

Reflections on Environmental Security and Japanese Foreign Policy

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1 . The Place of Environmental Security in Japanese Politics

Japanese politics is very strongly based on anthropocentric ideologies. This may be nothing unusual in the world, where policy-making tends to be dominated by short-sighted economic concerns and narrow interests. Environmental issues are an integral part of Japanese politics, but it seems that they are still all too often regarded as being part of “low” politics or “soft” politics and not something that really counts in the world of Japanese politics. When one observes Japanese political discourses, it is usually the national economic policies that get the most intense attention, but even that discussion tends to leave important areas outside the whole discussion.

As for security, the whole issue is closely intertwined with the relations with the United States. The postwar Japanese security policy was from the beginning created to accommodate to the U.S. security policies/ interests and it is widely understood that Japan needs to carry the burden of the U.S.-Japanese Security Treaty to benefit from continued friendly relations with the U.S. (which was also the core of famous Yoshida Doctrine). The aims of the U.S. security and foreign policy are quite removed from the daily lives of Japanese people and the difficulties related with the Okinawa base issue and continued undisciplined behaviour of the U.S. soldiers serve as a steady reminder that any pressure from Japan is unlikely to make the Americans to revise their security policies and practices. The current situation makes it difficult to have an open discussion about the “real” or changing threats facing Japan and whether the Japanese security policy is adequately prepared to face such risks, which have more to do with ecological security and human security than with traditional type of security threats. The Self-Defense Forces have this far played well their role as a junior partner in the U.S.-Japanese Security Alliance and, given the

sensitivity that there is about the role of military in Japan, it is unlikely that the Self-Defense Forces themselves would come up with radical new ideas and initiatives, which could easily be interpreted as criticism against the U.S.-Japanese Security Treaty. However, among the Japanese politicians there are quite a few who feel that it would be natural that Japan became more independent in its foreign policy and that a more independent Japanese foreign policy would be in the interests of the whole world, including the Americans. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Tanaka Makiko must be applauded for her bravery of voicing these ideas to the rest of the world.

The Koizumi Cabinet has already made its mark by having several key politicians to expose their dissatisfaction either with the general state of U.S.-Japanese relations (such as Tanaka's comments about the lack of independence) or with specific U.S. policies (such as Tanaka's comments about the U.S. missile defense plans or Prime Minister Koizumi telling that it is "extremely regrettable" that the U.S. turned against the Kyôto Protocol). Prime Minister Koizumi has also claimed that the U.S. missile defense plan has a possibility of leading to arms race. In short, the Bush administration has in few months succeeded to creating two major security threats for Japan: 1) by showing that it is not cooperating to solve the problem of global warming and thereby making it generally less trustworthy in any international attempts to alleviate ecological problems, and 2) by sticking to a missile defense plan, which may never succeed to solve its technological problems but has already demonstrated its ability to alienate the allies and antagonise the rivals of the U.S., the Bush administration has made it clear that it is going its own way in its security policy without taking seriously the concerns that a unilateralist U.S. is making the world a much more dangerous place. For the Koizumi Cabinet it is easier to break taboos about the U.S.-Japanese relations, because there are virtually no supporters for the U.S. policies in any other country of the world (with the possible exception of Italy under the new Berlusconi government). The people of the Western European countries have generally felt that their relationship with the U.S. has been more or less a one between equal and sovereign countries and there have been few inhibitions to say openly what is thought about the U.S. policies.

Prime Minister Koizumi has this far dragged his feet when it comes to clear Japanese support to the Kyôto Protocol. After the U.S. decision to withdraw from the Protocol the European Union has stepped up pressure to secure as many ratifications for the protocol as possible, in order to save the protocol and also show to the U.S. that its decision is very unpopular and works to isolate the U.S. To save the protocol it is of great importance that such countries as Japan, Australia and Canada do not change their position to please the current U.S. administration. The leader of the Democratic Party of Japan (Minshutô) Hatoyama Yukio urged has urged the government to seek Diet approval for the pact as soon as possible. Instead of following this advice Prime Minister Koizumi told that the government has "at the moment, not decided to make an independent decision". This sort of talk proves that Prime Minister Koizumi is reserved to make the Kyôto Protocol a major issue of foreign policy and obviously is worried about trying to make it appear that also Japan is stepping up pressure to make the U.S. to change its position. At least during President Bush's European tour in June 2001 it became clear to the U.S. side that

the members of the European Union are serious about the climate change and that it has already created a major conflict between the European Union and the United States.

It has already become clear that the environment as a policy field is the one that most clearly separates the mainstream ideologies of the United States and Western Europe. The Bush presidency has reminded the Europeans that the American political system has little room for solidarity and civility in such fields as the welfare society or taxation, not to mention the role of US government in executing its citizens and others, but it is the environment, where the common perceptions seem to have nothing in common. For the Western Europe the contemporary U.S. represents a country where the corporate interests of energy industry or corporations producing genetically modified food easily go before wider social interests and global cooperation. The modern ideas of human security and human rights go hand in hand and the new policies of the Bush administration are all too often directly opposed to the most cherished principles of human rights and democracy. The way that President Bush won his office greatly diminished his legitimacy as a political leader. After all, he got fewer votes than his rival and received the decisive votes from Florida, where the irregularities in voting were simply appalling. The Western European countries have learnt through their integration efforts the need and benefits of close international cooperation in human rights and legal issues. The refusal of the U.S. to join the new International Criminal Court (the Rome Treaty for the establishment of the court was signed by 139 countries by the end of year 2000) or the land mine ban tells much about the attitude of the U.S. on international cooperation. The U.S. policies on firearms, crime (including the death penalty) and abortion together with the failure to move on with international cooperation have gradually made the U.S. an ideological pariah state.

Among its allies the United States continues to be valued for being indispensable for the stability of world economy and for its historical role of defending democracy from its enemies. Among its internationalist achievements the United States did have an important role in defeating European colonialism, advocating the principle of national self-determination and promoting the United Nations in its early years. However, the recent U.S. policies have clearly pushed the country further away from internationalism, multilateralism and the values of liberal democracy, as much of the rest of the world understands them. In particular, the American interpretation of the "rule of law" and its application to international relations is radically different of that of most of its allies. On the other hand, it must be emphasised that the public as well as political elite in most countries that call themselves liberal democracies are reasonably well aware that the American foreign policy and its most peculiar manifestations do not reflect the multiplicity of opinions and values that American people have. In many cases, the most competent criticism against the American foreign policy is voiced by the Americans themselves. The fact that the United States does have plenty of people who are more than ready to challenge the policies of their own government and to develop alternatives that would be friendlier to the rest of the world, continues to make the United States be seen as a key partner or potential partner even when the government of the United States is seen to be devoted to strange causes. On the other hand, the domestic multiplicity of opinions in the United States is seen to make the United States

susceptible and reasonably sensitive to criticism and it is assumed that any government of the United States is mature and tolerant enough to understand that the most reliable allies/friends of the United States may at times be directly opposed to some American policies.

The U.S. failure to get its representative elected to the U.N. Human Rights Commission and the Narcotics Board was a clear indication that the U.S. is rapidly running short of unquestioningly obedient allies. After these votes the former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Jeane Kilpatrick, blamed the defeat on the Europeans by saying that "It is a fact that if either Sweden or Austria had stepped down in favour of the United States, we would have won a seat. That is how friends, allies and affinity groups operate in the United Nations to achieve common cause." In addition, Ms. Kilpatrick complained that the United States must in addition to opposing our adversaries compete with our best friends and that our one vote can never win against the EU's 15. It is interesting to note that Ms. Kilpatrick identified the common cause as the reason why other countries should let the U.S. represent them (Kilpatrick 2001: 7). Maybe it is time to acknowledge that the U.S. all too often has no common cause with other members of the United Nations, and not only the European countries and it is no wonder that the U.S. authority to promote human rights raises questions in other countries. As for the argument about the number of UN votes, much of the criticism in the United Nations has been directed against its lack of democracy and the way that the superpowers have influenced its workings. One of the concerns that has worked against Japan's wish to become a member of the security council has been that it would give the United States another vote, if Japan does not become more independent in its foreign policy. Sharing common values should also include reciprocity and sincerity to common decisions.

In spite of the current U.S. administration's concerns about the loyalty of its European allies the official line during President Bush's recent European tour was that it was a significant achievement for the Americans that the European Union and NATO were expanding up to the Russian borders. On basis of President Bush's speeches it seems like he is confusing the enlargement of NATO and the European Union to be almost like the same entity. The U.S. NATO membership served during the Cold War years its role in keeping the Americans engaged in European affairs and deterring the Soviets. NATO is predominantly a military organisation whereas the European political integration has been driven by the European Union. In short, their functions and future prospects are very different. For time being it seems like the European Union is happy to cooperate with NATO when there is need to address traditional type of security risks. However, the membership of these two organisations is not identical and the new Euroarmy is further confusing the division of labour between the two partly overlapping organisations. The current type of NATO is apparently needed as long as Russia shows little willingness to join the common European integration process. Even Serbia has rapidly changed its foreign policy and is likely to approach the EU. Russia's most difficult problem seems to be in overcoming its own past. It seems to be difficult to implement policies that guarantee human rights and democracy. The appalling violations of all possible human rights in Chechnya and, for instance, the current Russian campaign against press freedom demonstrate that it takes a long

time before Russia is ready to play by the same rules as the rest of Europe. By trying to make Russia strong again by resorting to its old tricks the Russian government is creating potential for future domestic problems and instability. At the same time Russia is defining the borders of European political integration.

It is interesting to note that from the Western European perspective both the former superpowers appear very much alike each other. Ideologically both countries represent administrations, which have little concern for welfare society, human rights or environment. In both countries the traditional security concerns and militarism are still very much part of the foreign policy, in words and deeds. When presidents Bush and Putin met in June 2001 the discussion was largely related to the U.S. attempt to get Moscow's blessing to its missile programme. In short, President Bush sent a strong message to Russia that we are back to the days when the U.S. and Russia saw the missiles as the real issues of international relations and human rights are something that do not get on way of national interests and are more or less for the domestic audience.

The For the Western Europe it has generally been a pleasant surprise to find out that in the Eastern and Central Europe a significant and apparently increasing part of population has a genuine concern for environment and human rights. While the European Union prepares for a significant widening (possibly about ten new members in the next few years) and deepening (which takes place by the passage of each new directive), the old ally, which once represented the so called Western values of freedom and democracy has now become the symbol of ignorance, militarism and crimes against environment and human rights. In spite of all the talk about European Union's common European heritage and values, the European Union itself has a problem with its image of being bureaucratic and out of touch with calls for democracy and transparency in decision-making. The current organisation of the European Union is simply not adequate for an organisation, which tries to replace the nation-states by more democratic institutions. It is clear that the European Union has a long way to go, but it is still fairly popular among the populations of its member countries and applicant countries, because it clearly has projected an alternative that makes away with some of the most fundamental problems of international relations. One of these is, of course, security. When the European integration makes war in Europe impossible and unthinkable it is far easier to prepare for other types of security threats, such as the scenarios of environmental security threats.

For me the European integration illustrates the merits of international cooperation and shows that international cooperation may easily take up new tasks, if the experiences from cooperation are good. For Japan the biggest problem is a lack of "natural" forum where Japan could promote regionalism with other countries that are concerned about similar issues. Japan is too different from its closest neighbours and the Japanese politicians and public have not been too keen to identify common interests even when it has been possible. All too often "globalisation" and "internationalisation" has been understood as a primarily economic process.

It is worth noticing that the global warming has during the years that it took to build an intergovernmental accord within Japan on the issue it had also become both a symbol of

international cooperation and an example of a new type of security threat. In Japanese case, the public was first slow to wake up to the reality of global warming and interestingly the administrative and political elite was quick enough to react to the rising international concern to give Japan a major role in the process. The fact that the main conference was held in Kyôto, in Japan, was the final factor that helped to commit people to the aims of the protocol. The official Japanese negotiation strategy closer to the concerns of industry rather than scientific community or environmental pressure groups and in the negotiations it has usually been the Europeans, who wanted stronger measures and Japanese often were even more reserved than even the Americans. However, the new American policy on global warming became as a shock to most Japanese, because it illustrates that their only close international partner may in the end ignore all its responsibilities and decide where and when it wants to be selfish, without paying much attention to the outside opinions. The continued U.S. hostility against the Kyôto Protocol, of course, must be interpreted also as a direct insult against Japanese foreign policy and its attempts to play a constructive role in international relations. As for Prime Minister Koizumi personally the American policy puts him in a very difficult position.

As for the personal record of Prime Minister Koizumi in environmental issues, at least he has expressed his strong determination to take environment seriously. In context of the so called Environmental Country Japan in the 21st Century (*21 seiki wa no kuni zukuri kaigi*) Committee Prime Minister Koizumi has steadily produced ideas and discussed with likeminded fellows, bureaucrats and politicians how to establish a society that coexists with nature (<http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/wanokuni/index.html>). Prime Minister Koizumi has also taken concrete steps to promote environmental conservation. Among the concrete plans are plans to reinstate tidelands in Tôkyô, Ôsaka and Ise Bays, promote reforestation projects in urban reclaimed areas and preserve wetland and river habitats. Prime Minister Koizumi has already indicated that the government will submit to the Diet bills in 2002 to revise the National Parks Law and Natural Environmental Preservation Law. In addition to this clear commitment to more environment-friendly legislation and administration the government is in process of earmarking a substantial part of the budget for public works projects for environment-related projects (see e.g. *Yomiuri Shimbun* 30 May, 2001: 1). Prime Minister Koizumi has also launched a new panel called the headquarters for urban rejuvenation, which has among its main objectives the promotion of so called eco-towns and eco-friendly businesses. In short, the idea is adopt the zero-waste goal and to show that drastic improvement is possible in eco-friendly urban planning (<http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/tosisaisei/index.html>). Of course, all these good intentions and promises do not yet guarantee that the ideas will be smoothly introduced to the legislation and will be duly observed in political and administrative practices. After all, a substantial number of Prime Minister Koizumi's closest supporters have a record of close links to interest groups, which are responsible for much of the environmental destruction in Japan. On the basis of consistency of Prime Minister Koizumi's statements about environmental issues there is a reason to expect that he is going to try harder than any of his predecessors to promote environmental issues in Japan. However, Prime Minister Koizumi's environmental interest seems to be confined

to the domestic environment and this far he has made very few policy initiatives, which would widen his environmental concern to foreign and security policies, where the Japanese government has direct impact on global environmental cooperation.

Unfortunately, environment does not seem to be the issue that makes or breaks the future of Japanese governments. Prime Minister Koizumi has undoubtedly introduced more fresh new ideas on environment to the national political agenda than any other politicians before him. However, these ideas have not been followed by an analytical discussion. Those politicians who do not share Prime Minister Koizumi's environmental concerns have largely kept quiet and seem to hope that things get back to normal sooner or later. In short, the quality of political discourses among the actors themselves, and especially in relation to the environmental policy, tends to be quite low and a high portion of the mass media is concentrating on daily news and scandals and has little ambition for more analytical reporting. The current reigning coalition has after Prime Minister Koizumi's phenomenal rise to power tried to maintain a perception that it is serious about fundamental reforms of politics, economy and society. However, a significant part of the political establishment still seems to value stability and their old ways of ruling the country and it is difficult to expect that any forces within the Liberal Democratic Party would be able to provide for a drastic turn in the political ideologies, environmental policies or economic fortunes of the country. The 2001 Japanese budget once again continued driving Japan deeper into debt and did very little to curb spending or to introduce new revenue and the comments that Prime Minister Koizumi has made about the speed and caution of his economic reforms make any swift action look quite unlikely. In short, the Japanese politicians are not serious about balancing the national economy and most likely are unable or unwilling to analyse the state of Japanese economy in terms of wider global economy. Prime Minister Koizumi has this far done very little to change the course of actual Japanese policies. One of the most promising new developments has been Prime Minister Koizumi's decision to admit the responsibility of the government in the mistreatment and denial of human rights of the leprosy (Hansen's disease) patients (<http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/koizumispeech/2001/0525danwa.html>). However, there is a good reason to say that this particular political decision should have been a matter of common sense, especially after the very clear decision from the Kumamoto District Court. In short, Prime Minister Koizumi was given a good chance to present a LDP with a human face, which is exactly what it needs to maintain its popular support. For the time being it seems that the government is preoccupied with the forthcoming Upper House Elections and want to have a new popular mandate for their policies. However, the LDP already has a mandate to run the country and the government should have no excuse for any delay in pushing through its policies.

The Japanese political culture has been shaped by decades of conservative political rule, where a small political elite, often former bureaucrats or sons of politicians (or both), have dominated the party organisation of the ruling party and have made empty all attempts to activate wider political participation. At the same time the political alternatives of the opposition parties have appeared too vague and unconvincing to the majority of voters. Most Japanese apparently do not believe that it is possible to have any radical solutions to political and social problems. As a

result the majority of voters have more or less steadily supported governments that in opinion polls they do not support. The majority of Japanese citizens apparently feel quite uneasy with all the existing political alternatives but are reluctant to do much about it. Many politicians and supporters of the Liberal Democratic Party were, of course, alarmed about the rapid decline of support for the party under the leadership of Prime Minister Mori. The arrival of a hugely popular Koizumi Cabinet has suddenly changed the overall situation of the LDP and all the opposition parties. It seems that most voters expect that any real change within the Japanese politics must take within the LDP. In other words, most voters have never seen such opposition parties as the Democratic Party as real alternatives to the LDP. In a democracy it is worrying when the popularity ratings of a government leave virtually no room for opposition parties. The current situation apparently tells even more about the state of Japanese opposition than about the governing coalition. Most people also seem to realise that it is unlikely that the LDP is able to radically reform itself and the most likely changes have more to do with style than with content. Most Japanese people, after all, seem to be relatively satisfied with their current socio-economic conditions and have suspicions and reservations about the social and political models of other countries and especially about their applicability to Japanese conditions. Therefore, it may be argued that plain nationalism is helping the LDP to remain in power without "modernising" its ways. Prime Minister Mori has now vanished to history as one of the least popular and openly ridiculed Prime Ministers of all times with his slips of tongue and dismal personal support rates, but he has demonstrated once again that even such a politician can survive for a surprising length of time at the very top of Japanese politics, when he has once made his way up there by having the right kind of set of parents, gender, age and the perseverance and greed that are needed to compete with his party buddies. In fact, the personal unpopularity of Prime Minister Mori has greatly helped the current Cabinet as appearing like there had been a revolutionary change in Japanese politics.

As for the people in general and about their relationship with nature, it is difficult to have any sweeping generalisations about the environmental awareness of any larger group of people. There are studies indicating that the Japanese rate among the lowest in industrialised countries in environmental concern and awareness (cf. Kalland and Asquith 1997:7). The actual destruction of nature, of course, gives the most accurate information about the real attitudes of people and judging from the rate of natural destruction, actual behaviour of Japanese people and the lack of real protection we can assume that Japan is not among the most advanced countries in terms of environmental awareness. However, some other studies ask slightly different questions and get almost opposite results by showing the Japanese as the most environment-concerned people that can be found. Recent survey results of the Dentsu Institute for Human Studies found out that among the major industrialised countries the Japanese respondents had the highest figure (80.9%) for expressing concern for the environment (Fukukawa 2000: 8) and the Yomiuri Shimbun (Japan's largest newspaper) opinion poll that was published in January 2001 had 77% of the respondents saying that they were willing to give up some of the conveniences they now take for granted to help protect the environment and 61% of respondents said in reference to their

wishes for Japan in the 21st century that they were concerned about protecting the environment whereas only 37% of respondents wanted "a country that pursues economic riches" (*Daily Yomiuri* 11 January, 2001: 2).

However, I personally feel rather hesitant to rank anything as ambiguous as people's concern or awareness. Furthermore, in most surveys in Japan there is a marked tendency to write down "don't know" (*wakarimasen*) or answer the way that people think that they should answer to please the researcher and get rid of him/her. Many Japanese people are at least somewhat aware that it does not sound good for Japan to be seen as an economic animal. For any rational person it is also clear that a clean, healthy and comfortable environment has its costs and that in the future ever increasing amounts of money will be spent on fighting against environmental degradation in its various forms, whether people like it or not. Surveys and quantitative analysis may have similar problems in other countries, but at least I have very little trust in any mass surveys conducted in Japan if the results are supposed to be accepted as a true reflection of people's attitudes and behaviour. However, we already know well that Japanese society surely has its share of environmental problems and the high population density alone together with the consumerism and waste put a heavy strain on environment. Japan also has its share of environmental activism and activists and environment related information and research results are readily available, but for various reasons the ecological arguments and green political philosophy seem to have difficulties entering the political agendas of the country. It is obviously a different matter to be concerned about the extremely high levels of dioxin that can be found in Japan or in the immediate neighbourhood than be concerned about such environmental problems that do not constitute a direct and clear health risk to people. Even with obvious health hazards people tend to trust the authorities, who are usually openly basing their policies on economic "rationality" concerns in the name of maintaining harmony between economic interests and other interests. For instance, the attitude of the health authorities and the general public is amazingly pro-nuclear in a country that has suffered atomic bombings and witnessed some of the worst cases of mismanagement within nuclear industry. When accidents happen, most people seem to take on face value the recommendations and orders of the various authorities and many key issues, such as the formulation of nation's energy policy, are largely left to the "specialists" and bureaucrats while few people seem to think by themselves about the merits and problems of available choices. In short, many important environment-related policy fields are in effect depoliticised and left to those who have strongest (economic) interests in these policy fields.

When the environment makes it to the political agenda, the human-prudential reasons usually dominate the discussion. As a political strategy, reliance on the human-prudential reasons may offer the best hope for gathering support for less anthropocentric policies. Japan is a democracy and most politicians still believe that they need keep in close personal contact with their voters. This same feature also explains why Japanese politics requires so much money and why there seems to be no end to petty money scandals. Most well-established interest groups in Japanese politics represent narrow economic or ideological interests and it may be difficult to persuade the politicians that there are voters with a genuine concern for other people, not to mention non-

humans. However, the fact, that Japanese politics is still so close to its local power base, provides the best hope for introducing new issues to politics. If the people get really concerned about any local issue, the politicians could serve their own interests well by using the issues in their campaign. However, the problem with Japanese environmental politics is that in most rural areas the traditional interest groups have used to their role of dominating the local politics. Often the politicians find it easier to take a status quo approach and in that kind of setting it is difficult to think that people with profound knowledge of the environmental issues could be accepted as candidates by most LDP local chapters. As a result many Japanese politicians either do very little with environmental issues or display simple technocratic views.

One important feature of politics in such countries as Japan and the Republic of Korea is that by the chauvinist party organisations and political culture have largely excluded the majority of population, women, from party politics and political decision-making and the more “informal” roles provide a better channel for them to be heard — and environmental issues, especially those with clear connection with human health have therefore become kind of socially acceptable political “women’s issues”. In short, people who otherwise shun/ are excluded from politics may become active in environmental campaigns. What is particularly interesting in the Japanese case is that the successful new grassroots movements are not the work of well-educated professional women but are usually dependent on volunteer *shufu pawâ* (housewives’ power) (Cf. LeBlanc1999: 66-68. In the UN statistics the numbers of women Members of Parliament’s Lower House the figures for Japan were 5% (25 out of 500) ranking 96 out of 116 in the world and the numbers for the Republic of Korea are 4.0% (12 out of 299) ranking 102 out of 116 in the world http://www.undp.org/dpa/frontpagearchive/june00/9june00/carte_anglais_OK.pdf) The Koizumi Cabinet has more women members than any of its predecessors. In particular, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tanaka Makiko has brought in a new style and way of debating policy issues. The current Minister of the Environment, Kawaguchi Yoriko, represents an other type of influential female politician — with her strong background in business and administration. Both Tanaka and Kawaguchi are in their own ways quite unique on top levels of Japanese politics. It remains to be seen how rapidly the number of women can increase in Japanese politics. If given a chance, many women surely would appear more electable than many present male politicians. In short, the LDP still has room for more female politicians who could contribute to the improved image of the party and, possibly, could also have a major role in the revision of its agenda (if that is what the party wants). The key issue would still be whether wider female participation in Japanese high politics would help to soften the ideology of the party. We are yet to see any pattern to form and people such as Minister Tanaka do not easily fit into any patterns. However, it is easy to conclude that it is only natural that the number of female politicians will gradually increase, if for nothing else, but to reflect the changes in the position of women in society during the past decades and that any change in the current inward-looking ways of the LDP is likely to have a healthy impact on the politics of the nation.

The impact of social movements has its limits in Japan and the postwar history of Japanese society has been shaped by conservative political forces that have usually ignored environmental

issues as long as it has been possible. That sort of anthropocentrism could be labelled as *chauvinist anthropocentrism*, where environmental protection is presented as an obstacle for economic development and it is argued that the narrow interests of local political elite (such as the local construction sector and co-operatives) represent the wishes of local people and therefore should guide all political action. At worst the chauvinist anthropocentrism among politicians leads to such bizarre behaviour as eating publicly whale-meat or strongly defending such environmentally destructive and economically and socially unsound projects as most of the current reclamation projects for creating new farming land, usually in regions where there already are large areas of unused farming land. It is only natural that quite a few of those politicians, who do not listen to the opinions of the political opposition in Japan, are only happy to defy the so-called international pressure or international public opinion.

One of the most glaring recent examples of chauvinist anthropocentrism was the implementation of Isahaya Bay reclamation project. Isahaya Bay in Nagasaki Prefecture off the Ariake Sea used to have wide tidal flats and was the largest such area remaining in Japan. The bay is still best known in Japan as the nation's leading *nori* (seaweed) cultivation centre with some 40% of Japan's total output. The bay also used to have rich fish stocks. Furthermore, the bay was an important area for migratory shorebirds, including many rarities, and until 1997 Isahaya Bay used to accommodate some 10,000 birds during the migration peaks and the area was the most important wintering area in Japan for many bird species. These birds included a wide variety of waders and plovers. On 14 April 1997, a seven kilometres long seawall constructed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery closed off about a third of the bay. The project caused 3,550 hectares of sea to disappear and destroyed the self-cleansing function of some 3,000 hectares mudlands and caused total destruction to the ecosystem of the bay. The authorities cited two reasons for the project: 1) to create farmland and 2) to control floods. The history of the project goes back to the 1950s and then agricultural land was badly needed. The project took shape in the 1970s and was kept going by the bureaucracy and local political pressure. However, local priorities changed many times during that period and when the construction of the floodgates started there was no need for extra farming land in the area and many of the local people had already started to question the wisdom of the whole project. The flood control argument that was invented after the farmland argument became widely questioned was too far-fetched and did not convince most observers.

The Tôkyo-centred national media picked up the topic and various opposition politicians, most notably the former Minshutô leader Kan Naoto, used the issue to embarrass the government. The public debate did not seem to have much impact on the politicians and bureaucrats (including the Environment Agency) who had approved the project a long time ago. In fact, it seems that both the local and national LDP politicians felt that they would have lost face if they had given in to the pressure. Moreover, in the top political discourses there was virtually no argument raised about the importance of Isahaya Bay for migratory birds. It was also clear from the beginning that a massive reclamation of land would greatly decrease the number of migratory birds in the area and would most likely contribute to the drastic decline and eventual extinction of several

species. The bureaucrats and politicians who approved the project did so with the knowledge that the project would destroy one of the most important sites for migratory birds in Japan. This shows that they did not care much about the birds as such and that they did not worry too much about the possible international consequences either, migratory birds, after all, are clearly not only a Japanese concern. After the flood gates were closed the number of birds in the area has, of course, been in decline. Most of the area is now a dry, cracked wasteland, covered with dead shellfish. The numbers of migratory birds have been reduced to fewer than one hundred in the reclaimed area and further decline is rapid also in neighbouring areas. In the Japanese media the Isahaya Bay struggle, however, was symbolised by the pictures of dying mudskippers (*mutsugorô*). Before this, many Japanese people probably had never learned about the existence of these sympathetic looking and relatively rare creatures. Seeing them die for a questionable project was something that disturbed a significant part of the Japanese public. It may also be argued that the type of emotional media coverage that the Tôkyo-centred national media suddenly gave to Isahaya Bay alienated many local people: the Tôkyô journalists seemed to care more about the mudskippers than about the people and the problems of remote parts of Nagasaki Prefecture (for the Isahaya Bay case, see Yamashita 1998, Yamashita 1996: 27-29 and Suwa 1997: 203-212. For migratory birds, Miyazaki 1999: 38-39 and *Daily Yomiuri* 27 April, 1999: 11).

In winter 2001 the Isahaya Bay came back to haunt the Japanese politicians. This was the time of peak seaweed production season and this year the seaweed in the area had lost its healthy black colour and had instead turned yellow having been deprived of nourishment by phytoplankton. Also the fishing has suffered enormously after 1997 and many fishermen have already left their trade. Starting from the New Year's Day 2001 hundreds of local fishermen started to organise protests (with their boats) and demand the government open the bay's floodgates. The Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Ministry is tried to defend its old decisions and claimed that there is no link or no established scientific data about a link between the closing of the floodgate and the recent demise of seaweed cultivators and fishermen. In addition to the reclamation project there are also other factors that have added to the environmental catastrophe, such as pollution by fertilisers and chemicals, the construction of several dams in rivers the after-effect of Mitsui-Miike coal mines (which is responsible for the seabed collapsing) and the bureaucrats can always try to escape responsibility by claiming that the massive project has nothing to do with the crisis. The same authorities have until these times done very little to address the problems caused by the other sources of destruction for the ecosystem. After the uprising of the fishermen and nori farmers the opposition politicians once again became active and, for instance, Kan Naoto did not waste time to visit the area and demand the opening of floodgates — to demonstrate that the reclamation project is responsible for the seaweed problem. Also environmental organisations have once again taken up the issue of Isahaya. After all that activism also the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Yatsu Yoshio hinted that he would open the floodgates if a clear link is found between the seaweed crop failure and the reclamation project. In March, a Ministry panel recommended opening the gates to study the impact on the

bay, a move that halted construction work on the reclaimed land, but a month later the same panel told the gates should not be opened for at least a year. The current situation is that the construction work on the site has stopped and the local population is sharply divided about the future of the project. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries apparently tries to find some kind of long term solution, but that decision is primarily is political one and requires a wider consensus in the Cabinet. From a point of view of environment the damage that has already been caused is so extensive that all the measures to alleviate the damage would be likely to have only limited success. In short, the opening of the gates would be most effective in making the policy-makers to publicly acknowledge their mistake, which hopefully would help to prevent reclamation projects elsewhere (see e.g.

<http://www.asahi.com/english/asahi/0130/asahi013008.html> and

<http://www.asahi.com/english/asahi/0128/asahi012804.html> and Yachô 2/2001: 28). If the popular resistance against the absurd reclamation project continues it has potential of dividing the loyal supporters of LDP in some of its power bastions. If the floodgates finally are opened it will be a heavy blow to the bureaucracy that so confidently pushed through the project just few years ago. Most Japanese people are most concerned with the apparent waste of 240 billion yen that the project has cost and about the expected rise in the price of nori. It has already become clear, no matter what course of action the government takes, that the chauvinist anthropocentrists, politicians and bureaucrats alike, will pay a heavy political price for their refusal to listen to the voices of scientific community and environmentalists. However, the only thing that is clear is that for the nature of Isahaya Bay it is impossible to return to the state that existed in 1997.

The chauvinist anthropocentrism is by no means restricted to Japan only. In fact, it is closely related to a group of ideologies, which often are sanitised by calling them versions of political realism or conservative nationalism, and these ideologies have remarkably wide support in many affluent industrialised countries. It could be argued that the chauvinist anthropocentrism provides an ideology that justifies selfishness in all human relations and in relations between humans and nature and when raised to the international level it fits well with the foreign policy doctrines, which emphasise traditional nation-state sovereignty and disrespect for international co-operation and international treaties. It is no wonder that most Japanese politicians were delighted to see the Republicans returning to the helm of American politics. The Japanese chauvinist anthropocentrism complements perfectly the isolationist American foreign policy that emphasises national interest and military power and attaches little importance to environmental issues. The so-called international pressure (*gaiatsu*) in Japanese context has usually meant only the pressure coming from the United States and therefore a Republican administration is always expected to be more predictable and easier to cope with. At its best a Republican administration could be satisfied with Japan as a loyal and indispensable military ally.

The conservative wing of the Republican party is well known to have its own chauvinist anthropocentrists and President Bush could easily be classified as the most notable representative of them all on basis of his campaign speeches and strong action in the first months of his

presidency. President Bush's comments on global warming and his eagerness to permit exploration for oil and gas in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska have come as a shock to environment-conscious people in all parts of the world since these irresponsible ideas most likely reflect the new realities of American environmental policy and the fact that the American government pays no attention to the opinion of its allies or popular opinion outside the United States. It may be argued that the chauvinist anthropocentrism and international environmental irresponsibility can easily thrive under the political situation created by the new American administration.

The widely spread and more moderate version of anthropocentric environmental policy could be called as *technocratic anthropocentrism*. In Western Europe, the European Commission and its agenda of economic rationality has created an atmosphere where anthropocentric politics rules and where even its critics usually have to be satisfied with moderate reformist policies. In spite of all the criticism against the elitism and lack of transparency the work of European Commission and European Union bureaucracy remains technocratic at its best and full of red tape at its worst. For a long time the environmental legislation was largely smuggled to the directives by referring to various human-prudential causes in an almost total lack of common agreements on environmental policy and still that is often the best way of reaching results. The result is that the European Union and its directives have set an example for the rest of the world of how to build an international environmental policy on legal principles and an ideology of technocratic anthropocentrism.

In Japan, the Ministry of the Environment (which was upgraded from the Environment Agency in January 2001) with its more than 1000 regular staff members is often representing technocratic anthropocentrism. Even the basic organisational structure of the Ministry tells about a strong ideological basis of anthropocentrism. The founding of the Agency (1971) itself was largely a result of awakening to the dangers of industrial pollution and responding to the growing public concern and political pressures. The opposition won several local elections in the early 1970s by using the environment as one of their main themes and the government has since tried to avoid being seen as totally ignorant about environmental issues and risks. Japan has also had clear success with its fight against industrial pollution and the government may use this as an example of its environmental concern. Respectively, the focus in environmental policy has been in safeguarding public health and the history of the Environment Agency reflects this pursuit. The Agency has had a Training Institute for Environmental Pollution Control since 1972 and an Environmental Health Department since 1974 and has been running a National Institute for Minamata Disease since 1978. It is no wonder that the Environment Agency publications, including the most informative *Annual White Paper (Kankyô hakusho)* tend to focus on technical details. The technocratic anthropocentrism may also provide the civil servants with a survival strategy in a political environment that is largely hostile both to more biocentrist or to global approaches. In the end the Agency has for almost all the time of its existence been serving LDP governments, which have supported political agendas, which have left environment to subordinate position, The Agency itself may not have all the resources to initiate active policies and to

respond to the initiatives of other more powerful Ministries. It is quite telling that of the 319 staff members, who work in the nominally less anthropocentric Nature Conservation Bureau of the Environment Agency, 54 of them work for the National Garden Office, which is running the three gardens related to the Emperor institution (outer gardens of the Imperial palace, Kyôto gyoen and Shinjuku gyoen) and many others have as their main task to administer the national parks in Japan (<http://www.eic.or.jp/eanet/en/index.html>). Since most national parks (two categories: *kokuritsu kôen* and *kokutei kôen*) in Japan are widely seen to contribute to recreation and tourism purposes and in many cases have shown to provide quite limited protection to nature, the running of the Japanese nature park network is to a high degree related to anthropocentric ideologies. For instance, most parts of the Inland Sea (*seto naikai kokuritsu kôen*) and virtually whole the coastline of the Iwate Prefecture (*rikuchû kaigan kokuritsu kôen*) are part of natural parks, but that has not prevented them from continuation of being regarded as objects of “development” for human use (for Japanese natural parks, *Kokuritsu kôen zukan* 1995 and *Kankyô hakusho, kakuron* 2000: 143-148).

Anthropocentrism may sometimes reach accommodation with environmental action. People in Japan should be aware that destroying the balance of nature has economic and social costs. We are talking about a society that has created and experienced such cases of massive pollution as the Ashio copper mine case (early Meiji period), Minamata mercury poisoning case, the case of Toyama Itai-itai disease, the case of Yokkaichi industrial pollution and recent discoveries of extremely high levels of dioxin in most parts of the country. It was exactly these tragedies and the subsequent marathon trials that turned to public opinion in Japan in favour of drastic measures to curb environmental pollution (for these cases and the history of Japanese environmental policy, see Tsuru 1999 and Awaji 1995: 3-16). It is also important to remember that it took decades of court battles and social movements to make the government recognise the existence of pollution-caused diseases (the first precedent being the Itai-itai disease verdict of 1968 in a case that had its origins as far back as in the Meiji period or ever before that (Hata 2000: 39-54). Even after it has become possible to fight against polluters who are directly responsible for the spread of pollution-caused diseases the victims have usually been met with little support from the authorities. Reparations are always tied to disease certification process that usually is arbitrary, time-consuming and bureaucratic. As a result, many victims are left without help and outside the compensation systems. People in general can have little trust that authorities will act swiftly to stop the spread of pollution-caused diseases even after the cause has been identified — if the polluter has its papers in order (Cf. Maruyama 2000: 23-38 where she analyses the case of the Minamata disease). After all the difficulties that there have been in defending the most fundamental rights of people against polluters most people’s concerns seem to be limited to direct health risks.

Moreover, when it comes to political parties and political behaviour, environmental politics is still undeveloped in Japan in comparison with most other wealthy industrialised countries. This is partly related to the wider issues of Japanese political culture that I have already touched above. However, it is worth mentioning that there is no significant Green Party in Japan or a

political force that has ideas that are critical of industrialism and economic growth and the absence of such political force already has the effect that environment is usually seen only through other political issues. However, there are significant social movements outside the party system working on environmental issues, but most often these movements are geographically limited to a certain area and usually have problems maintaining their support base and activities over a sustained period of time. The inward-looking nature of most Japanese social movements and NGOs has greatly hindered also their global impact. However, a good number of Japanese NGOs try to cooperate with their counterparts and with the local people of other countries to make a direct contribution to the fight against global environmental problems. For instance, the Wildbird Society of Japan (*Nihon yachô no kai*) has done some good work in other Asian countries to protect endangered birds, in spite of the fact that with its about 50 000 members and little government support it is a relatively weak organisation to engage in costly and ambitious programmes. The financial weakness of the Japanese NGOs and the rigid rules of the Japanese working life make it difficult for the Japanese environmental NGOs to have wide and effective programs abroad and it is no wonder that most of these organisations place their priority to the environmental problems in Japan.

Japanese political forces that are critical of capitalism, most notably the Communist Party and the Social Democrats, have a very strong anthropocentric bias and in many cases are still seeking comfort from their fossilised tenets. The Japanese party organisations, the ones of ruling coalition and the opposition alike, do not have direct access to research organisations, which could provide them with update information on environmental issues and it seems that the political parties are not too interested in getting involved with the details of environmental policy, which, of course, would require a good grasp of natural sciences in addition to social and economic issues. Compared with some other countries (such as Germany) Japanese political parties are failing in their data and information gathering activities in most other fields in addition to the environment and the governing coalition is compensating its weaknesses in own information gathering by relying on the work of the bureaucracy.

The Japanese environmental legislation and administrative liturgy makes interesting reading. The Nature Conservation Law (1972) defines the final purpose of nature conservation as “to contribute to ensuring the healthful and cultural life of the people, both now and in the future” (http://www.nies.go.jp/english/eic-e/eiguide_e/d0012c.htm). Similarly the Basic Environmental Law (1993) defines as the purpose of this Law “to comprehensively and systematically promote measures for environmental conservation to ensure healthy and cultured living for both the present and future generations of the nation as well as to contribute to the welfare of mankind, through articulating the basic principles, clarifying the responsibilities of the Nation, local governments, corporations and citizens, and prescribing the basic policy considerations for environmental conservation. Furthermore, the same law defines the objectives of environmental conservation as “(1) To maintain natural elements of the environment such as air, water and soil in good condition so as to protect human health, to conserve the living environment and to properly preserve the natural environment.

(2) To protect the biodiversity such as the diversity of ecosystems and wildlife species, and to orderly conserve the various features of natural environment such as in the forest, farmlands and waterside areas in accordance with the natural and social conditions of the area.

(3) To maintain rich and harmonious contacts between people and nature.”

(http://www.nies.go.jp/english/eic-e/eiguide_e/d000f0.htm and

<http://www.eic.or.jp/eanet/en/lar/blaw/ch2-1.html>).

To illustrate the depth of anthropocentrist bias one could take the basic natural protection as a case. In respect to the protection of birds and animals, the legislation is largely based on the Law for the Protection of Birds and Animals (*chôjûhogohô*, latest revision implemented in 2000), which is directly delineated from the Hunting Regulation of Birds and Animals of 1873 (*chôjûryôkisoku*) and Hunting Law of 1918 (*shuryôhō*). The objective of the law is defined in its first article as “The objective of this law is to protect birds and animals and to let them reproduce by taking protective measures, by applying moderateness to hunting, by elimination of harmful birds and animals thereby preventing them from causing damage, and to improve the living environment (*seikatsu kankyô*, of humans) and activate the farming, forestry and fishing industry” (Yachô 3/2000: 5). These laws speak for themselves for their anthropocentrism. It is quite telling that the Japanese legislation as well as the Diet discussions preceding the latest revisions are still far more concerned about the damage caused by wild animals than about the stopping the rapid decline of various threatened species. The Japanese environmental legislation is full of references that legitimise the economic interests of small interest groups. The references to the natural and social conditions of different areas also serve to dilute the responsibility of the national government to act when needed. Even in special wildlife protection areas the approval of Prefectural governor/Prefecture (or the Director-General of the Environment Agency) makes it possible to reclaim wetlands, cut down trees or construct structures. The latest revision in April 2000 to the Law for the Protection of Birds and Animals further diluted the protection by adding a provision that made the hunting of any “harmful birds and animals” subject to the approval of the Prefectural governor/Prefecture. That means that from hereon the Prefectural governors are expected to have the best knowledge in Japan to decide whether some creature is harmful enough to be killed, regardless of the rarity of such animal. In short, the Japanese environmental legislation is full of parochial provisions and expressions, and the current political trend to push forward decentralisation can only make things worse. In addition, the lack of references of the need and duty to develop and enforce international environmental co-operation is conspicuous.

Apart from legislation the administrative liturgy concerning the environment has been gradually improving and getting closer to other developed industrialised countries. In particular, one has to give merit to the Environment Agency for its Annual White Paper (Kankyô hakusho) which currently in its two volumes increasingly analyses the environmental problems from an international perspective. However, also the White Paper is guilty of sanitising the domestic political struggle on environment. The publication is more reliable when it comes to the chemical survey reports or explaining the official purposes of various government programmes. If one

relied on government information on Japanese environment and its state, one would believe that Japanese government has all the environmental problems under its control and that there are no major differences of opinion among the Japanese people about the environmental policy (see e.g. *Kankyô hakusho, kakuron* 2000).

The White Papers have in recent years emphasised biodiversity and their social message has focused on the harmonious co-existence of nature and people. The frequent use of the concept "biodiversity" corresponds with the popularity that this concept has on international level after the Convention of Biological Diversity was successfully established in 1992 with a result of leading to a series of subsequent conferences and international treaties. When the convention was first made open for signature in Rio de Janeiro Japanese government and Prime Minister Miyazawa used the conference to soften the image of Japanese Official Development Assistance and foreign policy in general by pledging support to environmental aid and for the Rio de Janeiro conference agenda. The Japanese government's progressive position in the Rio conference provided a clear contrast to the environmentally hostile attitude of the Bush administration in the United States. In short, the high profile adoption of the biodiversity-related liturgy has served well the Japanese foreign policy. As for the actual relevance of the convention and its lofty ideals about sustainable use of biological resources, the convention does not require all that deep commitment from governments. However, in Japanese case the timing of the biodiversity convention was perfect to provide some *gaiatsu* (foreign pressure) to support the attempts to bring similar ideas into Japanese domestic use (For the *chikyû samitto* and its implications for domestic Japanese politics, see Dômoto 1995: 72-168).

One of the most significant developments in Japan in the field of protection of biodiversity is undoubtedly the adoption of the Red Data lists to determine the status of endangered, threatened and vulnerable species. The Environment Agency compiled the first "Red Data Book of Japan" in 1991, which also served as the basis for the Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species or Wild Fauna and Flora (1992). The Wildlife Protection Division of the Environment Agency has since its establishment in 1986 been studying the threatened wildlife in Japan. The Agency carries its own site surveys, interviews hunters and specialists and studies existing printed sources and on basis of these efforts the Agency periodically revises parts of the "Red Data Book of Japan" (http://www.biodic.go.jp/english/kiso/14/do_kiso2_e.html). The survey methods of the Environment Agency are far from being reliable and the Agency has often been criticised for not being able to establish efficient guidelines for the actual protection of endangered species. For instance, the vague wording of the guidelines that the Environment Agency adopted in 1996 to protect the Goshawk (*Ôtaka, Accipiter gentilis*) have made empty many attempts to protect this species.

In Japan, the Goshawk usually lives in mountainous forests and its habitat is vulnerable to various kind of development projects and road construction. The goshawk guidelines, as well as many other guidelines, focus on protecting the individual trees where the birds build their nests. Such guidelines simply encourage the destruction of habitats of endangered species. The Goshawks have recently been at the centre of various local environmental disputes, the most

famous being the Aichi World Expo that is going to destroy some of the last remaining habitats of Goshawk in Aichi. Since Nagoya has a fairly active environmentalist movement and the World Expo still dares to use the environment as its theme, it is no wonder that Goshawk has become a symbol of the failures of current environmental policy in Japan. The World Expo controversy became a major embarrassment for the local as well as the national government. In the end the World Expo bureau accepted the official Japanese registration only after revisions and after all the campaigning it has become clear to everyone in Japan and elsewhere that the local organisers are totally ignorant about environmental issues and have only tried to use the Expo for their own benefit. Since the World Expos are supposed to be organised for their positive public relations value, the Aichi expo can be seen as a failure already years before its opening. As for the goshawks, on June 20, 2000 the Environment Agency announced that it is in a process of revising Goshawk guidelines and that it will also conduct studies on the birds and their habitat. It was also reported that the Agency is going to use radar equipment developed since the previous guidelines. (<http://www.asahi.com/english/asahi/0618/asahi061808.html>). If the Environment Agency's guidelines provide any indication about the degree of sophistication of their knowledge of natural science, and in this case, about the ecological and behavioural research on birds, one has to wonder whether they are up to their job.

2 . Japanese Economy as a Global and Local Issue

Japanese government has now about a 25-year history of issuing deficit-covering bonds in large volumes to stimulate economy and extend favours to corporations. The initial goal was to respond to the effects of oil crisis and inflation, which was largely caused by ambitious domestic development schemes, such as the Japanese archipelago redevelopment scheme of the Tanaka administration. However, the subsequent governments got used to the idea of issuing bonds whenever there was political pressure to do something with the economy. In the end the Japanese government is responsible for a massive fiscal deficit, which already considerably limits the freedom of action for the government and is one of the major reasons for the continued recession. In the end of year 2000 the fiscal deficit was nearly 400 trillion yen and since the government has not provided sufficient funding for most pension funds the Japanese economy is, in fact, even more deeply in red. Meanwhile the politicians show little signs for mending their ways and the state of Japanese economy has already now become a concern world over for the potential of triggering a global economic crisis if the Japanese private sector is ever forced to bring all their money back home from their massive investments abroad. For most Japanese politicians Japanese economic policies are a local issue and the discretion of the mainstream media, especially the NHK, to avoid telling the bad news about economy and troubled corporations has contributed to a slowness in tackling the problems. It is quite strange situation that the watchers of the BBC World and CNN get far more detailed and critical analysis of the Japanese market situation than the watchers of NHK. Since the top Japanese policy-makers almost without exception follow only the Japanese media they are largely unaware of the perceptions of Japan abroad and about the extent of interest that exist about the state of Japanese economy among the

world business community and even the wider educated population.

In Japan the LDP has trying to secure its position by initiating a set of political programmes, which it has tried to push through with varying degree of success. Among these programmes are the administrative reform, decentralisation and political reform. The national government is following a type of Reaganomics recipe for decreasing the role of central government. The idea is to keep national taxation at a low level, fix the fiscal deficit and decrease dramatically transfer payments and subsidies from the central government (For more about the *chihô bunken*, see Shindô 1996, Tajima 1996, Shigemori 1996 and Matsushita 1996). The decentralisation scheme is a way for the Liberal Democratic Party (*Jiyûminshutô*) to modify its image and to seek more electoral support from the big cities. The LDP has traditionally been dependent on the farming population's vote. However, the issue of the liberalisation of trade and deregulation first forced the LDP to choose its side and align itself more clearly with the business interests of the mainstream of Japanese economy. The decentralisation would also allow the LDP to maintain more diverse policy agendas in different locations. The LDP may also count that the farmers do not have any other political party that would listen to their opinions and that they can afford to break free from too close relationship with the declining farming population.

In economic terms the city-dwellers of large urban centres would certainly end up winners from decentralisation if the policy succeeds in its goals, but the idea of wider self-governing powers and greater citizen-participation has wide appeal also among those people who can expect that government subsidies to their communities are going to dry up in the future. The June 2000 parliamentary elections, however, demonstrated that the decisive division line in Japanese politics goes between the rural areas and bigger cities. The Democratic Party of Japan has been successful in gaining the support of an increasing share of urban voters. Largely due to the eroding support in cities, the LDP has for the third time in row been unable to gain a majority in the Lower House. As the result it has to rely on the support of quite unreliable and unstable coalition of parties and independent Members of Parliament. The other factor that has still helped to keep the LDP in power has been the gerrymandered election district system that gives rural districts a disproportionate and unfair share of the vote. This time the LDP won 60% of the seats in the single-seat constituencies with only 40% of the votes. The latest election results simply demonstrate that the LDP has alienated a large number of urban voters and is in a danger of becoming even more dependent on its traditional power base and gerrymandering that equals to massive election fraud. That kind of situation naturally favours the opposition and one may claim that it is only the perceived lack of credibility and phlegmatism of the opposition that has allowed the LDP to stay in power as far as it has done. The heavy reliance on the rural vote certainly explains why the LDP is so keen to push decentralisation ahead. A successful decentralisation would also allow the LDP to continue ruling much of the country even if it eventually loses its grip from national government. Therefore, decentralisation may also been seen as a tactic to consolidate the gains that have been made during the long rule of the LDP.

The revised Law for the Protection of Birds and Animals (see above) illustrates what kind of problems there are if the local governments are vested with more powers to make decisions that

previously required national government approval. If local interest groups understand that their participation is valued in all matters, this may easily turn against environmental protection in communities where environmental awareness is undeveloped and where the anti-protection forces tend to be far better organised. In any case, the Japanese local administrations can not be expected to possess all the knowledge that is needed to handle complex environmental issues. Furthermore, in many cases local interest groups have all too close links with the local authorities. The (unsaid) goal of the decentralisation has been primarily to adjust the LDP to a new social and demographic reality and at the same time do something with the fiscal deficit before the whole issue becomes too explosive. It is clear that the environmental considerations are among the least important in the decentralisation scheme and the whole idea of the programme is to make politics more local. Therefore, the new kind of local Japanese politics may come as a surprise to those who expected Japan to adopt a more active global role.

3 . Japanese Foreign Policy, Global Environmental Issues and Emancipatory Power

The *omnipresence* of power and the *chain-like nature* of power relations naturally makes it far from easy to define and analyse what kind of power relations exist between Japanese society and other societies. In different regions these relations are quite different in their nature. In spite of the “lost decade” of Japanese economic recession Japanese economic power is perceived with certain uneasiness among its Asian neighbours. Japan is still an economic superpower with its 15% share of the world GDP and the only one in East Asia (China with its huge population being still some seven times smaller than Japan in terms of GDP). The other countries in the region have received influences from Japan and applied the Japanese experience in their own modernisation pursuits. That has given Japan a very special position in East Asia. There are still fresh memories about the Japanese colonialism in most other parts of East Asia and in spite of all the assistance that Japan has provided to its neighbours one of the most obvious traits of regional foreign policy is a lack of trust for Japanese motives. This could partly be explained by the phenomenon that Japanese diplomacy has not been the most effective to get its message through and explain the Japanese policies. It is, indeed, difficult to explain the finer details of foreign policy “doctrines”, if the politicians themselves show little interest in foreign policy formulation and debate.

Another characteristic of Japanese domestic and foreign policies is the tendency to rely on long and throughout negotiations in the policy-making process and the process itself is characterised by a compromises which are supposed to produce happy consensus but all too often leave all the participants unsatisfied. When policies then are announced it is difficult to make any adjustments. The Japanese public administration (and sometimes even the large private corporations) provides a wealth of examples of megalomaniac projects, which are kept alive even after no one seems to have a clear idea of the original or present aims of the project. With so many foreign counterparts the “normal “ Japanese practice may easily turn to something very different. The Diplomatic Yearbook 2000 explains the Japanese approach to solving the global environmental problems in the following manner: “Views on the content and extent of

environment-related efforts also frequently differ even among the developed countries. In resolving global environmental issues, it will therefore be indispensable to coordinate the different positions and persist with negotiations until agreement can be reached" (*The Diplomatic Yearbook* 2000: 107). This "traditional Japanese" approach hardly demonstrates any leadership role and if the formula of endless consensus-seeking with all the legitimate actors is used in dealing with the global environmental problems the result is that there can never be any significant agreements. The Japanese negotiation style in the issue of global warming and in the series of conferences related to the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change has in many ways been reminiscent of the Diplomatic Yearbook description: Japan has tried to coordinate the views and served as the host for the Kyôto 1997 COP3 conference, but at the same time the negotiation position of the Japanese government has been one of the most environment-hostile. The Kyôto Protocol demonstrated the unwillingness of the Japanese government to make significant contributions to slow down the climate change and by doing so reflected the positions of various Japanese ministries which were primarily concerned with narrow interests of specific industries. Furthermore, the Kyôto Protocol in its attempt to produce some kind of consensus was made so hollow that the whole process came close to a collapse in the COP6 meeting in The Hague in November 2000, when it became clear that after all there was no consensus in the key concepts of the Kyôto Protocol, such as the role of forests as "sinks" and the idea of trading greenhouse gas reductions. Despite all its weaknesses the Kyôto Protocol was able to produce a mechanism that would have restricted the growth of emissions. Furthermore, the international process that culminated to the protocol raised the awareness of public, politicians and civil servants on the issue. In short, the abrupt decision by the U.S. President to walk away from the treaty by referring to the national economic interests was nothing short of unbelievable.

More generally, hiding behind the UN efforts that on the surface illustrate a widely spread global concern on the environment can easily be used as an excuse for inactivity: there is always another UN member country, which has a less impressive environmental record and less willingness to commit itself to environmental action, and the same applies to most area-specific agreements and conventions, as well. For Japanese foreign policy the United Nations is still viewed as the body that represents the whole world and the two-layer organisation of the United Nations is all too visible reminder of the inequality that is still part of the world system. The United Nations may be ineffective in many of its tasks, but at least it has standing ranking list of the nations — the United Nations Security Council. In the case of Japan, like in many others, it is obvious that the main motive for joining the Security Council is the one of national prestige. The official foreign policy is emphasising the Japanese capacity and willingness to assume global responsibilities and the need of Security Council members to be more active in economic and social areas in addition to the previously important political and security areas (*The Diplomatic Yearbook* 2000: 53-54). In addition, Prime Minister Mori has boldly claimed in January 2001 that there is a general dissatisfaction among Japanese people over the UN's failure to give Japan a permanent seat on the Security Council although Japan has steadily contributed financially to the UN (<http://www.asahi.com/english/asahi/0124/asahi012405.html>). Of course, it can be

doubted whether the Japanese people are so eager to have their country to join the UN Security Council, especially if the seat is seen to be bought by the Japanese tax payers' money. Japan, of course, is not prepared to send its troops to die in vain in all the conflicts of the world and it is already now contributing to the UN organisations economically as much as can reasonably be expected from one nation. In short, a substantially more active Japanese UN participation is unlikely even if Japan is given the seat that the government and nationalistic politicians so much want. The official Japan wants to keep the inequality as the basic feature of the UN system and sees herself entitled for a role among the "greater powers". However, there may lay some truth in the claim that Japan would be willing to promote wider dialogue within the United Nations members and would work in good faith with international organisations in order to establish agreements and find compromises — much more so than some of the present United Nations Security Council members.

Power still comes from below, although there can be a considerable time lag, and power relations permeate the whole social body and international relations. The economic "might" of Japan with all its consequences is a fact with which the Japanese as well as the rest of the world has to live. It may cause fear among some, but it is also a sign of hope for many, and it can be used and has been used as a tool of Japanese foreign policy. In all concerns, for instance, Japan's co-operation/ aid programme, including environmental aid, is far from free of political considerations: new Japanese activities are already changing the regional system and all its power relations. The question asked in most other East Asian countries has been whether Japan remains committed to help its neighbours when the wealth and development gap between them narrows down. The recent moves in Japan to cut its ODA have been accompanied by worries that Japan may be on its way to radically reassess its aid diplomacy. After all, the ODA has never enjoyed wholehearted support among the Japanese population and much of the domestic discussion has been related to the abuse and waste that has accompanied the ODA. In fact, the popular support for the ODA has most recently been in further decline. Currently only some 23% of the respondents seem to be supporting the ODA (*Daily Yomiuri*, 22 January, 2001: 2). Many cite the nation's own economic problems as the reason for their lack of willingness. It also seems that the Japanese government's food aid to North Korea is very unpopular among the population and possibility that the ODA ends up in North Korea and to a government that is seen to have kidnapped Japanese nationals and poses a direct military threat is contributing to further waning of enthusiasm for the ODA in Japan.

Another long-term issue is the position of China in Japanese ODA. The Japanese foreign policy has since the normalisation of relations with China tried to promote stability and economic development/ modernisation in China. It can be argued that the Japanese assistance and the role of the Japanese technology have been indispensable in the modernisation of Chinese economy. However, the Chinese economy has been able to narrow some of the wide gap with the Japanese one while the political sector has remained closed. In short, the Japanese perceptions of China are gradually changing. China may get more affluent and at the same time more nationalistic. That kind of China would be a difficult partner for Japanese foreign policy. Already

now many people in Japan are asking the question why China has remained among the largest recipients of Japanese aid although it has become a serious rival to Japanese economy, maintains huge military forces, possesses nuclear weapons, has obvious problems with human rights, shows little gratitude for past assistance and is a donor itself. It is difficult to provide easy answers to these questions and the Chinese aid clearly has potential of turning many Japanese people against the ODA, in general. The stated purpose of Japanese aid to China was to support stability and economic development, but another goal has always been to build friendlier relations with China and make it an easier neighbour for Japan.

The Japanese foreign policy liturgy has clearly discredited the use of (openly) *repressive power* in international relations and creates a picture of a world and an Asia where power relations have a more *emancipatory* nature. However, it remains unclear what kind regional system is after all emerging in East Asia and specifically what region we really are talking about and which actors are going to be the significant ones. It is much easier to preach the emancipation of potential if the others are much weaker and pose no real danger.

Nevertheless, in a contradiction to the emancipatory ideals and orientations behind Japanese policies one can see clear signs of the emergence of the old type of militarism, and some researchers predict that Japan is already on its way to playing a much greater military role, probably in the shadow of the United Nations. The new Republican administration in the United States will most likely ask Japan to play a more visible military role in the region and the easiest way to achieve that goal would be to widen the Japanese participation in the United Nations Peace Keeping Operations. Naturally a rise of Japanese militarism or imperialism would threaten the emancipatory power relations which have been formed. This is the political choice that the Japanese people will have to make, and judging from the social discourses in Japan, I remain quite optimistic that the basic policy orientation of more or less omnidirectional constructive foreign policy will continue and Japanese foreign policy and diplomacy will grow even more multilateral and diversified in its nature. However, the most significant threats to this kind of peaceful scenario are 1) major regional military crises (most notably in the Korean Peninsula, 2) Chinese foreign policy becoming more aggressive and turning against Japan, and 3) continued inability of Japanese government to take more decisive measures to fix the structural problems of economy with a possibility of serious economic crisis of domestic making in Japan. Any of the three aforementioned scenarios would rapidly change the regional status quo and with it the Japanese foreign policy. However, the risks should be clear to everyone and therefore we should treat all these scenarios as highly unlikely. Since the policy-makers are so concerned with the "traditional" type of risk scenarios they seem to have little time for something like the global environmental problems. Everything global and especially everything related to large multinational organisations is often regarded by the foreign policy decision-makers as "idealistic", less urgent and too far from the reality.

Omnidirectional foreign policy (*zenhōi gaikō*) was often used in the late 1970s and the early 1980s as the official characterisation of the "equidistantial" Japanese foreign policy and the idea was that Japan tries to maintain good and peaceful relations to all countries, even if the world is

plagued with all kinds of divisions. The term 'multilateral foreign policy' (*takakuteki gaikô*) also became widely used in Japan in the 1970s when China and South Korea had become major partners in Japanese foreign policy and the relations with the South East Asian countries were strengthening. ODA, the North-South relations and United Nations policy became a major issue in Japanese foreign policy, and, for instance, in Europe the German question demanded intense attention be paid to the diplomacy vis à vis the Germanies. The emergence of the European Union as a major player in foreign policy has contributed to the sense of "trilateralism" in all the affected parts of affluent industrialised parts of the world, Europe, Japan and the United States (+ Canada), but it remains a fact that the link between Japan and Europe is the weakest of all the three and that "trilateralism" often is as hollow as many of the G-8 (and G-7) meetings. However, the European integration and, in particular, the launch of Euro has contributed a sense in Japan, that the Japanese foreign policy must turn more global and multilateral.

Takakuteki gaikô' was contrasted with the earlier situation when the relations with the United States did not leave much room for multilateral relations and in this way '*takakuteki gaikô*' in Japan came to be strongly associated with a certain historical period when Japanese relations with the rest of the world diversified and Japan was supposed to have a more active role in international politics. The multilateralism of the Japanese foreign policy was directly related with the increasing foreign aid. The increased multilateralism apparently also helped to change the nature of Japanese ODA from being tied to the economic objectives of Japan and wider political and strategic objectives of the United States to a policy with a great diversity of objectives, covering also the environment (Cf. Yasumoto 1995). The direct participation in ODA projects in most parts of the world has brought better knowledge about contemporary global problems to a fair number of Japanese specialists. The hidden objectives of the Japanese politicians may be far more narrow than the officially stated ones, but it is important to recognise that the years of Japan being the top donor country in terms of ODA have created a new class of specialists and bureaucrats who are far better accustomed in dealing with a great diversity of societies and political conditions.

From the point of view of Japanese foreign policy, it was only with the changes in the relationships between the USA, Russia and the Western European countries, that the foreign policy paradigms of Japan started to change to give Asia and the Asia-Pacific region a much more important role in Japanese foreign policy and diplomacy (Cf. Watanabe 1997: 18-23). In short, the original motive for a change was simply a feeling of being left outside. Japanese diplomacy is still characterised by being rather reactionary in its nature, and cautious in making too many commitments. While gradually shifting the focus of Japanese diplomacy toward the rest of Asia, it has remained clear that given the global reach of Japanese economic and other interests, it is most unlikely that Japan will push for any kind of exclusive economic or political zone in Asia (Cf. Unger 1993: 163-166). However, regional multilateral and bilateral cooperation and ODA activities have provided ample tools to stress new priorities and contribute to a better future in most Asian societies; nowadays at least the volume of Japanese ODA is so large that it will have visible effects and is bound to be noticed in most of the recipient societies. Even if

Japanese ODA has not been able to win wide gratitude for the Japanese in the developing world, at least it has brought a new type of acceptability for Japan within the Asian community.

The sheer magnitude of Japanese economic and political presence in Asia and the other parts of world has changed the world power relations, no matter how 'soft' these forms of power may be. Some researchers point out that it is often difficult to even recognise Japanese manifestations of power because those do not correspond to traditional notions of power, especially the forms of military power (Drifte 1996: 85-92). For me it seems like it greatly improves the efficacy and general image of the Japanese diplomacy if there still is a widespread belief that the Japanese prefer to use 'softer' methods than some other countries. Furthermore, there seem to be situations in international relations where the economic power and influence is the only kind of power which has some use, and even it may prove to be insufficient. With such tasks as persuading the present Indian government to give up its determination to escalate nuclear rivalry and the government of Pakistan to idly observe this to happen, it is hard to say which of the two, Japan or the United States, have been more efficient. As for the definition of the positive role that Japan has been playing in general in world affairs in the 1990s, I find most accurate the term 'facilitator', used by Shibusawa, Ahmad and Bridges (1992: 123-142). By serving its role as facilitator of peaceful change and development Japan can help to create more cooperative kind of power relationships and encourage the emergence of emancipatory forms of power.

However, when it comes to the more constructive global and regional role for Japan in the future world much of the discussion in Japan has too often been overshadowed by the rather narrow domestic concerns related to these issues. Ronald Dore points out that in the early 1990s it was the nationalists, preoccupied with power and prestige, who were the most vocal supporters of high profile Japanese participation in the building of a United Nations based security system and many of the people most prone to have internationalist ideas were so fixated on defence of the Peace Constitution that they saw embarking on peacekeeping as yet one more concession to American attempts to subvert it (Dore 1997: xv). Many Western researchers are quick to point out in these days that without a perception of common threat, there is more scope for Japan and the United States to pursue security policies independently of each other (See e.g. McDougal 1997: 72). As for the United Nations it seems like virtually no one in Japan is in favour of so called "super-Scandinavian" option (term taken from Dore) - making Japan the champion of the UN. Therefore it seems likely that much of the future regional policies of Japan will continue to be rather conservative and cautious, and largely confined to bilateral relations between nation states. In addition we have the sub-regional level where the collapse of the Cold War system has created more room for new alternative ways to link countries and national regions across boundaries. However, even at the sub-regional level the legacy of Japanese imperialism tends to cast a shadow over most attempts to deepen relationships with its neighbours (which of course would make the best candidates for sub-regional partners) (Cf. Hook 1996: 21-24). The great disparities in wealth between Japan and the other East Asian countries easily make all sub-regional links appear rather asymmetrical in their nature.

To sum up the development of the emancipatory elements in Japanese foreign policy I want to

distinguish between the periods of omnidirectional foreign policy and multilateral foreign policy. During the omnidirectional foreign policy Japan tried to be friendly with almost everyone and while still hiding behind the United States and regarded its political passivity often the best what it could do to help other countries, and especially other Asian countries, to develop their own societies. Under the multilateral foreign policy Japan has adopted a more active role and has been given significant assistance to those countries that have made efforts to show their friendliness to Japan and responsiveness to the new priorities of Japanese aid diplomacy. The diversity of the Japanese foreign policy objectives should have made it reasonably easy for most countries to deal with Japan and since the Japanese foreign policy objectives reflect the severity of various global problems, there is a lot to do. For most developing countries Japan has been one of the least selfish of the wealthy industrialised countries and there is, indeed, a slow shift toward more environment-friendly and human-development-concerned aid diplomacy. At the special session of the UN General Assembly in 1997, Prime Minister Hashimoto summed up the new more environment-conscious priorities of Japanese ODA by explaining the content of the Japanese “initiatives for sustainable development” as being based on the principles of “promotion of human security”, “ownership” (self-help efforts of developing countries) and “environmental cooperation toward sustainable development” (Matsushita 2000: 18). This mixed bag of principles apparently is intended to win the wider support of recipient governments and all the other partners, which are needed to make the ODA efficient. These principles show a clear respect for the recipient governments and their own policies/priorities. The “sustainability” in these principles seems to be subject to other anthropocentric objectives. Human security is a convenient term, which clearly includes meeting the “basic needs” of people but may also be interpreted as a reference to human rights and to the issues of social and political rights in other societies. The underlying assumption seems to be that the “sustainable development” should be achieved together with “human security” and “ownership” and that usually there is no conflict between these principles or priorities. No matter what is the real content of Japanese response to global environmental problems, it seems to be the most popular of the Japanese international contributions among the Japanese survey respondents. Some authors have pointed out that the strong support of international environmental efforts reflects the thinking that Japan should contribute only to “low politics” and avoid getting involved in “high politics” and military/security issues and that the support is, in fact, a sign of ambivalent or reluctant attitude toward internationalisation (Itoh 2000: 38-42). There can be some truth in that interpretation, but I would consider it as a positive sign that the Japanese people identify environmental cooperation as the field where Japan could most easily contribute to global governance.

Not all Japanese foreign policy is dealing with the issues of changing global constellations and high principles. With some countries there are historical problems, which make it difficult to have meaningful cooperation, including the environmental aid and other forms of constructive cooperation. It may even be argued that the Japanese foreign policy has never had a chance of being truly omnidirectional — with some countries no diplomatic jargon has been able to hide the lack of trust and respect. In particular, Russian Federation with the absence of peace treaty

and its reluctance to give up the islands that Soviet Union occupied during the last days of the World War II has together with North Korea become the anomalies and exceptions of Japanese foreign policy. From Japanese point of view Russia can be regarded as a country that is by military force occupying part of Japanese soil. The Russian lack of respect for the human rights and rights of national self-determination of its own people, such as the Chechens, further damages the chances for cooperation. Russia has inherited much of the bad reputation of the Soviet Union in Japan. There may be countries in the world that have even more repressive governments than the Russian one, but Russia is still seen as more dangerous and imperialistic since it's large territorial possessions in Asia are a result of historically fairly recent expansion. In short, the foundation for the bad relations with Russia was laid already during the Meiji period and the issue of the Northern Territories has left little room for the Japanese foreign policy to build more constructive relationship with the Russians. The ideas of emancipatory foreign policy seem to be difficult to apply to governments, which are seen to represent an open use of repressive power and the type of politics and international relations that existed before the time of globalisation. The Japanese politicians may have difficult time embracing the changing realities of contemporary world system, but judging from the state of economy, politics and environment in Russia, the same applies to the Russian politicians even at a greater scale.

4. Japanese Global Environmental Co-operation and Domestic Discourses on Environmental Protection/Conservation

In environmental protection Japanese governments through ODA have taken an active role in launching many projects in this field as it has been realised that ODA often provides the only tool with which Japan can mitigate the environmental damage caused by economic activity. As Japanese companies have often been involved in activities which have destroyed nature especially in Southeast Asia, the Japanese government obviously has also wanted to save the Japanese reputation by being active in environmental ODA, even when the aid recipient governments have been less than enthusiastic in environmental protection. It has to be remembered that most other East Asian countries have even a stronger belief in the benefits of rapid economic growth than Japan has. It is quite telling that after the financial crisis hit East Asia in 1997 the government of Thailand was quick to slash its environment-related budget (Matsushita 2000: 16).

Internationally Japan is perhaps most widely criticised for the "scientific whaling", driftnet fishing and import of timber from Southeast Asian tropical forests. Especially in the whaling issue the whole question has become some kind of diplomatic prestige issue as successive Japanese governments, like Norwegian governments, have raised the issue of protection of local cultures and traditions. Whale killing is not necessarily a particularly important part of Japanese culture and its traditions are not always that long. In any case the modern whaling with modern weapons has very little to do with the old type of coastal whaling and the arguments that uses the "traditions" usually is just one more excuse to withdraw from global efforts. Interpreting of cultural meanings and differences is both in Japan and Norway done in the whaling issue in ways

which politically simply serve nationalistic purposes and have indeed become issues of national prestige. Economically whaling is less important and it can be doubted that Japanese ordinary people have very strong opinions on the issue itself. The diplomatic pressure and foreign pressure attached to this issue has developed to an issue itself. Some foreign environmental organisations have even campaigned against giving a permanent United Nations Security Council seat to Japan on the basis of Japan's whaling.

Reinhard Drifte identifies the foreign criticism of the ecological consequences of Japanese economic activities and the realisation of the trans-boundary pollution from China and South Korea as the reasons for Japan's new activity in the field of global environmental cooperation (Drifte 1998: 123-124). The foreign pressure may once again be important in the Japanese foreign policy decision-making, but I would argue that there are quite a few individuals in the Japanese decision-making elite, who are aware of the magnitude of global environmental problems. For these people spending on environmental aid is less wasteful than many other more conventional forms of spending money and the foreign pressure can be convenient to support their argument. In addition, most people who have dealt with environmental problems and are familiar with the rapidly worsening situation in East Asia know very well that in the future vast amounts of money need to be spent on environment and that in most cases it would be much cheaper to take decisive action before things get much worse.

The Japanese ODA has after some delays institutionalised the environmental impact assessment and in Japan the so-called advanced environmental technology has been applied in many development projects. Some Japanese researchers are, in fact, concerned that there are problems when the most advanced environmental technology is being applied in ODA projects when the general infrastructure is not commensurate with that technology and the real purpose of the assistance is once again to support the Japanese industry. Some of the money designated for environmental ODA is spent on training foreign environmental researchers, officials and administrators in Japan and the idea is very much to spread the latest Japanese know-how to other countries. At least some of the more advanced Japanese practices and technologies have a positive impact on environment. For instance, Thailand has engaged with Japan in the most developed long-term environmental training programme (including dispatch of Japanese experts, acceptance of Thai trainees and the provision of equipment and materials) and Japanese grant aid was already used after 1983 to establish the Environmental Training and Research Center in Thailand. A similar centre was established in Indonesia in 1993 and in China in 1995. Japanese aid has also greatly contributed to the development of environmental information gathering systems in developing countries. Soon after Japan started to emphasise environment in its aid diplomacy the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, JICA and OECF conducted environmental surveys and draw up the environmental profiles of most key countries of Japanese aid.

In addition, there have been quite a few wider large-scale environmental studies, often in cooperation with foreign counterparts, aimed at generating data for the formulation of comprehensive plans to control environmental problems in specific locations, such as the city of Bangkok in Thailand and Liuzhou in China. In short, the Japanese aid has added to the

knowledge of environmental problems and since this information is often generated by the Japanese researchers/administrators it is readily usable for the Japanese ODA decision-making. As for the actual aid projects that are aimed at contributing to the preservation and improvement of environment, Japan has defined as such the improvement of community environment (such as the improvement of water supply, sewer systems and waste management systems), the preservation of forests and reforestation, the prevention of disasters, pollution control and the conservation of natural environment. The share of the community environment (or living environment) has in terms of used funds been more than the others together and second most costly has been fight against pollution. The share of the natural conservation and biodiversity-related projects has remained negligible and the actual content of Japan's environmental aid tells once again about the anthropocentric priorities, which should be no surprise since the ODA tends to reflect the domestic policies and values of the donor countries. It should also be remembered that Japan has on the top of its bilateral environmental aid steadily contributed to the multilateral efforts, especially to the UN-led, to heal the global environmental problems and the most important international organisation that has received Japanese support is obviously the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) (on the development of Japanese environmental ODA, see Japan's ODA. Annual Report 1993: 173-191 and Japan's Official Development Assistance. Annual Report 1995: 183-197).

The community environment- related projects have been the main item of the ODA programmes of many countries already well before the "awakening" to environmental problems. In Japanese case the emphasis on community environment may help to steer the ODA away from large-scale infrastructure projects, which have proved to be prone to cause environmental destruction and embarrassing questions about political and business connections. In any case, the community environment- related projects are in most cases based on the similar type of technocratic knowledge, skills and management that has served the Japanese ODA programmes from their beginning and therefore the biggest change may sometimes occur in liturgy rather than actual work. The emphasis on preservation of forests is more interesting since the Japanese economic activities (especially the pulp and paper industry, construction & building and the processes of making concrete and concrete panels, and to a lesser degree the use of disposable chopsticks) consume tropical timber from Southeast Asia and also domestic timber in great quantities and can be seen directly responsible for much of the deforestation. Japanese ODA has now for many years included several forestation projects although their scale is still small compared with the damage created to the foreign forests by Japanese economic activities (on the Japanese role in the politics of timber in Southeast Asia, Dauvergne 1997 and about the destruction of tropical rain forests of Southeast Asia, Yamada 1997).

Obviously the Japanese side has believed that Japan can contribute much to the sustainable forestry in Asia, and again draw on Japan's own considerable experience with forestry. The problems of tropical forestry tend to be different from those in Japan and it can be questioned whether the Japanese companies really have the best knowledge to deal with the specific problems of Southeast Asian forestry. Some of the Japanese paper and pulp companies are

among the most efficient in the world (such as the Ôji Paper) and from the business point of view they are a subject of envy to many non-Japanese companies. However, their own environmental record is not the best possible and the Japanese government has this far regarded the industrial pollution as the most urgent task and respectively it has forced the paper and pulp industry to adopt much stricter measures to treat their wastes — with a considerable improvement in the quality of nation's water resources. In spite of these successes with the fight against pollution the industry has shown little interest to take measures to protect the biodiversity or to accept a more comprehensive responsibility on the state of forests.

In some international environmental issues there is a direct link with the state of environment in Japan and Japan has also good reason to be active to protect its own environment and people. It is clear to anyone that for instance the global warming has major impact to Japan and that much of the carbodioxide emissions will originate in the East Asian region where rapid economic growth continues and governments are often reluctant to cut the emissions of their industry. The marine pollution and depletion of fish stocks in the region hit hard a nation, which is among the heaviest consumers of fish and seafood. The size of China's economy and its environmental problems create a global problem, which is all the time getting worse. China's pollution is also a regional problem and Japan has probably the only government in the region that can have a major impact on China's environmental policy. China's economy, for instance, annually pumps to air estimated 20 million tons of sulphur oxides or about 20 times the amount generated by Japan and Japanese authorities feel quite powerless to fight against acid rain in Japan when much of the emissions originate in China (and other East Asian countries). China depends heavily on the use of low-grade coal as its energy source and much of that coal is burned inefficiently and without the use of adequate desulfurisation equipment. Of course, the consequences of acid rain and air pollution hit hardest the Chinese people and air pollution of most big cities in China clearly poses a major health risk to human population. Japanese government has had some of its best successes in environmental policy in its measures to fight against air pollution (for the situation of air pollution in Japan, *Kankyô hakusho, kakuron* 2000: 1-66).

At the same time also European and North American countries have witnessed a marked improvement or end of deterioration in the quality of air. On the contrary the antropogenic emissions of sulfur oxides have rapidly increased in East Asia and together with other emissions have already made the East Asia the worst air polluter in the world. Now the concentrations of sulfate aerosol in air are often as high above remote islands of Okinawa as they are above Japan's largest urban centres due to Chinese sulfur dioxide emissions. The Japanese government has through the MITI and various research organisations supported cooperative research with the Chinese and other East Asian partners on acid rain. The most ambitious initiative is the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET) launched by the Japan's Environment Agency in 1998 and which now has cooperation in ten different countries. EANET provides technical assistance in monitoring and collection of data and tries to establish uniform monitoring data (see e.g. Matsushita 2000: 17-18 and Tanaka 2000: 32-33). However, the problem remains and the Chinese government must be aware of the gravity of their air pollution

problem, which is literally visible in such cities as Beijing.

In spite of all the good intentions of the Japanese environmental ODA, it is obvious that Japanese ODA has not met the highest criteria for ecologically sound behaviour in most regions of Asia, not to mention the role of overall Japan's economic activities in the world. Japan's ODA in the Pacific Asia region has, as it is described in the ODA Charter of 1992, rather been "a support for self-help efforts of developing countries toward economic take-off" than a force to move towards sustainable development in the region (Japan's Official Development Assistance. Annual Report 1995: 253). It still remains to be seen whether it ever will be possible to combine both these goals. For most successful industrial states of Pacific Asia, including Japan, it will be very difficult to modify substantially their culture to enable it to more or less conform to the principles of sustainable growth.

However, there is still some cause for optimism since various Japanese private corporations have more or less voluntarily adopted the cause of environmentalism and are actively trying to benefit from their new environment friendly image at home as well as abroad. For instance, the Canon Corporation bases many of its highly visible advertisement campaigns on environmental themes, which include quite a lot critical information on environmental destruction, as well. Some companies, such as the Ricoh Corporation, have very ambitious environmental plans and have provided resources for a wide range of environmental activities. As a result the Ricoh Corporation has won several domestic and international environment-related awards (for the environmental report of the Ricoh Corporation, <http://www.ricoh.co.jp/ecology/e-report/index.html>). These kind of globalised Japanese corporations seem to be fully aware of the need to build up their environmentalist credentials in order to appeal to the tastes of a significant segment of their customers. In this case the laws of the market are contributing to more environment conscious business practices.

When it comes to the Japanese environmental NGOs, those tend to be focused on local environmental issues. On local level the environmental issues can occasionally become the focus of all politics, as has taken place in the whole Yoshinogawa River basin area. On the contrary, the membership figures for most Japanese national environmental organisations tend to be modest and most are too weak to have significant independent role outside Japan (and sometimes even within Japan). That reflects the difficulties that also many other Japanese NGOs have in securing their financial and organisational maturity. It is also deplorable that the Japanese authorities have most of the time been reluctant and unprepared to cooperate with environmental NGOs. That lack of cooperation has certainly harmed the more balanced development of Japanese global environmental activities. Many of the people who are responsible for the official Japanese environmental cooperation are displaying the traditional attitudes and behaviour of Japanese civil servants rather than enthusiasm and environmental consciousness that would be needed to convince their foreign partners of their sincerity and good intentions.

In Japan in 2000 it became known that a Foreign Ministry official, Matsuo Katsutoshi, had embezzled government funds and used them to buy racehorses (at least 15 of them) and houses to his various mistresses. The scandal confirmed all the rumours about the 'widespread use of

“confidential” funds for entertainment and other inappropriate purposes among Japanese diplomats themselves. The former Minister of Foreign Affairs Kôno Yôhei gave statements supporting the lack of transparency and saying that “confidentiality” is key element of the use of the funds in the Ministry. In short, the Foreign Ministry strengthened its image of old type of elitist and arrogant diplomacy that is removed from the realities of Japanese citizens and global problems alike. The 3.65 billion yen in “confidential funds” that is annually allocated to the Japanese diplomats around the world is not that large in the context of overall spending of the Ministry and since the salaries of the Japanese central government civil servants tend to be relatively low it has helped to make the diplomats happier with their life, although the funds have been distributed most unevenly and unfairly.

However, the latest scandal has potential to question the role of Foreign Ministry in the foreign policy formulation. The globalisation has already diminished the role of central government in many policy fields, especially in economic policies. For the Japanese Foreign Ministry the latest scandal was most unfortunate since it calls into question the “expertise” and working methods of the Ministry and possibly opens a way for the other envious bureaucrats to widen their turf. A truly emancipatory foreign policy would, of course, be based on people’s power and close participation of the whole society. In Japan, the island country mentality has made it easier for small elite to control foreign policy but the growing disillusionment with central government and politicians may translate to “democratisation” of policy-making. In domestic environmental controversies the citizens/ community members (*shimin*) have organised themselves with great efficiency and the environmental movements themselves have given new meaning to the whole concept of ‘*shimin*’ (Cf. Kitô 1999: 10-26). The current Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tanaka Makiko, understood well how disillusioned the Japanese public is about the arrogance of their diplomatic representatives. When the Ministry officials turned against their new outspoken minister it made Ms. Tanaka as popular as Mr. Koizumi and greatly contributed to the reformist image of the Cabinet. In short, Minister Tanaka did not have to do much to build up independent political support that has very few precedents in her Ministry.

To conclude about the recent changes in Japanese foreign policy, I am optimistic that since the current decision-making system of Japan is based on the close interaction of conservative politicians, top bureaucrats and narrow interests of part of business sector, any kind of change in the direction of democratisation apparently would serve the cause of environment, although it remains highly likely that anthropocentric ideologies in their different forms will continue to be strong in Japan for the foreseeable future.

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