

## **JAPANESE FOREIGN AID, AN EFFECTIVE TOOL TO INFLUENCE NORTH KOREA?**

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### *Abstract:*

Peace building and peace preservation are new key concepts in Japanese foreign aid policy. According to the revision of the ODA charter in 2003, the objective of Japan's ODA is to contribute to peace and the development of the international community, and thereby to help ensure Japan's own security and prosperity--"Japan aspires for world peace. Actively promoting the aforementioned effort with ODA" that Japan will carry out "even more strategically" in the future. Asia and especially East Asia is pointed out as a priority region. North Korea, with whom Japan has not yet normalised its relations, is one of Japan's closest neighbours and would, from a logical point of view, then seem like an important starting point.

Why isn't aid provided to North Korea then? The truth is that aid is a very complex issue and not giving is often regarded as effective as giving, when it comes to getting concessions and changes in the recipients' policy behaviour. It is used both as a carrot and a stick. Aid is always envisioned as something quite plausible, if North Korean policy behaviour is changed for the better according to Japanese judgement (so called positive aid sanction); but aid is never paid out and remains an illusion as long as it does not change (negative sanction). But the question for Japan is more complex than this. There are various domestic opinions and interests groups that have to be taken into consideration and there is also foreign pressure at work.

Keeping all these factors in mind, this paper questions if Japanese foreign aid is an effective tool to influence North Korean policy behaviour. Has it ever led to a change of behaviour? Has it contributed to peace and stability in the area in any way?