Diet Members League Seeking the Release of Aung San Suu Kyi. The leader of this group was Takashi Kosugi, and Tomiko Okazaki (Suto, 2002)⁹. Eda, however, began his efforts on the Burma issue well before the creation of the league.

In 1990, prior to the first national election in Myanmar, the BAIJ, the International Network for Burma Relief, and five other NGOs requested Diet members to send a letter to express their protest against Myanmar's political oppression. One hundred sixty-six members of the Diet responded to this and signed the letter to be presented to the Myanmar embassy in Tokyo ("Japanese Lawmakers Protest," 1990)¹⁰. Eda was in the group that delivered the letter along with an NGO leader and some other Diet members. While the ambassador did not accept the letter, the Japanese group was able to discuss the release of Aung San Suu Kyi during the meeting at the embassy ("Ambassador Denies," 1990)¹¹. In October 1990 when 61 Diet members sent letters to the United Nations to plea for action to support the democratization movement in Myanmar, the campaign was also organized by the initiative of Satsuki Eda in cooperation with the International Network for Democracy in Burma ("Japanese Lawmakers Join Campaign," 1990).

In December 1991, NGOs in Japan, including Amnesty International and International Women's Group for the Freedom of Aung San Suu Kyi, organized an event to celebrate the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Aung San Suu Kyi in the same month and to call for the release of the pro-democracy leader. The event in Tokyo attracted a crowd of over 300 people. Among them were politicians, such as Eda and Takemura ("Diet Members, Groups," 1991). Later in the year, Eda took the initiative to prepare a petition which was signed by 422 Diet members and presented to the government. In this petition, the group asked the government to put pressure on Myanmar for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi ("Eda a Noted Advocate," 1993). At the end of the same month, the Japanese government granted asylum to three Burmese refugees for the first time. Also around the same time, a MOFA official met with Myanmar's ambassador to Japan, Thein Han, and requested the SLORC to hand over power to the elected democratic government led by Aung San Suu Kyi ("Japan Asks," 1992).

⁹ The group was renamed to the Diet Members League Supporting Democracy in Myanmar after Aung San Suu Kyi's release from house arrest. The membership of the league in 2001 was 92.

¹⁰ A different article reports the number of legislators who petitioned the Myanmar government prior to the election as 195 ("Japanese Lawmakers Join Campaign," 1990).

Takemura is one of the three Japanese members of the PD-Burma, whose operation in Japan is coordinated by one of the executive members of the PFB. The PD-Burma (the International Network of Political Leaders Promoting Democracy in Burma) was established in 1996 at the initiative of the former prime minister of Norway, Kjell Magne Bondevik. Along with two other Japanese politicians, Takemura represents Japan in the network of 29 members from around the world. In 1996 Takemura joined an international team of six politicians from different parts of the world to visit Thailand and investigate the human rights situation in Myanmar. In 1997 Takemura represented Japan at the PD-Burma's conference held in Japan, at which many leaders of Burma's democratization were present, including the prime minister of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma.

Eda and Takemura also have assisted the PFB and other NGOs' activities as they have done for the FETJC. They have arranged meetings between the NGO leaders and government officials, giving the opportunity to the NGOs to talk directly to the government. As well they periodically bring the issue up in the debate in the Diet, especially regarding Japan's foreign aid policy and human rights issue.

Analysis of the Burma NGOs

While there are several similarities, the activities of the Burma NGOs have slightly different foci and characteristics compared to the East Timor NGOs. The Burma NGOs utilize both 'open' and 'closed' approaches in their operation. Some of the organizations that I contacted during my research were somewhat secretive with the details of their activities and information. Some NGO leaders were concerned about how information would be used in my research, as the issues with which they were dealing were 'sensitive' in nature.

In addition the organization of the network is distinctive. Many of the PFB's leaders are also in charge of multiple NGOs, and such overlapping membership of the leaders leads to strong ties and cooperation among different organizations. At the same time, these overlaps make it difficult to distinguish boundaries of activities of each NGO. In addition, many of the leaders of the PFB pursue Burma and human rights issues as their profession. Thus, in the case of the Burma NGOs, it seems more appropriate to describe the network as the community of individuals who share the same hopes and goals for Burma. Given these traits of the Burma NGOs, it becomes even more

¹¹ A week later Myanmar approved visas to the international press to report the national election.

difficult to assess the effectiveness of their activities for influencing decision making of the Japanese government.

One of the few cases for which we may make a somewhat visible connection between the activity of NGOs and politicians, and the government's behavior occurred in 1991, when 422 out of 764 Diet members petitioned the government at the request of some human rights NGOs. We may suspect that this action contributed to Japan's decision to grant asylum to some Burmese refugees. In addition, around the same time, MOFA requested the SLORC to hand over the power to Aung San Suu Kyi's party. As in the previous case study, Eda and Takemura are among the most sympathetic and enthusiastic politicians on the issue of Burma, and their assistance is an important element for the NGOs' activities that makes it possible for the organizations to bring their issue to the government's attention in a more direct and effective way.

Unlike for the case of Indonesia, the Japanese government cannot officially encourage business or aid flow to Myanmar, except for a good reason, such as humanitarian assistance. This may be attributed partly to the established awareness of the issue among the general public. Partly because of involvement of journalists, and the extremely negative reputation of the Myanmar government in the international community, Myanmar has been attracting a great deal of attention among the Japanese public. Aung San Suu Kyi is well known in Japan, and numerous books and other publications on her struggles for democracy are on the shelves of every bookstore in Japan. The recent news of her release from house arrest was also widely reported in newspapers and magazines, and many reporters and politicians interviewed the released activist on TV programs broadcast nation-wide¹². In addition, the presence of Burmese immigrants in Japan affects the motivation of NGOs and the decision making of the government to a certain extent. Internationally known Burmese groups, such as the NLD-LAJB and SOLB, have set up offices in Japan and have been actively engaged in political activities since the late 1980s. Japanese NGOs also are involved to support Burmese residents in Japan, by promoting more favorable legal and social conditions for the immigrants and democratization of their home country. The Japanese government is under constant pressures from those civil society groups to consider the situation of Burmese immigrants who fled their country because of the political oppression by the military government and to refrain from becoming too accommodating toward

¹² Asahi, Yomiuri, Mainichi, as well as regional newspapers carried the news of Aung San Suu Kyi's release. In the following weeks, those newspapers published numerous articles on Myanmar (Burma).

Myanmar.

The difficulty of assessing the effect of the NGOs' activities comes from the characteristics of foreign policy decision making toward Myanmar, as well as from the operational pattern of the Burma NGOs. In contrast to the case of Indonesia, Japan does not have an established pattern of foreign policy toward Myanmar. Thus, the Japanese government's decision is often unpredictable for outsiders. Moreover, Japan's foreign policy making toward Myanmar is not open, involving many behind-the-scene negotiations. As I discussed in the chapter on business interests, it is apparent that the Japanese government has been engaged in negotiations with the military government in Myanmar, and also that business is involved in this process.

The operation of the Burma NGOs fits into this type of decision making process. The PFB's emphasis on lobbying and journalists' involvement correspond to the environment in which the NGOs operate. Combination of wide publicity of Aung San Suu Kyi and 'low' and 'high' profile activities may be contributing to the continuous withholding of Japan's aid. Japan has kept its general policy not to resume full-scale aid until democracy is achieved in the country. When Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest earlier this year, the Japanese government took a relatively cautious position not to acclaim the decision by the Myanmar government as a dramatic step forward to democracy. While Japan welcomed the news, the Japanese government was cautious to observe the situation and refrained from resuming full-scale aid until any further change could be observed in the country's political system (Nemoto, 2002).

The case studies of Indonesia and Myanmar illustrate two patterns of Japanese NGOs' activities and organizations. East Timor and Burma NGOs have developed differently in their respective political environments. Differences in their organizations, strategies, and focus of activities reveal two somewhat different patterns of NGO operations that currently exist in Japan. In the case of East Timor, the NGOs emphasize formal and open strategies, such as education to raise public awareness and written petitions toward the government. While it has been limited for most part to rhetoric, Japan has brought up the East Timor issue occasionally in its diplomacy with Indonesia.

In contrast, the political environment for Burma NGOs is characterized by Japan's general partiality toward Myanmar. The combination of some economic interests, personal connections among influential individuals, and historical ties between the two countries influence Japanese foreign policy toward Myanmar. Informal negotiations often take place between the two

governments, and this environment affects Burma NGOs' approach. With the wide publicity of Aung San Suu Kyi and NGOs' efforts the Japanese government is under constant pressure, and up to this point Japan has not resumed full-scale ODA to Myanmar.

While the two models have many differences, they also share some similarities. First, in both cases individual activists play crucial roles. Those individuals set the climate of the NGOs by initiating activities and providing skills to undertake certain activities. Involvement of academics in East Timor NGOs and journalists in Burma NGOs contributes to the differences in operational styles and focus of activities. Second, the case studies suggest that an alliance with politicians is an important and effective way for NGOs to promote their issue at a higher level of Japanese politics. More specifically, Satsuki Eda and Yasuko Takemura were discussed as individual politicians who have been sympathetic to the NGOs and willing to initiate action at the Diet level to promote human rights and democracy in Japanese foreign policy¹³.

NGOs have developed their strategies in the particular political environments that they encounter. The NGOs discussed in this chapter have been incorporated in the complex process of Japanese politics, and they contribute to shaping the path of Japanese foreign policy.

¹³ Yasuko Takemura lost her seat in the Diet in the recent election for the upper house held in July 2001.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The research started with the question of whether international norms affect a state's foreign policy and if so how. I particularly focused on human rights, which speak to people's moral judgment and emotions. To discuss the role of norms in international politics, I share much of my view with that of constructivists, such as Martha Finnemore. Finnemore argues that international norms influence a state's behavior. In her view norms are constructed and promoted in interactions among state and non-state actors in the international community, and they affect the process in which states articulate their 'national interests.' Finnemore studies the case of the Red Cross and the Geneva Convention, in which the humane treatment of injured soldiers and protection of non-military personnel during wartime became "norms of war," and points out that those norms have affected states' actions during wartime. The case of the Red Cross is particularly interesting to me as it demonstrates the crucial role that individuals have played in international politics, by acting on their beliefs in certain moral argument.

What is essential in the origin of the ICRC (International Committee on the Red Cross) and the Geneva Convention is the role of a few morally committed private individuals – individuals without government positions or political power – and the elite networks they were able to use to build an international organization. Neither of these has received much attention from international relations scholars. The state-centric analysis dominating the field has made it difficult to recognize that private individuals with no formal political standing might have significant influence. Furthermore, realism's rejection of morality as a significant force in world politics provides few tools for understanding people like Henry Dunant or the widespread ethical convictions he harnessed. (Finnemore, 1996, pp. 86-87)

While Finnemore's study focuses on the international level of analysis, "morally committed private individuals" also play an important role within domestic politics. Japanese NGOs that I discussed in this paper are groups of "private individuals" who dedicate themselves to the ideas of human rights and democracy. They organize themselves as NGOs and work for their moral beliefs, not for their personal material gains.

This study demonstrates that the efforts of those individuals and NGOs are now part of Japan's political processes. Their actions have produced some moderate but important impacts on Japanese foreign policy toward Indonesia and Myanmar, despite the challenging conditions of the reluctance of the Japanese government to be actively engaged in international human rights and the strong presence of business interests in Japanese politics.

Table 6.1

Japanese foreign policy, business interests, and NGOs

	Indonesia	Myanmar
Pattern of Jpn Foreign Policy	Hesitance in the area of human rights: avoidance of side taking, mediation between West and Asia, legacy of the war	
Business interests	Substantial business interest: large amount of investment, bilateral trade, and foreign aid; publicly acknowledged and encouraged strong economic tie.	Some business interest, but limited; strong historical ties; friendship between influential individuals, and informal negotiations.
NGOs' focus of activities	(The Free East Timor Japan Coalition) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involvement of academics - High profile activities - Connection to politicians - No direct involvement of East Timor residents 	(The People's Forum on Burma) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involvement of journalists - Low to high profile activities - Connection to politicians - Involvement of Burmese groups and residents
Foreign policy outcome	Friendly policy maintained; however, subtle changes in diplomatic tactics (sympathetic remarks for East Timor's human rights; warnings to the Indonesian gov't – mostly rhetoric).	Inconsistent policy between accommodating and critical of the Myanmar gov't; however, no resumption of full-scale aid and no official encouragement of business relationships.

The Japanese government has traditionally been hesitant to take decisive action for human rights. As a result human rights NGOs face an overwhelming task to challenge the established pattern of Japanese foreign policy. The NGO groups that I discussed in this paper perceive the Japanese government as the target whose policy must be shifted. Both NGO groups are not in a cooperative relationship with the government, but they hold critical views towards the government's policy and behavior in its diplomacy with Indonesia and Myanmar.

While the pattern of Japanese foreign policy toward human rights applies to both Indonesia

and Myanmar, the two cases also pose slightly different political environments for NGOs in relation to business interests. NGOs and activists who are concerned with human rights issues of East Timor are particularly in a disadvantaged position, because of the established economic ties between the two countries and the close connections between business and the government. NGOs operate in this political environment through public awareness education, petitions, and alliance with politicians. The involvement of academics as leaders contributes to this characteristic of East Timor NGOs. They have been at the center of NGO activities, by publishing their writings and organizing seminars and events to raise public awareness of the East Timor issue. Through these methods, the NGOs' voices are heard in Japanese politics, and Japan has adopted diplomatic tactics to bring the East Timor issues occasionally into its dealings with Indonesia, even though they have been limited for the most part to rhetoric,

On the other hand, Burma NGOs have the advantage of Japan's limited economic interest in the country. However, the Japanese government displays inconsistency in its dealings with Myanmar, in the sense that Japan changes its attitude between critical and accommodational toward the Myanmar government from time to time. In this political environment, the Burma NGOs utilize both high and low profile approaches, ranging from formal petitions and seminars to political lobbying. The involvement of journalists and the presence of a large number of Burmese refugees in Japan have affected the NGOs' strategies and motivations. Journalists provide skills and conditions for the NGOs to engage in informal negotiations and lobbying with politicians. This type of tactics also suits the fact that many Burmese immigrants are undocumented and need sensitive consideration in how their issues are treated. At the same time, the journalists have been active in bringing up human rights issues and the situation in Burma to the public and media attention, through their writings and investigations involving the Japanese and Myanmar governments. Their efforts are enhanced by the wide publicity given to Burma's democracy movement leader, and up to this point, Japan still has managed to refrain from resuming full-scale aid to the SLORC government.

While it is still difficult to see any dramatic impacts of their activities on Japan's foreign policy, the study shows that these NGOs are now woven into the complex political process that shapes Japan's foreign policy. Japanese NGOs have established themselves as legitimate entities in the society, and the Japanese government has begun to pay more serious attention to them. The change in the government's recognition of NGOs as legitimate political entities implies that the

Japanese government now recognizes human rights as a legitimate claim in politics. NGOs play an important role to set an agenda in Japanese politics in issue areas, which could otherwise neglected. NGOs raise a question of accountability in the government's foreign policy based on normative argument of human rights. It is clear that through the establishment of NGOs as political actors, human rights have a more effective form of representation in Japanese politics. While more direct impacts on the government's policy of this trend are yet to be seen, NGOs have achieved important initial steps toward a system in which human rights are given serious consideration in foreign policy.

Timeline

1957	Japan became a member of the United Nations
1970	Beginning of international NGOs Foundation of Amnesty International Japan Branch
1975	Indonesian invasion of East Timor
1978	Japan's ratification of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
Late 1970s	Settlement of many Indochina refugees in Japan
1980s	Beginning of rapid development of Japanese NGOs
1982	Japan joined the UN Human Rights Commission
1983	First release of <i>East Timor Tsushin</i> by Kure YWCA
1984	Establishment of the Human Rights and Refugee Division in MOFA
1985	Jose Ramos-Horta's visit to Japan
1986	Establishment of the FETJC Establishment of the Suprapartisan Parliamentary Forum on the East Timor Issue in the Diet
1988	Civil unrest in Burma Establishment of BAIJ, BRC-J, and Karenni Rainbow Foundation
1989	Japan's recognition of the SLORC government in Myanmar Establishment of International Human Rights Network
1990	First election in Myanmar scheduled Petition by 166 Diet members presented to the Myanmar embassy Petition by 61 Diet members presented to the United Nations to promote democracy in Myanmar
1991	Massacre in Dili Petition to the Miyazawa government by 262 Diet members for East Timor's human rights and revision of ODA to Indonesia Petition by 422 Diet members for Burmese asylum and Myanmar's democratization

	Aung San Suu Kyi awarded the Nobel Peace Prize New ODA principals announced
1993	The World Conference on Human Rights
1995	Aung San Suu Kyi's "Letter from Burma" started in Mainichi newspaper
1996	Two East Timor activists awarded the Nobel Peace Prize Establishment of the PFB Establishment of the PD-Burma
1997	Visit of Ramos-Horta to Japan; Rejection by PM Hashimoto of the request to meet by the East Timor activist
1998	The NPO bill passed in the Diet
1999	East Timor's independence
2000	Amnesty International Japan Branch acquired <i>koeki hojin</i> status

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Vita

Atsuko Yokobori

Atsuko Yokobori, the eldest of two children and the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Katsuhisa Yokobori, was born on September 3rd, 1973 in Chigasaki, Japan. She received here Associates of Arts in English from Obirin Junior College located in Tokyo, Japan in March 1995 and graduated as one of the top five students in her class. In May of 1999 she graduated from Winona State University with a degree in Bachelor's of Arts in Political Science with Sum Cum Laude. She matriculated to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in August of 2000 to pursue her Master's of Art in Political Science.

Her interests include human rights, cultural studies, education and traveling.