

# Proem of the Foreign Policy of Moderation (Talking Points)

March 7, 2020, Kazuhiko Togo

## I Introduction

“Foreign Policy of Moderation” was born from “ ‘World Thinking’ originating from Japan”. This is the title of Part 3 of this book.

How was this book written?——34 years in the Japanese MOFA 1968~2002, half of which was dedicated to Russia. After retirement, 7 years have passed until I joined Kyoto Sangyo University (KSU). These 7 years made me think that the sweeping rise of China would lead someday to cultural and civilizational assertion of a new Sino-centric order. What would be Japan’s message then? Some may argue that following Euro-American values of human right, democracy, and rule of law against whatever Chinese values might be a solution. But is it really so?

On the one hand, China is too powerful, too close and too intertwined with Japan that it is not in our national interest just to part from. Also there are too long years of shared history with China that is engrained in our DNA. Just to opt for Western values against Asian way does not seem to conform to our national interest. It is necessary to think thoroughly Japan’s geopolitical and geo-economic position as well as Japan’s 4000 years of history and identify its position in the world.

In doing so, philosophy as its root, public policy as its stem and foreign policy as its branch were the metaphor of our thinking. So in my 11 years of service at KSU starting from 2009, we have spent a solid 5 fiscal years, from April 2012 till March 2017 on this project with Professor Mori, leading philosophy, Professor Nakatani, leading public policy, and myself leading foreign policy, together with overall 20 scholars, half from KSU and another half from outside, roughly two thirds from Japan but also from China, Korea, US and Germany.

## II From *Mu* (Nothingness) to *Yawaragi* (Moderation)

Part I philosophy: “Embracing from *Mu*”: We consider that the highest philosophy in past Japan was probably Kyoto School led by Nishida Kitaro (1870~1945), who seriously studied German and Western philosophy and on that basis created philosophy based on Japanese thinking. It was the period leading to WWII and since some of Kyoto school philosophers were considered to have led imperialist aggressive war. Thus Kyoto School and Nishida were virtually purged for many years after the end of WWII.

Nishida's first achievement was "An Inquiry into the Good" (1911, when he was 41 year old) and the key concept there was "Pure Experience", a situation where the split between oneself (subject) and the other (object) is fused. Nishida himself describes that "Pure Experience" as follows:

"The moment of seeing a color or sound, for example, is prior not only to the thought that the color or sound is the activity of an external object or that one is sensing it, but also to the judgment of what the color or sound might be. In this regard, pure experience is identical with direct experience. When one directly experiences one's own state of consciousness, there is not yet a subject or an object, and knowing and its object are completely unified." (Nishida, pp3~4) <sup>i</sup>

Later it was developed to the concept of "place of *Mu*." Nishida's philosophical thinking based on his study of European thinking was underpinned by his deep learning of Zen, notably of 13<sup>th</sup> century Kamakura Buddhism. Suzuki Daisetsu (1870~1966), a Zen priest well versed on Euro-American tradition became his partner in life. While it is presumptuous to discuss anything on Zen without practicing it, "Ten Bull metaphor (World Thinking, pp30~31)", notably picture 7 and 8, is a fascinating imagery to explain and get a touch of Zen even without practicing.

Part II: "Public Policy as *Awai* (between-ness)" and Part III: "Foreign Policy as *Yawaragi* (moderation)"

If you face domestic politics from the philosophical position of Nothing-ness, then you will not seek establishing an absolute position of yourself against the other. You will seek a resolution while respecting other's position and seek an answer in between.

If you face foreign countries you are not in a position to establish the precise line of between-ness because your knowledge of the other would be much less than your knowledge of yourself. What you can do is to moderate your position vis-à-vis other's. Foreign policy of moderation is hence emerging.

"Stern realism is extremely important for foreign policy. Security conditions must be constructed and implemented realistically and meticulously with full attention to military-strategic aspect. Intensification of rivalry has a structural character, originating from logos and spreading to emotion. Having such recognition allows us to realize that 'righteousness' is not always a solution.

Foreign policy does not end by power vs power or logos vs logos. At its basis should lie philosophical thinking that no solution can be found by rivalry where one asserts a position of

exclusive righteousness and seek full and complete submission of others. Instead, while recognizing with sadness the inevitability that righteousness collide each other, it would become necessary to create a place which comprises oneself and the other." (World Thinking, p.370) <sup>ii</sup>

To find this 'place' is the creation of foreign policy of moderation.

### **III Sino-US rivalry and split**

Has the world become more moderate since the publication of "'World Thinking' originating from Japan" just 3 years ago? No, quite to the contrary. Rivalry between China and the US includes geopolitical conflict, where power politics and realism count, but also includes recently technological-digital conflict. Both sides seem to be taking stronger position of not allowing other side's supremacy.

China's rise after Mao's death in 1976

Deng Xiaoping(1978~97): "reform and opening" (1978), Tiananmen Square incident (1989), 南巡講話-韜光養晦 (1992), double digits economic growth; military power up

Jiang Zemin (1989~2002): APEC (1991); WTO(2001)

Hu Jintao: end of 韜光養晦 (2008), G20 Summit (2008), GDP No2 (2010)

Xi Jinping I: "Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation (Chinese Dream)" (2012.11.29), "Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI)" (2013), "Made in China 2025 (2015); Xi Jinping II: "Great Modern Socialist Country" by mid-21<sup>st</sup> century (October 2017); Terms of the President was abolished by National People's Congress of March 2018

Digital revolution (Fourth Industrial revolution 2016~): which side wins?

5G, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence AI, Robotics, drones, space, cyber warfare (from visible war to invisible war); mutual decoupling between GAFA (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon) and BATH (Baidu, Alibaba, Tencent, Huawei)

America after the end of the Cold War in 1989

The Cold War victor (1989): on all fronts of economy, politics, military and culture

First challenge (2001/9/11): terrorist attack from Islam

Second challenge (2007~08): subprime mortgage crisis to bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers

Third challenge (2016~): election of Donald Trump to the presidency

China policy: Pence's speech (2018/10/4) at Hudson Institute: engagement policy failed and China under Xi embarked towards its own way; China is seeking superiority over the US in all fronts particularly on technology, which determines the future hegemonic power; Chinese values are encroaching into and demolishing American values

A short comment from the foreign policy of moderation: Division of the world into two, assertion that one side has 100% of righteousness and the other side has none, look at the world with zero-sum perspectives, these views are not compatible with "moderation". Increased tension between China and the US is a reality, but it should be possible and necessary that each side deepens respective understanding of the other. It is not "mutual decoupling", but it is "mutual coupling" which should be sought.

#### **IV Response by the Japanese government led by Prime Minister Abe**

Abe led Japan to navigate with moderation between ever increasing China-US rivalry, to coexist with both. He did it well on geopolitical rivalry, such as BRI, but how to navigate the digital divide, like mutual decoupling, is yet unclear.

Abe's China policy: Abe inherited Chinese official vessels' encroachment to the territorial waters of Senkaku from his predecessor PM Noda. Hence his 2013 policy was understandably primarily deterrence. But in 2014 first Abe-Xi meeting took place. Four points agreement which in substance stabilized the Senkaku and Yasukuni issues with existing status-quo paved the way to this meeting. In 2017, he switched his policy on BRI from detachment to engagement in economic areas.

This led to enhanced dialogue between the leadership: Li Ketiang visit to Japan and Abe's visit to China (2018), Xi Jinping's visit to Japan on G20 (2019), Xi Jinping's visit to Japan (2020: originally planned for April but postponed to a later period due to Corona virus epidemics). Japanese media reports that quality of dialogue between Abe and Xi reached to the level where Abe might be able to state his views on such "delicate issues" as Hong Kong, Uighur, human rights inside China and debt-trap diplomacy.

Abe's US policy: Abe took three years from 2014 to 2016 to establish "Japan's Legislation for Peace and Security". Especially the revision allowing Self Defense Forces to act not only when Japan's exerts its right of individual self-defense but also when it exerts its right of collective self-defense is noteworthy, though under certain

limited situation, namely, when an armed attack against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan occurs and as a result threatens Japan's survival and poses a clear danger to fundamentally overturn people's right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness 存立危機事態. The new law substantially revised asymmetry existing since 1960 that US is obligated to defend Japan when attacked, but Japan is constitutionally prevented to do so when an equivalent situation occurs with the US.

On historical memory issues, through his historic address to a Joint Meeting of the US Congress in April 2015, Obama's visit to Hiroshima in May 2016 and Abe's visit to Pearl Harbor in December that year, he made a substantial contribution to heal the wounds of the two people in relation to WWII.

Thus when Trump assumed presidency in January 2017, Abe could meet with him with a solid record of achievements of having strengthened the relationship, namely Japan doing substantially more to the cause of the alliances, that gave greater autonomy in its position vis-à-vis the US. Abe also seems to have succeeded in expressing respect to and listening to an elected president of the United States in his first encounter in November 2016 in New York.

Since then in the three years of Trump's presidency, Abe maintained and strengthened his personal relations with President Trump based on his ability of communication and establishing trustworthy policy even with some differences, both essential for foreign policy of moderation. In his policy of Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), where Japan and US share much of commonality, careful readings seems to indicate that he is sending signals that he does not intend to isolate China or Russia. His Iran policy of visiting this country in 2019 just before the Osaka G20, sending Maritime Self-Defense forces to the Holmes Strait region on its own capacity without joining the coalition of forces under US initiatives also seem to be the result of maintaining a trustworthy position even with some differences.

Where to position Japan in the divided space of digital rivalry? In contrast to Abe's success in navigating its foreign policy in geopolitics or geo-economics, Abe's position on digital arena, whether to join in the America-led arena in full, or seeking some accommodation to co-exist with China-led arena does not seem to be clear. American pressure to cut away Huawei from any American companies' activities and foreign companies working together with these American companies seem to be strengthening. But at the point of writing of this short paper, even simple web-surfing seems to be much complicated in many countries concerned.

✓ In December 2018, CFO Meng Wanzhou, daughter of Ren Zhengfei, a founder of

Huawei was arrested in Canada. This was followed by series of apparent “hostage diplomacy” by China against Michael Koving, Michael Spavor and Yang Hengjun.

- ✓ Reportedly Canada, Australia, Korea and Taiwan are following American restrictive policy toward Huawei.
  
- ✓ Europeans are taking more cautious approach. In December 2018, German Federal Digital Information Agency gave a statement not confirming American allegation. In March 2019, European Committee publicized that whether to use Huawei equipment to 5G system would be entrusted to the choice of each member countries. In May 2019, President Macron also stated that France will not exclude Huawei.
- ✓ Inside America views do not seem to be completely unified. In September 2019 Microsoft president Brad Smith expressed concern about US ban of Huawei. Mixing this essentially security issues with trade issues, as US commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross stated in November 2019 that if a trade deal is reached “US companies will be allowed to work with Huawei” creates a confused impression.

## **V Response by some American moderates toward China**

In America minority views are expressed not to provoke China unnecessarily and take a more moderate approach. The WP July/2/2019 opinion advertisement “China is not an Enemy” can be cited as typical example. Among five representatives of this statement, Ezra Vogel and Mickel Swane are included. Among the signatories, such familiar names as Richard Bush, Gerald Curtis, Robert Keohane, Mike Mochizuki, Joseph Nye, Douglas Paul, Richard Samuels, Anne-Marie-Slaughter, Strobe Talbot, can be found.

Among those who enlisted themselves in this opinion advertisement, a few words need to be mentioned on Ezra Vogel, who has a unique career of devoting the first half of his academic career to Japan studies (best known as the author of “Japan as Number One” 1979) and the latter half to China studies (best known as the author of “Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China” 2011). He has been one of my closest acquaintances and mentor-professors after my retirement from MOFA in 2002. Professor Vogel also published recently another momentous book “China and Japan: Facing History” (Autumn 2019) and its translation in Japanese was also published at the end of 2019 (『日中関係史』日本経済新聞社、2019年12月27日).

In commemorating the publication of this book, he made a tour in Japan and on November 17, 2019 visited Kyoto Sangyo University to have a thorough half day discussion on Japan-China relations, his new book and the concept of “foreign policy of

moderation”. Some of the main points of that discussion are as follows:

- ✓ Professor Vogel enthusiastically supported the basic idea of “diplomacy of moderation” to be pronounced from Japan. He particularly underlined the importance of such idea coming from Japan in the context of exacerbating US-China relations. He labelled himself jokingly as “Panda huggers”.
- ✓ We discussed thoroughly how best to translate this terminology *yawaragi* into English. Professor Vogel advised that “harmonization” is not adequate and “moderation” might be the best.
- ✓ In expressing some of the essential ideas on human-rights, democracy, and rule-of-law, all ideas which he also supported, he stated that “You might criticize the other but you have to think carefully that the expression you use has an effect of letting the other think. A direct criticism, having oppressive character, possibly raising provocative impression can become counter-productive. No country is in a position to assert 100% of righteousness in its own history. In that context, the Japanese should not forget that it is not in the position to forget the past.”
- ✓ Ezra Vogel’s message is well taken. But in turns, this raises a difficult but important question of what is the values on which Japan stands and from which Japan should moderate its position. Will the concept of ‘human security’ be easier to accept both by the Chinese and the Americans, rather than pushing forward such basic Euro-American values as ‘democracy, human rights, rule of law’? Is not the ‘freedom from fear’ and ‘freedom from want’ a general concept with less of ideological push difficult for the Chinese to accept? Politically this concept was supported by late Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo, one of the most thoughtful and best Asianists prime ministers in post-war Japan.

## **VI Expanding basis of “philosophy of moderation” in Japan**

A view from Professor Ogura Kizo (2019/12/25):

Oneself is not ‘one unit’ but is composed of ‘multiple units’ and is continuously emerging and developing. Not to setting up ‘one unit’ but to consider that things are emerging and developing in the flowing multiplicity---from where do such views originate in Japan? In China Confucius is most important but Xinxue 陽明学 is also important.

Conference on Comparative Civilizational Study

On 2019/11/16 Conference on Comparative Civilizational Study was held at Chuo University and its main theme was coincidentally “Global Civilization and the

philosophy of Moderation (*Yawaragino Shiso*)”. Some of the key points raised there are as follows. Professor Hosaka Shunji (保坂俊司) of Chuo University stated the following:

“Urgent task of contemporary society is to construct a philosophy of harmonization and *kyosei* to be adapted to the highly developed information society. Japan needs to state to the world its philosophy of ‘harmonization and *Kyosei*’ (or *Yawaragi*) which it has developed in the course of its history. The Japanese society has its long history of harmonizing multiple culture and civilization peacefully and developing a unique philosophy of tolerance. Its’ key word is the philosophy of *Yawaragi*, dating from the period of *Shotokutaishi*. The First Article of Seventeen-Article Constitution is usually known as “Harmony 和 is the greatest of virtues 和をもって貴しとなす”, but this “harmony 和” in reality should be read as “*Yawaragi*”.(Hosaka, pp1~2)<sup>iii</sup>

Associate Professor Miyajima Shunichi (宮嶋俊一) of Hokkaido University stated the following:

“*Yawaragi* is an attitude or behavior. When meeting with values or actions which are different from yours, neither enforcing one’s own values and actions to the other nor accommodating to the other throwing away one’s position, *yawaragi* is to acknowledge the difference and still continue accumulating dialogue with the other.” (Miyajima, p4)

Professor Watanabe Kazuo (1901~1975, a renowned scholar on French literature) questioned himself “Should tolerance become intolerant in order to protect its position of tolerance?” Watanabe responded that “Quite simply, I argue that one should not become intolerant for the sake of protecting one’s position of tolerance.” (Miyajima, p3)<sup>iv</sup>

To what extent and on what cause one acknowledges and tolerates differing position of those who think differently is indeed a difficult but important question. It is a difficult question difficult for me to respond.

## VII Conclusion

The starting point of our thinking was the “Pure Experience” and the “place of *Mu*” and the “8<sup>th</sup> white circle of ten bull metaphor”, where the distinction of oneself (subject) and the other (object) disappears. While recognizing with sadness the inevitability that righteousness collide each other, it would become necessary to create a place which comprises oneself and the other. To find this place is the creation of foreign policy of



moderation.---So I concluded in Section II.

But then through the discussion on the exacerbating rivalry and split between China and the US, Section V raised a difficult but important question of what is the values on which Japan stands and from which it should moderate its position. Then Section VI concluded that to what extent and on what cause one acknowledges and tolerates differing position of those who think differently is indeed a difficult but important question.

In closing my presentation and awaiting a lively discussion, let me give the major points of my presentation:

One: We need to let the world know ‘A message from Japan.’

Two: What is needed from philosophy?

Negation of self-absolutization 自己の絶対化の否定

*Mu* Nothingness vs *Yu* Being-ness

*Awai* between-ness vs Self

*Yawaragi* Moderation vs Fight

It is based on, in harmony with Japanese spiritual and intellectual tradition.

Three: It is not a monopolized truth in Japan alone.

It is to be shared by, in harmony with other spiritual and intellectual traditions of West (Euro-American) and Asia (Chinese-Indian).

Four: Certain values exist.

Certain values need to be protected and fought for.

But they are more wisely done with moderation, that is, instinctive understanding that the ‘place’ we stand is a ‘place where self and other coexist’.

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<sup>i</sup> Nishida Kitaro “An Inquiry into the Good” translated by Masao Abe and Christopher Ives, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1990

<sup>ii</sup> “World Thinking originating from Japan” 東郷和彦・森哲郎・中谷真憲編著『日本発の「世界」思想：哲学・公共・外交』藤原書店、2017年

<sup>iii</sup> 保阪俊司『和（やわらぎ）の思想の現代的意義』2019年「比較文明学会」論文

<sup>iv</sup> 宮嶋俊一『「和」（やわらぎ）の思想』を乗り越えて？』2019年「比較文明学会」論文