

**JAPAN'S OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AND  
ITS IMPACT ON PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF  
HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA**

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M.A. (HUMAN RIGHTS)

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ABSTRACT

Official development assistance (ODA) is an official financial flow from developed countries to developing ones through providing goods and services. Its major aims are to contribute by bringing social development and a market economy as well as to provide emergency assistance. In the 1990s the international community gradually tended to pay attention to human rights and democracy in the process of ODA. Japan announced its ODA Charter as the first official policy statement on foreign aid in replying to such an international tendency. The ODA Charter statement calls for protection and promotion of basic human rights and democratization in recipient countries. The purpose of this research was to examine whether Japan's ODA Charter notion on human rights and democratization is effectively implemented. Analysis was made by focusing on a case study of Burma. In Burma, the authoritarian military regime has been powerful and known as one of the most crucial human rights violators, while Japan recognizes Burma as a pro-Japanese country. Japan has been the most generous and important donor to the country from a quantitative and qualitative perspective.

The research revealed the ineffective results and negative impact of the Japanese ODA in helping the Burmese government to survive for a long time. Japan consistently provides ODA to Burma after the Charter in the name of 'humanitarian' aid but without contributing to improve the human rights situation and democratization. The study clarifies Japan's ODA to Burma does not implement human rights protection and democratization promotion due to both internal and external causes. It includes Japan's lack of seriousness in considering human rights politically, economically, socially and culturally. International and regional pressure also influence Japan's aid policy.

These findings suggest that the Japanese government needs to recognize the importance of the human rights idea for all ODA processes and the enormous negative effect caused by assistance without human rights consideration.

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