



Article

Abe Shinzo and Value-Oriented Diplomacy: Combining Global Norms and Domestic Ideology

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Abstract

The second Abe Shinzo Cabinet re-introduced value-oriented diplomacy, which was originally set up during the first Abe Cabinet (2006-2007), as Japan's diplomatic doctrine. Value-oriented diplomacy was the foundation of a "free and open Indo-Pacific" during the second Abe Cabinet and continues to be a pillar of the Japanese government's diplomatic approach after Abe. This paper examines how the Abe Cabinet's value-oriented diplomacy has transformed the Japanese government's history policy and how to link it with its change of Asian policies. According to value-oriented diplomacy, the Japanese government emphasizes the significance of democracy and human rights as the core principles of its diplomatic policy. Value-oriented diplomacy is the recent version of Japan's effort to characterize Japan as a global normative leader, emphasizing human security norms. However, in real East Asian international politics, value-oriented diplomacy became a tool for confronting China and North Korea. Although the human security norm was mainly introduced in Japan's diplomatic discourse in the mid-1990s by mild-conservative internationalists or progressives, it was taken over by hawkish conservative political leaders in the 2000s. By linking it with domestic "safety" values, they could transfer the substantial meaning of human security in Japan as an ideological principle for withstanding neighboring countries. This paper will track how Japan's hawkish conservative political leaders could take over the human security norm, which is universally accepted in the democratic world, and mobilize it for the reinforcement of domestic conservative ideology in Japan.

Keywords

Abe Shinzo, Historical Revisionism, Value-Oriented Diplomacy, Japan's Conservatism

Introduction

Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) introduced the "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity (AFP)" as a new pillar of its diplomatic doctrine in 2006. The AFP has two interesting meanings in Japan's diplomatic history. First, it was the nation's statement that it would not be a reactive

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player in diplomacy anymore. Instead, Japan wanted to set up a grand strategy and principle for its diplomacy with the slogan AFP. Second, the AFP drew values such as human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in Japan's diplomacy. Unlike the pragmatic approach in which national interests are closely connected with economic interests, the AFP is an attempt to link values with Japan's national interests. The AFP represents the first Abe Shinzo Cabinet's value-oriented diplomacy. It returned to the nation's diplomatic scene with Abe's return to power in 2012. Value-oriented diplomacy became a cornerstone of the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," which the Japanese government maintained as the centerpiece of its diplomatic orientation during and after the Abe Cabinet era. Abe set up himself as a leader of Japan's value-oriented diplomacy (Hagström & Gustafsson, 2016).

However, Abe was a leader of historical revisionism within the established political groups since the early 1990s. When the Japanese government initiated reconciliation diplomacy in the early 1990s, Abe aggressively criticized its statement on sorrow and apology for its aggression and colonial rule before 1945. He sometimes expressed this stance when asked about an interpretation of Japan's military history (Edström, 2007; Lim, 2019). It is not easy for historical revisionists to accept the norms of democracy and human rights. To them, the nation's military history was an inevitable choice to save Asia from the West. Democracy and human rights could not fit into Japan's particular "glorious and beautiful" cultural system, that is, the nostalgia of historical revisionists (Morris-Suzuki, 2001, pp. 297-305). Therefore, value-oriented diplomacy is not well associated with the visions of historical revisionists.

This paper examines the rise of value-oriented diplomacy in the first Abe Cabinet in the political process of domestic conflicts in Japan's history policy since the 1990s. Therefore, this paper will answer how and why Abe could be a champion of value-oriented diplomacy while revising but not totally abandoning the idea of historical revisionism.

Value-Oriented Diplomacy in International Structural Changes and Domestic Political Competitions

The conventional understanding by the international discipline is that, although value-oriented diplomacy claims no more reactivity in Japan's diplomacy, it is another case of the nation's "reactive state" character (Calder, 1988; Potter & Sueo, 2003). The rise of China provided the need for confrontation with China in the dimension of defense, and the Japanese government has tried to use global values to emphasize the nation's more engaging role in defense (Hughes, 2009; Kingston, 2020; Midford, 2018; Yoshimatsu, 2012). Japan's value-oriented diplomacy is intended to form a kind of democratic coalition, an idea that was explored as part of a initiative for the containment of China's rise.

However, the emergence of value-oriented diplomacy as a response to these international structural changes does not answer the question of what such diplomacy has meant and developed in the country's domestic foreign policy discourse. In particular, further observation is needed on how value-oriented diplomacy, which is significantly deviated from the regional cooperation in East Asia emphasized in Japan's diplomatic initiatives in the 1990s, is justified in the domestic and international discourse space. There are some studies that emphasize the role of domestic policymaking actors in the rise of this type of diplomacy during the first Abe Cabinet (Pugliese, 2017). However, there is a lack of research on how the value-oriented diplomacy of the first Abe Cabinet was linked to domestic political competition over diplomatic orientations. Hosoya (2011, 2013) shows the conflict between a line emphasizing regional cooperation in East Asia and a value-oriented diplomacy line emphasizing cooperation with democratic countries such as the

United States and Australia during the Cabinet in the early 2000s. However, further research is needed on how this is connected to domestic political conflicts, especially the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)'s intra-party politics.

This study analyzes the emergence of value-oriented diplomacy in the first Abe Cabinet in the context of Japan's domestic political process. In doing so, it aims to show that the emergence of such diplomacy is not only a response to international structural changes but also a product of domestic competition over diplomatic orientations. The study of the domestic political process of the rise of value-oriented diplomacy is important because value-oriented diplomacy was represented by Abe, who was a historical revisionist. How did Abe, a historical revisionist, become a champion of value-oriented diplomacy, which emphasizes universal values?

How and why did Abe suggest or accept the values of democracy and human rights, and how did he manage possible friction between different visions of Japan's state image? This study investigates the domestic political environment, policymakers' logic, and the social background of the rise of value-oriented diplomacy. Three related points are argued. First, in the 2000s, the LDP's intra-party political conflicts provided the domestic background for the turn to global norms by historical revisionists. Koizumi's annual regular visits to Yasukuni Shrine paradoxically made a condition to absorb more universal orientations beyond the emphasis on Japan's uniqueness and glory. Second, Abe got help from MOFA's diplomats, who provided a grand diplomatic strategy. The strange mixture of historical revisionism and global norms is a product of cooperation between politicians who wanted to break through the complicated political condition by more easily approved universal discourse and bureaucrats who wanted to have able political leadership that supported the realization of their ideas. Third, the global norms of human security were easily accepted in Japanese society because they were linked with the domestic norms of safety.

Universalistic and Particularistic Diplomatic Orientations in the 1990s

The Conservative Liberals versus the Conservative Rights

The LDP, a conservative party that has dominated postwar Japanese politics, has a history of intra-party divergence on diplomatic orientations. Of course, the Yoshida doctrine, established by Yoshida Shigeru, was a major orientation within the LDP (Pyle, 2007). Yoshida made a diplomatic guideline on restraining remilitarization, maintaining peace constitution, and concentrating national capabilities on economic growth under the U.S.'s defense umbrella. However, even in the 1950s, when Yoshida set up this principle, Hatoyama Ichiro and Kishi Nobusuke, who were rivals in conservative political groups and succeeded the prime minister position after Yoshida, desired the revision or overturn of the Yoshida doctrine. Although they didn't have the idea of getting out of the U.S.'s arms, they proposed establishing more independent diplomacy in Asia and regaining Japan's military power (Edström, 2004).

However, following Kishi's resignation in 1960 after political turmoil on a revision of the U.S.-Japan security alliance, the Yoshida doctrine remained a commanding diplomatic orientation in the 1960s. Ikeda Hayato and Sato Eisaku never longed for a breakaway from the Yoshida doctrine (Iokibe, 2014, Ch. 3). In the 1970s, Japanese political leaders following the Yoshida doctrine quickly changed their China policy in step with the United States. However, some conservative leaders strongly opposed normalization with the People's Republic of China (PRC). The leader of the conservative rights was Fukuda Takeo. However, the Fukuda group never made up the majority in the LDP intra-party faction politics. Ohira Masayoshi and Tanaka

Kakuei, who led groups of conservative liberals favoring the Yoshida doctrine, cooperated on conciliatory diplomacy toward the PRC (Hattori, 2011). In the LDP, the conservative liberals and the conservative rights diverged in diplomatic orientations. The biggest rupture between them emerged from an issue between the PRC and Taiwan in the 1970s (Kawachi, 2009). However, the conservative rights was always a minor group until the 1990s. Even when Nakasone Yasuhiro, who was apparently one of conservative rights, took strong leadership in the 1980s, he could not transform the intra-party power configuration (Kitaoka, 2008).

The end of the Cold War demanded a revision or alternation of the Yoshida doctrine by Japanese politicians. International society's indifference to Japan's role in the first Gulf War was a huge shock to the Japanese leaders. They agreed that Japan should be involved in international affairs, but there were four divergent orientations on how, as Richard Samuels showed (Samuels, 2008). The choice of the conservative liberals was not a significant change from the Yoshida doctrine. Heirs of the Ohira faction, such as Kono Yohei and Kato Koichi, did not prefer remilitarization, which would cause domestic political conflicts. Their orientation was that Japan should get credentials by non-military international contributions. Their method was to use Japan's economic power, such as the ODA. In addition, the conservative liberals conceived that Japan should fit into more universal international norms such as democracy and human rights. Their internationalist orientation continued to be dominant within the LDP since the conservative liberal factions were still the majority in the 1990s. The internationalist orientation was able to get cooperation from progressive political groups since both agreed to keep the peace constitution.

However, there were different orientations. Although Ozawa Ichiro was an heir of the Tanaka faction, a part of the conservative liberals, he argued the necessity of Japan's remilitarization to make international contributions and called it a "normal state." He thought non-military international contributions should be limited. The UN's guidance was his answer to internal and external worries over the nation's military role (Ozawa, 1994). The extreme orientation came from Ishihara Shintaro, who argued for aggressive remilitarization, including nuclear armament, and for having an autonomous position ruptured from the United States. Although there was less sympathy for Ishihara among the established politicians, his orientation showed an authentic version of historical revisionism (Lee, 2012).

Human Security Norm Led by the Conservative Liberals

The biggest achievement of internationalists and progressives in the 1990s was the human security norm. They set ODA as a main method of non-military international contribution and human security as a normative principle.

The concept of human security was introduced in 1994 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The UNDP declared human security because national security was not enough to provide security to individuals. It wished to address the necessity of responding to issues of civil war and starvation in the 1990s. Human security quickly acquired persuasiveness from international society. The like-minded developed countries, which didn't have strong military power, led the diffusion of human security norms (Paris, 2001).

To Japan's internationalists and progressives, the human security norm was a timely and appropriate framework for expanding the nation's international role. Among Japanese leaders, Murayama Tomiichi, the first and last prime minister of the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP), first mentioned the significance of human security in Japan's diplomacy. In 1995, he declared in the UN General Assembly that human security is at the center of Japan's international development policy and that the Japanese government would engage in actions to protect people from poverty, disease, illiteracy, persecution, and violence from the perspective of global society (Soeya,

2005). From Murayama's speech, human security norms arose as one of the nation's diplomatic doctrines.

However, Japan's focus on human security differed from Western like-minded middle powers. The Canadian government led the international discourse on human security from the perspective of "freedom from fear." This perspective means that international society should intervene in an independent state's domestic feud with military methods. However, Japan's internationalists and progressives could not accept the Canadian perspective on human security. Instead, the Japanese government set "freedom from want" as the Japanese perspective on human security. Japan's international contribution could be realized as aid and development cooperation for expanding "freedom from want" in global society (Acharya, 2001).

Japan already had a method well-suited for it. In 1989, Japan became the biggest donor country in the quantitative scale of ODA. In the 1990s, Japan maintained the first ranking in overall ODA volume. Taking human security norms into account, the Japanese government tried to revise its ODA policy, which originated from a mercantilist orientation. In the late 1990s, the Japanese government emphasized reforming its ODA policy to a recipient-led, case-by-case, and humanistic one (Hook and Zhang, 1998).

In the late 1990s, Obuchi Keizo, one of the leaders of the conservative liberal groups, commanded Japan's engagement in human security norms. In 1998, he stated that human security is the core of not just international development cooperation policy but also the nation's diplomacy. His emphasis on human security was verified by his support for the Ottawa Treaty banning the use and production of anti-personnel mines, even though the United States opposed it. Furthermore, he suggested the foundation of the UN Trust Fund for Human Security and guided the Japanese government's initiation of donations for it (Edström, 2003).

With human security as a norm, the nation's internationalists and progressives liked to portray Japan's international role as more universalistic. They wanted to establish its international credentials as a more normative state globally.

For and Against Reconciliation Diplomacy

The conservative liberals and progressives pursued a more universalistic internationalist character in the diplomatic doctrine of Japan. According to this internationalist orientation, the nation's reconciliation diplomacy emerged as a tool for strengthening the background of its more active engagement in international society. However, the conservative rights opposed reconciliation diplomacy from the perspective of historical revisionism. In the debate on reconciliation diplomacy, the particularistic orientation of the conservative rights was fortified.

In the postwar period, Japan had a relatively free hand in settling its past aggression and colonial rule. In the San Francisco Peace Treaty, the United States and other key allied powers renounced their rights to reparations from Japan (Pyle, 2007, pp. 233-238). In addition, in the Cold War situation, the United States advised to speed up normalizing diplomatic relations between Japan and the Asian countries Japan once ruled over and oppressed. However, there were many unsettled issues between Japan and the Asian countries, mainly China and South Korea, such as comfort women and forced labor. Of course, the Japanese government apologized in normalization with each Asian country. However, the domestic public in China and South Korea didn't consider Japan's apology and treatment sufficient.

In the 1990s, when Japan longed to engage more actively in international affairs and possibly become a permanent member of the UN Security Council, more economic treatment by the ODA was not enough. The conservative liberals accepted the necessity of reconciliation diplomacy with neighboring Asian countries. They believed that Japan should respond sincerely when unsettled

historical issues emerge and have a clear view of its past errors when asked about evaluating the nation's prewar expansion in Asia. The logic is that in order for Japan to get a better reputation for global norms in international society, it should show clear regrets for its past violations of global norms (Arase, 1993).

The Kono statement and the Murayama statement were the result of this internationalist orientation. When the comfort women issue emerged, the Japanese government investigated and apologized for it under the leadership of Kato and Kono, prominent conservative liberals in 1992-93. Murayama's statement on the 50th anniversary of the end of WWII in 1995 has words about aggression, colonial rule, apology, and regret. Murayama's statement was possible with the agreement of the LDP leadership. The LDP's conservative liberals accepted his language, which was previously refrained from use (Yakushiji, 2012).

However, reconciliation diplomacy faced strong opposition from the conservative rights. After the Kono statement and Hosokawa Morihiro's remarks on aggression, some LDP politicians organized the Committee for Reviewing History (Rekishi Kentō Iinkai), a study group for LDP Diet members, and held 20 meetings over two years (Wakamiya, 2014). This study group invited many right-wing intellectuals to each meeting and published the meeting materials as a book titled *Summary of the Greater East Asia War* (Daitōasensō no Sōkatsu) on August 15, 1995. This book includes contents denying aggression, enforcement of comfort women, and the Nanking Massacre and criticizing Japan's textbooks for providing biased self-tormenting historical views (Rekishi Kentō Iinkai, 1995). Historical revisionists in the LDP strongly expressed opposition to the reconciliation diplomacy of an internationalist orientation. The conservative rights reinforced the historical revisionist view. Before the 1990s, the established politicians refrained from clearly expressing denials of the nation's misconduct during WWII and from calling WWII the Greater East Asia War, as it was officially named by the Japanese military government. This view was mainly voiced by the non-institutional right-wing group. Reconciliation diplomacy became a momentum to foster historical revisionism within the established political groups. Abe, who was first elected in 1993, actively participated in the Committee for Reviewing History. His political career clearly started from a position of historical revisionism. The reinforcement of historical revisionism in the 1990s in the LDP showed the conservative rights leaned toward a particularistic orientation in diplomacy by Japan.

The Opportunity of the Conservative Rights and Constraint from Koizumi Junichiro

The Transformation of LDP Intra-Party Politics

Although the conservative rights fortified its historical revisionism, it was not the majority in the LDP and overall Japanese politics during the 1990s. The conservative liberals still dominated LDP intra-party politics. However, during the 1990s, there was a continuing decline and enfeeblement of the conservative liberals in the LDP.

The factions representing the conservative liberals experienced a crisis in the 1990s. Heisei Kenkyukai, a faction that originated from Tanaka, was heavily hit by continuing scandals related to the faction's leaders, such as Takeshita Noboru and Kanemaru Shin, and also by Ozawa's secession in 1993. Ozawa, who was the most influential figure in the faction, conflicted with Obuchi in the faction's leadership, seceded from the LDP, and caused the LDP's loss of power in 1993. However, Heisei Kenkyukai would continue to be a leading faction in the LDP until the late 1990s. Hashimoto Ryutaro's and Obuchi's holding of the LDP presidency in the late 1990s

showed its durability. Kochikai, a faction that originated from Yoshida and Ohira, represented the continuance of the Yoshida doctrine and was led by internationalists such as Kono and Kato in the 1990s. However, Kato's revolt in voting in the 2000 confidence vote on Mori Yoshihiro, the LDP-born prime minister in the Diet, heavily damaged Kochikai. The LDP's two factions of conservative liberals experienced a weakening in controlling their faction members and maintaining the faction leadership's harmonious arrangement. Seiwa Seisaku Kenkyukai, a faction that originated from Kishi and Fukuda Takeo and a reservoir of the LDP conservative rights, also encountered intra-faction cleavage in the late 1990s. However, its confusion was much less than Heisei Kenkyukai and Kochikai (Nakakita, 2014).

The LDP intra-party power configuration changed dramatically in the 2000s under Koizumi's rule. Seiwa Seisaku Kenkyukai, which was never the biggest faction, became a leading one in the 2000s. Koizumi's political success did not originate from the power of his faction (Seiwa Seisaku Kenkyukai). Instead, he achieved dominant power from his appeal to the people. However, his success provided momentum for the fortification of Seiwa Seisaku Kenkyukai's (Uchiyama, 2007). Although faction membership never firmly determined the orientations of politicians, the conservative rights greatly increased their positions in intra-party politics.

In addition, the generational change of politicians was another factor in the enlargement of the conservative rights. Politicians that never experienced Japanese military rule became the majority. Abe, born in 1954, represented this new generation. Although most of the younger politicians were not likely to share Abe's historical views, they had less sensitivity to the adherence to historical issues of neighboring countries than the old generation. This situation caused less firm factional policy integrity. This tendency was more severe in Kochikai and Heisei Kenkyukai, which became the minority groups in the 2000s. Therefore, the transformation of the LDP intra-party configuration was a factor in the empowerment of the conservative rights in the 2000s.

North Korea Abduction Issue

Koizumi visited Pyongyang and held a summit talk with North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il on September 17, 2002. The joint statement between Japan and North Korea covered discussions from diplomatic normalization between the two countries to nuclear weapons. However, Kim's admission of North Korea's abduction of several Japanese shut down other issues, and this provided overwhelming propulsion for expansion of the conservative rights. The biggest beneficiary of the Japan-North Korea summit in 2002 was Abe (Nam, 2015).

From 2000, North Korea approached Japan on normalization. After the failure of economic reform and the stubborn attitude of the Bush administration, North Korea chose Japan for a breakthrough in muddling internal and external conditions (Manyin, 2003). Therefore, the joint statement of the 2002 Japan-North Korea summit included much of North Korea's retreat from its original policy positions. First, North Korea agreed on economic cooperation as a method for diplomatic normalization, which Japan took in the normalization with South Korea in 1965. North Korea gave up reparations. In addition, the North opened a discussion on nuclear weapons with Japan. This was a huge change for North Korea from only discussing nuclear issues with the United States. Therefore, Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang was regarded as an immense victory in Japan's diplomatic history, internally and externally (Kitaoka et al., 2017).

However, the joint statement was never realized. Japanese society only focused on North Korea's abductions. Unlike the expectations of Koizumi and the MOFA's working groups, the Japanese government could not advance discussions on other issues. Five abducted Japanese temporarily returned to Japan on October 15, 2002. However, the Japanese government decided on their permanent settlement in Japan and demanded the return of their siblings to Japan. The

return of the siblings to Japan would not be a solution for settling the abduction issue. Although North Korea continued to say that the abduction issue was settled on September 17, 2002, it returned siblings to Japan when Koizumi visited Pyongyang again on May 22, 2004. However, a controversy over the authenticity of Yokota Megumi's ashes, which were returned in December 2004, terminated Japan-North Korea discussions (Samuels, 2010).

The conservative rights was empowered by the abduction issue. Before Kim Jong-II's admission, progressives and conservative liberals had been cautious about suspecting North Korea, while the conservative rights assumed North Korea's crime and organized a group of Diet members to save the abduction victims. They got a great deal of energy from Japanese society's anger and influenced the hawkish response to North Korea after 2002. By contrast, progressives and conservative liberals had weaker positions.

Abe was a key figure in the nation's hawkish response to North Korea as the vice chief cabinet secretary. Of course, the overwhelming anger of Japanese society was the background of Abe's leading role in the permanent settlement of survivors and the following demands to North Korea. Abe, who had been vigorously involved in the abduction issue since the late 1990s, took the job of controlling the abduction issue after 2001 (Wada, 2009). Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang gave Abe a great opportunity. With the abduction issue, Abe emerged as a promising candidate for the next prime minister.

Koizumi's Visits to Yasukuni Shrine and the Shin-YKK Coalition

After his inauguration as the prime minister on April 24, 2001, Koizumi visited Yasukuni Shrine annually. The prime minister's visits to the shrine became a diplomatic issue with China and South Korea since the shrine enshrined class-A war criminals in 1978. Koizumi's visits to the shrine naturally caused backlashes from China and South Korea. Although Abe favored Koizumi's choices, they constrained a leaning toward more historical revisionist orientations of Abe and other conservative rights.

Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine caused cleavage in Asian diplomatic policy in the LDP. As Koizumi worsened relations with China and South Korea, there were increasing voices for a pragmatic, restrained approach in the LDP. The Shin-YKK coalition represented these voices. The coalition was an alliance of Kato Koichi, Yamazaki Taku, and Koga Makoto in the mid-2000s. In the 1990s, there was the YKK coalition among Kato, Yamazaki, and Koizumi. The YKK coalition was an alliance of influential leaders beyond factional memberships. The significance of the YKK coalition faded when Yamazaki and Koizumi did not participate in Kato's 2000 revolt against the party leadership. When Koizumi became the prime minister, Kato and Yamazaki made an intense cooperative relationship with Koga. The Shin-YKK coalition never became a formal organization. However, the Shin-YKK coalition's platform was the agreement on Japan's diplomatic orientation by the three figures, whereas the YKK was based on shared views on domestic politics. The YKK coalition worked to raise voices against pork-barrel politics in the LDP. In the 2000s, the Shin-YKK coalition focused on foreign policy, mainly toward Asia. Although Kato and Yamazaki were close to Koizumi, they worried about Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine and were estranged from him.

However, Kato, Yamazaki, and Koga never shared common views on the meaning of Yasukuni Shrine. Kato was an obvious opponent of the shrine's role as a national memorial institution. As an apparent conservative liberal, he criticized perceptions and movements of historical revisionists (Kato, 2007). Since Koga was an heir of Kochikai, a faction representing the LDP's conservative liberals, he belonged to the conservative liberals. However, as the president of Japan Izokukai, an organization representing families of the war dead, he was a board member

of Yasukuni Shrine (Ooshita, 2007). Yamazaki was a member of the Diet group for visiting the shrine and went there several times. It is hard to see him as a traditional conservative liberal. In addition, regarding the constitutional revision issue, he apparently belonged to the conservative rights favoring revision (Yamasaki, 2001).

The common point among the three figures is that the prime minister should refrain from visiting Yasukuni Shrine. They worried that the shrine would continue to be a danger to Japan's relations with neighboring Asian countries. There was a less clear opposing voice on the normative problem of the shrine among overall conservative political groups. Yamasaki and Koga didn't have a sense of this problem. The Shin-YKK coalition's logic showed that the universalistic character weakened in the 2000s. In a power reversal of the conservative liberals and the conservative rights, the universalistic normative logic for reconciliation diplomacy was no longer located in the heart of the nation's conservative liberals. However, their pragmatic approaches acquired consent from many influential senior conservative leaders such as Fukuda Yasuo, a son of Fukuda Takeo, a key figure in the lineage of the LDP conservative rights. Fukuda Yasuo agreed that the Japanese government should find a solution to the Yasukuni Shrine issue bolstered by Koizumi. Therefore, he shared the idea of officially founding a national war memorial with Kato and Yamazaki.

However, the historical revisionists severely opposed this idea because the shrine is a symbol of their particularistic understanding of Japan (Shibuichi, 2005). Abe faced an uncomfortable situation with the politicization of Yasukuni Shrine. Historical revisionism is a core part of Abe's political constituency, and he agreed with the necessity for Japan's political leaders to visit the shrine. However, Koizumi provoked criticisms about it. In the mid-2000s, pragmatic voices on Yasukuni Shrine fortified and demanded that the future party leader not visit the shrine. In this circumstance, Abe, the successor of Koizumi, had to find a solution between demands for more pragmatic diplomatic attitudes for the Asian countries and his beliefs on historical revisionism.

The Turn to Universal Values by the Conservative Rights

Universal Values of Security-Focused Diplomats

Abe's solution was to inject global norms into his diplomatic orientation. He could get its logical basis from his close advisors whose careers had been in the division of intelligence or treaties in MOFA. Although Abe had maintained close relationships with many historical revisionist intellectuals, the MOFA OBs were also close personal advisors to Abe. By taking the advice of MOFA OBs, Abe weakened his image of persistent historical revisionism. This gave assurance on Abe's leadership to the U.S. government and expanded his domestic political constituency.

There were commonalities and differences between the diplomatic orientations of the MOFA OBs and historical revisionists. Okazaki Hisahiko, who was unofficially called Abe's personal teacher, was the most senior advisor with a MOFA career close to him. Okazaki, who had a career path specialized in MOFA's intelligence division, took an active role in the media and publication after retirement, arguing the necessity of reinforcing the security role of the Japanese government. He was in favor of constitutional revision and at least changing the interpretation of the Constitution on the right of collective self-defense. This is a common view with historical revisionists (Okazaki, 2007). However, his understanding of WWII and the United States separated him from historical revisionists. He opposed a historical revisionist view that Japan went to war in WWII in order to protect its own security. There was friction between him and Nishio Kanji, a prominent historical revisionist, when he changed a clause on the breakout of

WWII in a new textbook by the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (*Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai*). Okazaki deleted a clause blaming the United States for the breakout of WWII and atomic bombing (Lee, 2019). His view on the U.S., different from historical revisionists, is widely shared by Abe's other close advisors with MOFA careers.

Yachi Shotaro and Kanehara Nobukatsu have been the key advisors with MOFA careers since the 2000s and continued to help Abe in the second Abe Cabinet. Yachi, who had served as MOFA's vice minister from 2005 to 2008, returned with Abe as a special advisor to the prime minister from 2012 to 2014 and became the first head of Japan's National Security Council (NSC) in 2014. When Yachi directed the establishment of the AFP in the first Abe Cabinet, Kanehara helped conceptualize it and served as the assistant to the deputy chief cabinet secretary in the second Abe Cabinet. Yachi and Kanehara experienced intensive careers in MOFA's international treaty division and shared a vision that Japan should establish a new grand diplomatic doctrine on the basis of strategic calculations on national interests. They put security at the core of this new doctrine (Kanehara, 2011; Yachi, 2011).

Their logic on security is based on realism for pursuing and ensuring Japan's national interests. However, Kanehara added one more point: values. He never assumes that Japan should accept human rights because they are global norms. Instead, his logic states that protecting each state's value system should be a part of defending national interests. He argues that Japan's value system is not particular and unharmonious with current global norms. He suggests that the nation's traditional value system had more harmonious points with democracy and human rights. On this point, Kanehara's view of the country's past militarism cannot accord with historical revisionism. Kanehara highlights the importance of democracy and human rights because they are compatible with both Japan's tradition and current systems (Kanehara, 2011). There is no more confrontation between global universalism and Japan's particularism.

According to this logic, Kanehara and Yachi founded value-oriented diplomacy, which prioritizes diplomatic relationships with countries that share the same values as Japan. However, its universalistic orientation provided the same diplomatic attitude toward Asian countries as the particularistic orientation of historical revisionists. From a value-oriented diplomacy perspective, China and North Korea are countries that must be balanced because they do not share values and pose a threat to Japan. The antagonistic relationship with China is the commonality between value-oriented diplomacy and historical revisionist orientations.

Global universalism in the 1990s, which demanded the large-scale self-criticism of Japan's past, was not acceptable to Abe. However, since value-oriented diplomacy provides the logic that highlighting global norms is a way of protecting Japan's own identity, it is more easily accepted by him.

Internal-External Security Nexus and the Revival of “Datsu-A Ron”

Value-oriented diplomacy has two points that are easily acceptable in Japanese society. While human rights norms are naturally associated with the nation's domestic “safety” norms and North Korea's threat to ordinary Japanese, democratic norms are mingled with ‘orientalism’ toward China by Japan.

North Korea's abductions are not just an “external security” issue. In the traditional understanding of security scholarship, the realms of “external security” and “internal security” could be separated. However, modern threats are more complex. Terrorism, civil war, and starvation do not have territorial boundaries (Eriksson & Rhinard, 2009). When foreign countries violate Japan's “internal security,” the Japanese government's diplomacy with them is highly constrained. Domestic perceptions of protecting “internal security” dominate the policy process.

North Korea's abductions is a typical case of this internal-external security nexus.

For the abduction issue, North Korea's threat is not just a violation of Japan's sovereignty. It damaged ordinary Japanese lives. Japanese society's overwhelming backlash after Kim Jong-Il's admission of abduction can be understood in this context. Of course, there was intense propaganda and movement by hawkish politicians and right-wing activists to amplify the abduction issue. However, the Japanese people conceived this issue at the individual level rather than the state level.

In the 1990s, when Japan led the diffusion of human security norms, these norms were initially conceived to be applied to societies of recipient countries beyond Japan. In the logic of the international contribution of global universalism, human security norms are combined with the responsibility of Japan. However, with the abduction issue, the human security norm is perceived to be applied to Japanese society. Human security is no different from safety. The human rights norms of value-oriented diplomacy can get more persuasiveness from the Japanese, although they do not share views on history or foreign countries with conservative activists.

On the other hand, the democratic norms of value-oriented diplomacy are mainly understood with the image of China. Global universalism and historical revisionism both pay great attention to China. Their focus is actions in China by Japan. While global universalism awakens Japan's wrongdoing, historical revisionism says that it was not wrongdoing but rather an inevitable choice. Unlike global universalism and historical revisionism, value-oriented diplomacy does not focus on Japan's actions in China, but alters the focus of imagination. This provides the Japanese with room for escaping uncomfortable issues. Regardless of agreement or disagreement on Japan's wrongdoing with China, its discussions caused fatigue.

When value-oriented diplomacy argues that democracy is a universal value, it creates an image of China's non-democratic backwardness. The sense of China's backwardness naturally combines with the advance of Japan. China's economic growth has intensified a threatening feeling in Japan (Hughes, 2009). However, value-oriented diplomacy turned an eye to China's backward part. It is not based on the perspective of diversity and difference. In the linear understanding of social development, there are advanced and backward. The Japanese people can get assurance of Japan's advance from an imagination of China. This is a current version of the country's 'orientalism' that prevailed when it embraced "Datsu-A Ron" in the Meiji era (Suzuki, 2016).

The Decline of the "East Asian Community" Vision and Rise of the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific"

However, the diplomatic orientation of value-oriented diplomacy never fully dominated the Japanese government's Asian diplomacy in the 2000s. There was Japan's initiative to realize an "East Asian Community" vision. Ironically, Koizumi was an initiator and breaker. In 2002, Koizumi gave a speech during his visit to Southeast Asian nations and clarified an intention to create an East Asian community covering China, Japan, South Korea, and the ASEAN countries. His idea mainly focused on ASEAN+ when he mentioned "act together and advance together" in East Asia (Hosoya, 2013). This vision developed into the East Asia Summit, first held in December 2005. Of course, Koizumi never intended to transform Japan's priority of the United States in diplomatic doctrine. However, he approved the "East Asian Community" vision (Hosoya, 2011).

Since this vision prioritized cooperation with China, South Korea, and the ASEAN countries, it has different priorities from the AFP based on value-oriented diplomacy. In November 2006, when Foreign Minister Aso Taro gave a speech proposing the AFP, it had the meaning of

broadening a new front in diplomacy. He mentioned that Japan would deepen diplomatic ties with democratic countries located on the outer rim of the Eurasian continent (Yuasa, 2008). The AFP emphasized cooperation with the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, the ASEAN countries, and India. It was not easy for the two visions to coexist because China was unable to associate with value-oriented diplomacy.

Tanaka Hiroshi, director-general of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau in 2001-2002 and deputy minister in 2002-2005, played a leading role in proposing the “East Asian Community” vision. He showed a pragmatic and dovish orientation toward Asian countries in MOFA (Tanaka, 2009). However, his initiative in MOFA was damaged by a setback with the North Korea abduction issue, which intensified after the Japan-North Korea talks in which he played a central role. More importantly, Koizumi’s visits to Yasukuni Shrine made it difficult to propel the vision. Although Abe showed a restrained attitude on historical issues during his first term, it was hard to revitalize the vision. Rather, with the help of Yachi and Kanehara, Abe proposed value-oriented diplomacy. That means he had less passion for the vision of an “East Asian Community.”

The diplomatic orientation prioritizing cooperation with Asian countries revived with Hatoyama Yukio of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). Just before the DPJ’s victory in a lower House election in 2009, he expressed his vision of prioritizing Japan-China relations over Japan-U.S. relations in his article published in *The New York Times*. He criticized American capitalism’s infectious nature, declared the era of East Asia, and proposed a “fraternity diplomacy” strategy for empowering Japan-China cooperation. The U.S. government was unhappy and in conflict with the Hatoyama Cabinet, mainly on the issue of relocation of the Okinawa Futenma U.S. military base. In addition, there was no applause from China for his initiative on “fraternity diplomacy.” Hatoyama’s radical approach to depart from the postwar orthodox diplomatic doctrines of Japan didn’t succeed with the DPJ’s Kan Naoto and Noda Yoshihiko. In a series of conflicts in the East China Sea and East Sea (Sea of Japan), they returned to orthodox diplomatic doctrines and prioritized Japan-U.S. cooperation (Nihon Saiken Inshiatibu, 2013).

Abe returned to power in 2012 after the LDP’s landslide victory in December 2012, and so did his diplomatic advisors such as Yachi and Kanehara. The second Abe Cabinet revived value-oriented diplomacy as a central orientation of the nation’s diplomacy. Rather than the AFP, he proposed a “democratic security diamond,” emphasizing more cooperation among four democratic countries, Australia, India, Japan, and the United States, in his article published in Project Syndicate on December 27, 2012, just a day after his inauguration. His diplomatic strategy, based on value-oriented diplomacy, became more explicit and more aggressive.

Abe stood at the crossroads between historical revisionism and value-oriented diplomacy. Although he declared that value-oriented diplomacy would be a cornerstone of his cabinet’s diplomatic strategy, there were anxieties about how much he would refrain from choices based on historical revisionism (Mochizuki & Porter, 2013). His visit to Yasukuni Shrine on December 26, 2013, signaled that he would not remove historical revisionism from his mind. However, in his 2015 speech to the U.S. Congress and his postwar 70th-anniversary prime ministerial address on August 14, 2015, Abe reflected on Japan’s past of challenging the U.S.-led international order. In the process, the discomfort between Japan and the United States over Abe’s revisionist tendencies was resolved. With the strategic invisibility of Abe’s revisionist tendencies, the second Abe Cabinet’s value-oriented diplomacy was able to develop into “Indo-Pacific” diplomacy.

During the second Abe Cabinet era, he emphasized universal values in talking diplomacy, which produced the “free and open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” concept. The Japanese government first officially used the term the FOIP at the 2016 Conference on African Development (TICAD). It describes a geographical space that connects two oceans and two continents and emphasizes

role of Japan in promoting freedom and openness, including democracy, rule of law, and market economy. The 2017 Diplomatic Blue Paper included a special section on the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy.” The idea of such a strategy, which was already implicit in Abe’s speeches during his 2006 visit to India, came to the forefront in the second Abe Cabinet (Katsumata & Shibuichi, 2023; Koga, 2020).

The implications of Japan’s FOIP for Asian regionalism are similar to those of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in that they are regional initiatives that focus not on geographic proximity but on principles, norms, and values (the liberal nature of the domestic and international order, such as democracy and freedom of navigation in the case of the FOIP, and high standards of free trade norms in the case of the TPP) (Hosoya, 2024). Both the FOIP and the TPP do not oppose China’s engagement but emphasize the liberal principles of the regional order. China has no incentive to align with it. The FOIP, formulated in 2016-7, was the embodiment of value-oriented diplomacy and clearly demonstrated a post-Asian character (Satake & Sahashi, 2021). Although the FOIP was formulated at the end of the Obama administration, it is very much in line with the Obama administration’s rebalance to Asia (Campbell, 2016).

Conclusion

Value-oriented diplomacy is the recent version of efforts by Japan to characterize itself as a global normative leader and emphasize human security norms. However, in real East Asian international politics, it became a conceptual tool for confronting China and North Korea. Although the human security norm was mainly introduced in the nation’s diplomatic discourse in the mid-1990s by mild-conservative internationalists or progressives, it was taken over by hawkish conservative political leaders in the 2000s. They transferred the substantial meaning of human security in Japan as an ideological principle for withstanding neighboring countries by linking it with a domestic “safety” values. The nation’s hawkish conservative political leaders took over the human security norm, which is universally accepted in the democratic world, and mobilized it for the reinforcement of domestic conservative ideology in Japan.

Abe’s historical revisionist nature was a concern for South Korea, China, and even the United States in the early years of the first and second Abe Cabinets. However, international assessments of the second Abe Cabinet have been very positive. The prevailing view is to acclaim Abe as a leader who established Japan’s position as a defender of the liberal international order in an era of U.S.-China rivalry (Green, 2022; Solís, 2023). Abe’s embrace of value-oriented diplomacy allayed concerns about his revisionist nature. However, after Abe stepped down as the prime minister, he resumed visiting Yasukuni Shrine. This shows that Abe’s acceptance of value-oriented diplomacy is the result of a strategic choice, not a change in beliefs. As a strategic choice, Abe’s value-oriented diplomacy is likely to remain a key pillar of Japanese diplomacy in the era of U.S.-China competition.

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