

subscription for the movement. He even visited India and inspected several refugee camps.<sup>8</sup> As opines Anwarul Karim, "he has done what we, as Bengalis, couldn't do. I've rarely come across such an ardent champion of humanity."<sup>9</sup> Few other persons' contributions must also be mentioned here:

Yasushi Chiba, Associate Professor of Nuclear Physics, Tokyo University of Technology and Supervisor of Shorinji Kenpo Sport Club in the University. By his persuasion many students of Tokyo University of Technology joined JBFA as members who worked hard for street campaign and relief works. He also delivered lectures at the Headquarters of Shorinji Kenpo Association in Japan and influenced many members of the said Association to help Bangladesh Refugees.<sup>10</sup>

Tatsuko Ikeda, a salaried woman and active member of the 'Japan Socialist Party', used to stand on the street for fund raising and to visit her friends and neighbours to contribute money and clothes for Bangladesh refugees. Persuaded Busho Gonenkai to come forward to cooperate with JBFA in collecting relief goods, money.

Shinkichi Taniguchi, a student in 1971, now Professor, Department of Economics, Hitotsubashi University told:

"I with several other students who attended the beginners' course of Bengali language organized by the Institute of Language and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Languages, held meetings and collected money and clothes to be sent to the refugees in India. We once or twice went to Shinjuku Station and asked for the passengers to make small donations. We also published a series of small pamphlets under the name of "Friends of Bangladesh" in Japanese. We translated relevant news from Indian and European sources into Japanese and published them in these leaflets. The initiative of these activities came from Dr. T. Nara who taught us Bengali at the above mentioned beginners course."<sup>11</sup>

Tomio Mizokami, Professor, South Asian Studies, Osaka University of Foreign Studies worked for the cause of Bangladesh.

He wrote articles for the Mainichi Shimbun (Japanese) criticizing it. In this regards *The Tribune* wrote:

A Professor of Foreign Studies at Osaka University writing in "Mainichi Shimbun" today took the Pakistani Ambassador here to task for describing what was happening in East Bengal as an "internal matter" of Pakistan.

He also criticized the Ambassador for his failure to refer in his interview with the Editor of the paper to the genocide being practised in Bangla Desh.

Prof. Tomio Mizokami, who was replying to the Pakistani envoy's interview with the Editor of 'Mainichi' a week earlier, said it certainly was the Ambassador's duty to convey his Government's views. But it should be equally his duty to tell his Government what the Japanese people thought about his country's action.

The Pakistani Ambassador said what was happening in East Bengal was an "internal affair to be best settled by the Pakistanis themselves" and also charged India with "interfering in Pakistan's affair".

Refuting the charge of Indian interference, the Indian Embassy today in an official denial (also carried in "Mainichi Shimbun") said: "The Government of India has stated categorically and repeatedly that India has not supplied arms or ammunition to the people of East Bengal. The allegations by the Pakistani Ambassador, therefore, are baseless and mischievous".

The Embassy statement further said the Pakistani Ambassador could not but be aware of the atrocities being committed by the West Pakistani troops against the people of East Bengal. "The genocide that is going on in the unfortunate country has been testified by numerous independent and impartial observers".

The Japanese Professor in his letter to "Mainichi" said: "We have the least idea of interfering in the domestic affairs of Pakistan. But since the present matter concerns humanism, we cannot keep quiet.

"Ambassador, you did not explain about the genocide in East Bengal perpetrated by your Government's Army. It is

this very thing about which we are so concerned". The Professor said: "When East Bengal suffered a devastating cyclone last year, your Government did not lose time to ask for foreign aid. Did you then reject foreign 'interference' on the ground that the cyclone was a domestic issue?"<sup>12</sup>

In this connection we should also mention the contributions of Lt. Gen. Fujiwara, an associate of the legendary Indian leader Shubhash Chandra Bose. He was very much active in creating a public opinion in favour of Bangladesh and to gain the support of the Japanese government.<sup>13</sup> Eminent journalist K. V. Narain, Indian Prof. Ashok Sarker also contributed in gaining the support of Japanese public. In a program held at the Seminar Hall of Keio University, the passionate speeches of Ashok Sarker, K. V. Narain and Prof. Nara greatly moved the congregation.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, intellectuals, students, employees, political leaders, religious institutions, that is people from all walks of life in Japan stood by the people of Bangladesh.

### **B. Bengalis in Japan**

Only a handful few Bengalis of East Bengal were residing in Japan. In Tokyo the number was below 25. All of them were either students or trainees. Although numerically rather insignificant, their contribution to the Liberation Movement was praiseworthy. They were also ably aided by Bengalis of West Bengal.<sup>1</sup> According to Prof. Nara, not only the people of West Bengal but all the Indians residing in Japan at that time tendered their whole support to the Bangladesh movement.<sup>2</sup>

After learning about the brutal genocide of the Pak army and the brave armed resistance of the Bengalis, those Bengali students on 26th March, congregated at the 'Komaba Foreign Student House' and by forming the 'Bangladesh Association' expressed their whole-hearted support to the movement. In that meeting they decided to communicate with the Japanese press, generated public support for the movement and cabled different government bodies urging them to support Bangladesh. In a resolution they also declared themselves

as citizens of Bangladesh. The joint convenors of this organization were Iskander Ahmed Chowdhury and Momtaz Bhuiya. Aminul Islam was made the representative of the organization. Among others Mustafizur Rahman, Syed Mokbul Murtoza and Anwarul Karim were also present in the meeting. In this connection, a newspaper under the caption "Support Us Say, Tokyo's E. Pakistanis" said:

Students and vocational trainees from East Pakistan in Tokyo decided Sunday to support the current move of the East Pakistanis to secede from Yahya Khan's government.

They cabled many governments urging support for the "People's Republic of Bangla Desh".

In a statement, the East Pakistanis, who call themselves "Bengalis", hailed the declaration of independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and called for world-wide support.

They also urged countries supplying the Yahya Government with weapons to cease deliveries.

They decided to stage a demonstration in Tokyo Monday appealing to citizens here to support their movement.

About 25 youths hailing from East Pakistan are now living in Tokyo as students and trainees.<sup>3</sup>

'Bangladesh Association' organized several seminars highlighting the problems of Bangladesh, which were participated by eminent Japanese journalists and Professors. In this connection, opines Iskander Chowdhury, "under the auspices of the Language-cultural Research Centre of the Foreign Language, University of Tokyo on 'Pakistan Politics and Ittefaq'. I read out the keynote paper as 'I was local correspondent of the leading Bengali Daily from February' 70 to February '71. While commenting on the role of Ittefaq, we also had to include in our discussion the background of the Bangladesh movement.<sup>4</sup>

In October, an international conference on 'The Future of Asia', was held under the auspices of a Korean research organization. In this seminar, Bangladesh, one of the 11 participating nations was