

# The Normative Origins of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles

- Opposition to Nuclear Weapons in Japan During the 1950s and 60s -\*

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## Abstract

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Japan adopted a series of policies in 1971 that came to be known as the ‘Three Non-Nuclear Principles’, outlining that Japan will not produce, possess, or introduce nuclear weapons. The Three Non-Nuclear Principles featured an exceptionally high degree of non-proliferation commitment when compared to other states, and they have remained the backbone of Japanese nuclear policy to the present day. Then, what factors motivated Japan to adopt a set of unique non-nuclear policies such as the Three Non-Nuclear Principles in 1971? To answer this question, this paper examined the normative background of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, with an emphasis on the norms that motivated the domestic actors in Japan at the time. The findings show that the following four distinct norms in Japan motivated the domestic actors to advocate the adoption of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles in 1971: 1) Japan’s non-nuclear norms, 2) Japan’s

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anti-war norms, 3) regional norms in Okinawa, 4) conservative norms in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's leadership.

**Keywords:** Three Non-Nuclear Principles, Sato Eisaku, Japan, Nuclear Weapons, Non-Proliferation

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## I . Introduction

Nuclear weapons have been the dream of many states since being invented in 1945. Even though they have not been used since the end of World War II, the mere possibility of their use has been enough to deter states from going to war with one another (Jervis 1989). Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 showed that nuclear weapons are not some relics of the past, with Russia threatening to use them if its 'territorial integrity' was threatened (Sauer 2022). As a result, more and more countries have recently begun to cry out for nuclear weapons of their own and the need to 'share' them with nuclear patrons at the very least (Kosuke 2023; Lind and Press 2021; Moskwa and Leonard 2022).

Considering such popularity of nuclear weapons around the world, it is surprising that Japan, the only country to be attacked with nuclear weapons and also one with decades of conflict with nuclear-armed neighbors such as Russia and China, has featured exceptional commitment to non-proliferation.<sup>1)</sup> This all began in 1968, when the

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1) Only recently Japan began to discuss the need for nuclear-sharing with the United States (産経新聞 2022/03/29; 空本誠喜・衆院議員 2022; 福富旅史・渡辺丘 2022). However, mainstream nuclear policy in Japan has remained committed to non-proliferation, which is supported by the public as well (Baron et al. 2020; 日本経済新聞 2022/03/02; NHK 2022/03/01).

Japanese Prime Minister Sato Eisaku announced a series of unprecedented principles that have shaped Japan's nuclear policy to this day. In what came to be known as the 'Three Non-Nuclear Principles', he declared that Japan will not produce, possess, or introduce nuclear weapons. Three years after his announcement, the Three Non-Nuclear Principles were officially adopted by the Japan's National Diet in 1971, and they have been repeatedly recognized by Japan ever since (外務省 2011).<sup>2)</sup>

The Three Non-Nuclear Principles were characterized by their uniqueness seldom seen in other parts of the world. For example, a number of states have agreed to build 'nuclear-weapon-free zone', or NWFZ, which is similar to the Three Non-Nuclear Principles in content.<sup>3)</sup> However, NWFZ is multilateral in its nature, while the Three Non-Nuclear Principles were unilateral, with Japan adopting them without assurances that others will follow suit. Similarly, the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula adopted by North and South Korea in 1992 resembles the Three Non-Nuclear Principles (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008). However, the Declaration was a bilateral one, not unilateral like the Three Non-Nuclear Principles.

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2) This is not to argue that the Japanese decision-makers fully adhered to the Three Non-Nuclear Principles since 1970s, as they repeatedly made attempts to circumvent the boundaries of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, even making a secret agreement with the US that allowed the Americans to station nuclear weapons on Okinawa (Komine 2013; 北岡伸一 外. 2010). However, the fact that Japan had to make serious efforts to circumvent the Three Non-Nuclear Principles demonstrates that they were more than mere rhetoric, taken seriously by both the Japanese decision-makers and public alike.

3) The United Nations define NWFZ as an agreement that a group of states has freely established by treaty or convention, prohibiting the development, manufacturing, control, possession, testing, stationing or transporting of nuclear weapons by states in a region (UN General Assembly 1999).

In this context, the main question to be addressed in this paper is as follows; what factors motivated Japan to adopt the Three Non-Nuclear Principles in 1971? To answer the question, this paper extensively reviewed the normative origins of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles from 1950s to 1960s. By doing so, this research found evidence that there were not one but four norms in Japan that were interconnected with the Three Non-Nuclear Principles: 1) non-nuclear norm, 2) anti-war norm, 3) regional norm in Okinawa, 4) conservative norm in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's leadership.

The rest of this paper proceeds as follows. First, existing studies on the origins of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles will be reviewed. Second, I will lay out this paper's main argument and research methods. Third, this paper will examine the normative origins of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles. Lastly, a short summary of the findings and their implications will be discussed.

## **II . Literature Review**

State's choice to give up the nuclear option has been receiving the attention of many international relations scholars for some time. The existing studies so far have emphasized the effects of the following three elements: 1) security factors, 2) international regime, 3) normative factors.

To begin with, a number of scholars argue that security factors can be crucial for state's choice in giving up nuclear option, an argument which can be further divided into two. First, a group of scholars contends that security guarantees by others can result in non-nuclear

policy (Lanoszka 2018; Paul 2000; Redick et al. 1995; Schadlow 1996). In the anarchic international system, states are left with no choice other than to seek self-help in order to survive. Nuclear weapons can be useful tools for state's survival here, providing effective means of deterrence against foreign aggression. As a result, once state's security is guaranteed by other nuclear powers through extended deterrence, it will have little need to develop nuclear weapons of its own, thus resulting in non-nuclear policy. When applied to the Japanese case, it can be argued that Japan had little need for nuclear weapons due to US security guarantees, which led to the adoption of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles.

Adopting a similar but somewhat different approach, some argue that other states' coercion can compel states to adopt non-nuclear policy (Gerzhoy 2015; Korda 2018; Levite 2002; Miller 2014). While providing security guarantees has significant impact on non-nuclear policy, they can also be coerced into forgoing nuclear options, especially the ones that rely on patrons for their security. Extending the argument to the case of Japan, it can be said that the Three Non-Nuclear Principles were partly caused by pressure from other states, especially the US.

Second, a group of scholars contend that international regime can be a powerful driver behind giving up nuclear options (Keohane and Martin 1995; Nye 1981). The international regime can not only lower the transaction cost among states but also provide more transparency when they cooperate with one another, which allow states to trust each other and forgo developing nuclear weapons. In fact, non-proliferation regimes such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) have been effective tools in making states to go non-nuclear (Fuhrmann and Lupu 2016).

In addition, others argue that fear of being cut off from the international economy can refrain states from going nuclear (Potter 1995; Solingen 2009). Developing nuclear weapons entails significant criticism and economic sanctions imposed by the international non-proliferation regime. As a result, one must risk losing economic gains by joining the international economy, which makes states reluctant to go nuclear in the first place. Then, it can be said that Japan feared losing economic benefits by going nuclear and thus pursued a non-nuclear policy such as adopting the Three Non-Nuclear Principles.

Last but not least, a group of scholars point out that ideas and national identity can affect states' decision to develop nuclear weapons or not (Hymans 2006; Long and Grillot 2000; Rublee 2009). Building on social psychology literature and applying it to the Japanese case, they argue that the Japanese postwar identity was formed around an anti-nuclear nation built on the Article 9 of Peace Constitution and Japan's unique nuclear experiences, such as nuclear bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 and the Lucky Dragon (Daigo Fukuryū Maru) Incident in 1954. Such non-nuclear norm was repeatedly transmitted by the Japanese decision-makers in the 1950s and 60s, processed by Japanese people through symbolic events including annual commemoration activities at Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Rublee 2009, 79).

Historical accounts on the birth of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles reveal that the three factors explained so far all contributed to Japan's nuclear policy to some degree, and they are also supported by substantial empirical evidence. In fact, many historical accounts on the Three Non-Nuclear Principles emphasize one or a combination of the three factors explained so far. For instance, Kusunoki provides an

excellent and thorough historical explanation on how the Sato Cabinet built its nuclear policy in the context of both domestic politics and Japan's overall national security policy at the time (Kusunoki 2008). Samuels and Schoff explain that while Sato's articulation of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles was driven by Japan's continued reliance on the US nuclear umbrella, normative and institutional elements have been contributing to the durability of Japan's non-nuclear policy (Samuels and Schoff 2015).

This paper does not aim to refute the existing arguments. Instead, this paper aims to build on existing research, focusing on the normative origins of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles due to two reasons. First, the existing studies' approach tends to be a narrow one, largely confined to the role of non-nuclear norm in Japan. However, such an approach has the danger of misunderstanding how norms worked at the time, because mechanisms through which norms function in the real world are seldom unitary.<sup>4)</sup> This study aims to fill such a gap by building on existing literature and clarifying how not one but a series of norms in Japan were interconnected to the emergence of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles.

Second, the existing studies on the normative origins of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles tend to take a bottom-up approach, focusing on the norms shared by general populace in Japan at the time. However, what can be overlooked in taking such an approach is that the decision-makers at the top can also be norm-driven, having somewhat

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4) Even the non-nuclear norm in Japan was not a unitary one, being opposed only to specific usages of nuclear energy in Japan. To understand the complexity of non-nuclear norm in Japan, see Seo, Dong-ju. 2014. "The Representation of Nuclear Power and the Memory of Exposure in Post-War Japan." [in Korean] *The Korean Journal of Japanology*, No. 99: 433-448

‘irrational’ motives behind their actions. This means that even in the case of Three Non-Nuclear Principles, the Japanese decision-makers at the time might have had normative reasoning for supporting them in 1971. This paper aims to address such neglected areas of study and incorporate the top-down approach to the traditional bottom-up approach, studying the normative background of not only the general populace but also the key Japanese decision-makers at the time.

### **Ⅲ. Research Design**

This paper defines norm as a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Katzenstein 2018). Norms are distinct from institutions, as norms isolate single standards of behavior while institutions stress how behavioral rules are structured together and interrelate (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 891). They can be further divided into regulative and constitutive norms; the former defines standards of appropriate behavior that shape interests and help coordinate the behavior of political actors, while the latter expresses actor identities that also define interests and thus shape behavior (Katzenstein 2018, 18-19).

The question is how to examine the norms empirically, as norms are not physical objects but observable only indirectly from the outside. One way to do so is to focus on how norms provide justification for action; as norms, by definition, lay out what is right and wrong, they leave an “extensive trail of communication among actors” that scholars can observe directly (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 892). This means that the reasoning that actors use to justify their actions can be defined as norms.

The key actors to be examined in this paper are the general populace and the decision-makers in Japan during the 1950s and 60s. First, the general populace is further divided into two: those on the Japanese mainland and Okinawa. This paper distinguishes Okinawa from the mainland because prior to the adoption of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, Okinawa had been under American jurisdiction for two decades and not part of Japan. Second, the latter includes the decision-makers that supported the Three Non-Nuclear Principles. This paper mainly focuses on the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, because the LDP had been the most powerful political group in Japan in the 1950s and 60s.

The research method to be used in the paper is the congruence method (George and Bennett 2005, 181-204). Studying a unique historic case can be best accomplished through extensive qualitative approach, such as the process-tracing method (George and Bennett 2005, 205-232). However, in-depth case studies can be difficult to be applied here because norm and its workings are difficult to be examined by outside observers directly. As a result, this paper will mainly focus on addressing whether a meaningful correlation existed between the four norms and the Three Non-Nuclear Principles.

## **IV. Four Norms and the Three Non-Nuclear Principles**

### **1. Non-Nuclear Norm in Japan**

To begin with, Japan was distinct from other countries around the world in that it had a much more painful history regarding the use of nuclear weapons. One of such history was Japan being the only state in the world that had been attacked by nuclear weapons. Even until now, nuclear weapons have been used in war only twice, and those were both in Japan: Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. What made the nuclear bombings more tragic was that the bombs were used on Japan's major cities, resulting in tens of thousands of civilian casualties. Moreover, exposure to radiation from the bombs meant that even those who survived had to suffer from illness and disabilities, and their would-be-born children as well (Sawada 2007; Tomonaga 2019).

The two bombings were not the only nuclear-related experiences that put Japan apart from the world. Another case of Japan's distinct history with nuclear weapons was the Lucky Dragon (Daigo Fukuryū Maru) Incident in 1954, in which a Japanese fishing boat named Lucky Dragon was exposed to high level of radiation from the US test of hydrogen bomb conducted on Bikini Atoll (Matashichi 2011). Even though the fishing boat was nearly 160 kilometers away from the testing site at the time, the power of the explosion was so great that all 23 sailors on the boat were exposed to radiation. Captain Kuboyama Aikichi become the first member of the crew to die from radiation, and other members of the crew also had to suffer radiation sickness.

The shock of Lucky Dragon Incident quickly spread throughout Japan and, combined with the non-nuclear norm in Japan born from

memories of two nuclear bombings in 1945, resulted in ‘nuclear allergy’ that terrified the Japanese public. This can be seen in the unprecedented anti-nuclear movement in Japan following the Lucky Dragon Incident (Naono 2018; Yamazaki 2009). After hearing the news of the Lucky Dragon Incident, the Japanese public became aware of the destructive power of nuclear weapons. Moreover, news spread about the possibility of contamination of seawater and fishery resources from nuclear radiation, and such concerns led the Japanese public and media to openly pressure the government to take action.

In addition, how the people thought about the death of captain Kuboyama Aikichi and the crew’s illness after the Lucky Dragon Incident was starkly different in Japan and the US, showing the existence of non-nuclear norms in Japan (Homei 2013). The Japanese believed that the main reason behind captain Kuboyama’s death and crew’s suffering was exposure to radiation, and something had to be done about nuclear power itself. In contrast, the public opinion in the US at the time was that while radiation might have been the source of the problem to some degree, it was not nuclear radiation but inadequate treatment from the Japanese doctors and hospitals that killed them, thus downplaying the impact of nuclear accident.

Such empirical evidence shows that there had been strong non-nuclear norm in Japan beginning from as early as 1950s. Although a number of Japanese leaders did try to overpower the non-nuclear norm, their efforts were fruitless in general. The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) assessed in 1969 that the Japanese “nuclear allergy” showed “few signs of weakening”, even though Sato and other like-minded politicians tried to encourage a “less emotional approach” to nuclear issues to the Japanese public (Central Intelligence Agency 1969).

However, the question remains; why did it take so many years for the Three Non-Nuclear Principles to emerge? The key nuclear-related events in Japan took place mostly in the 1940s and 50s, but it was only in the late 1960s that the Three Non-Nuclear Principles first appeared. To address this puzzle, this paper now turns to other norms in Japan related to the Three Non-Nuclear Principles.

## **2. Anti-War Norm in Japan**

What was also related to the Three Non-Nuclear Principles was Japan's strong anti-war norm. Since its takeover of Manchuria in 1931, Japan fought a series of wars against practically all of its neighboring countries, including the US and China. This eventually led to deaths of millions and destruction of Japanese Empire in 1945. To add to Japan's woes, it was turned into a major battlefield of newly emerging US-Soviet rivalry during the Cold War, and the fear of being caught in a conflict between two superpowers loomed large in Japan (Sakamoto 2011). This led the Japanese people to become against the idea of war in general, especially nuclear warfare.

As a result, powerful anti-war norm appeared in Japan (Berger 1998; Katzenstein 2018). Then, what were the main features of such anti-war norm? This paper approaches Japan's anti-war norm by distinguishing two distinct aspects of anti-war norm in general: victimhood and victimization. Victimization focuses on how much damage one has caused to others during a war (Bukh 2007). For instance, the mass killing of Jews during the WWII resulted in the German anti-war norm in the context of victimization that has remained to the present day. In contrast, victimhood focuses not on the crimes that perpetrators

committed on others but how much pain they themselves have suffered during the war (Bar-Tal et al. 2009; Bukh 2007). Simply put, if the idea of victimization mainly sees *others* as major victims of war, the idea of victimhood instead focuses on *themselves* as the victims of war. Between the two features of anti-war norm in general, it can be reasonably said that the foundations of anti-war norm in Japan were based on the idea of victimhood, as the fear of Japan being involved into another devastating war, or becoming ‘victims’ of another war, was what built its anti-war norm.

Such an anti-war norm in Japan was further enhanced by its fear of entrapment to the Vietnam War in the 1960s. At first glance, Japan seemed to be one of few countries that actively supported the US military operations in Vietnam; while not being involved directly in military terms, Japan ceaselessly provided economic support such as manufactured goods, construction services, and even medical units that contributed to the US military efforts in Vietnam (Llewelyn 2011, 610). Moreover, the US bases in Japan served as the main center of air operations in the Vietnam War, as the US Air Force launched a series of air campaigns against the communists from bases in Japan due to its proximity to Vietnam (Nalty 2000).

However, such increasing Japanese involvement into the Vietnam War led to fear in Japan that Japan may be entrapped into a war not its own. It was this fear that resulted in major anti-war campaigns calling for the end of the war (Havens 2014; Shiraishi 1990). The anti-war campaigns were joined by those from different backgrounds, including the Japanese Socialist Party, the Japanese Communist Party, the Zenkyoto (the All Campus Joint Struggle Committee), and the Beheiren (The Citizen’s League for Peace in Vietnam). The increasingly fierce

anti-war campaigns in Japan began to pressure the Japanese government to discuss the return of Okinawa to Japan, which had been a major US military center since the end of WWII. Eventually, a series of negotiations led to the famous Sato-Nixon Communique in 1969, outlining the return of Okinawa to Japan.

The empirical evidence discussed so far shows that there had been strong anti-war norm in Japan since the end of WWII. They contributed to the birth of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles by cultivating a political environment that forced Japan's decision-makers to pursue strong non-nuclear policy. The anti-war movements increased fear among the Japanese leaders that they could lead to political chaos similar to the one following the ratification of the US-Japan Security Treaty in 1960.

In particular, the conservatives recognized the need for the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, fearing that the liberals could use the political opening made by the Vietnam War (Kusunoki 2008). Edwin O. Reischauer, the US Ambassador to Japan at the time, reported to the State Department after a meeting with Sato in 1965 that the Prime Minister was "disturbed" by the "unexpected strength of reaction" of leftists to Vietnam(Reischauer 1965). In 1968, Richard L. Sneider, the State Department's Country Director for Japan, reported that the left has "moved to attack" Sato and the LDP, with the socialists, militant student groups, and even the relatively moderate Komeito forming a "newly-found unified front." Sneider wrote that one key reason for such heavy opposition was the US involvement in Asia and the Japanese commitment to the US, and a "good number of Japanese" were having "second thoughts" about the US (Sneider 1968).

### 3. Regional Norm in Okinawa

In addressing the origins of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, the distinct regional norm in Okinawa merits attention.<sup>5)</sup> This is because of the non-possession and non-introduction principles, both of which center on how Japan should address *foreign* nuclear weapons. The most likely candidate of foreign nuclear weapons to be either shared by Japan or introduced to Japanese soil would have been the American ones, meaning that how Japan handled the issue of American nuclear weapons was directly related to the Three Non-Nuclear Principles. Here, Okinawa mattered more than other regions because the bulk of US nuclear weapons in Japan had been stationed there for decades.

However, the Okinawans had deep anti-war and anti-American norms due to painful history during the WWII and afterwards. First, Okinawa was the last and fiercest battleground of the war between Japan and the US; the American casualties totaled nearly 50,000 including dead and wounded, while the Japanese casualties were over 100,000 (Leckie 1996; Sloan 2007). The American military occupation then followed, which increased in scale as Japan began to negotiate with the US over reduction of its military bases. The US agreed to reduce its military presence in Japan by more than half, but what it practically did was relocating the military from the Japanese mainland to Okinawa, as Okinawa was under American jurisdiction at the time.

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5) Such distinct regional norm in Okinawa can be traced back to its unique history and culture different from the Japanese mainland, as it was only in the 1879 that Okinawa officially became part of Japan. However, as this paper's main focus is the relationship between Okinawa and nuclear weapons, the history of Okinawa prior to war will not be addressed here. For Okinawa's pre-WWII history, see Kerr, G. H. (2011). *Okinawa: The History of an Island People*. Tuttle Publishing.

With the US military presence in Okinawa growing, conflict between the Okinawan locals and the Americans increased (Hook 2015; McCormack and Norimatsu 2018). Tragic accidents only further fueled the tensions, such as the Miyamori Elementary School crash in 1959, in which an American fighter aircraft F-100 crashed into Okinawan elementary school, resulting in 17 dead and more than 200 injured (Hook 2015, 310). Moreover, as of mid-1960s, number of crimes committed by American troops in Okinawa numbered nearly 1,000, including theft, arson, and even rape (しんぶん赤旗 2010).

The conflict intensified due to the Vietnam War, as Okinawa was turned into an American launching base of B-52 bombers towards targets in North Vietnam (Nalty 2000). Moreover, Okinawa became logistically crucial as well, with Maki Supply Base, the largest logistic base of operations during the war, becoming a shipping ground for American war supplies and repairs (Muto 2007, 8). This greatly increased Okinawans' fear of being involved into another war, resulting in massive anti-war protests in Okinawa (Muto 2007, 9).

This was why when the negotiations began over Okinawa's return to Japan, the issue of US nuclear weapons gained attention. The question was how much US military operation in Okinawa that Japan should guarantee after its return, especially regarding US nuclear weapons (Komine 2013). But the Okinawans hated the idea of continued American presence on their islands, which can be observed in the protest movements at the time. Most prominently, after a car driven by drunk American soldiers hit an Okinawan in 1970, hundreds of Okinawans gathered in what came to be known as the 'Koza Riot' and stormed the streets, even assaulting American military bases and burning buildings in the process (Inoue 2007, 53). In another case, the

leading group in Okinawan resistance to American occupation, *Fukkikyo* (復帰協, abbreviation of 沖縄県祖国復帰協議会, *Okinawa-ken Sokoku Fukki Kyogikai*), demanded the removal of US nuclear weapons in Okinawa as well as immediate and unconditional reversion of Okinawa to Japan. It was also joined by other reformist parties in Okinawa as well, such as the Okinawa People's Party (OPP), the Okinawa Socialist Masses Party (SMP) and the Okinawa Socialists Party (OSP) (Inoue 2007, 51).

In short, the Okinawans harbored strong anti-war and anti-nuclear norms, which in turn had a significant impact on anti-nuclear movements on the Japanese mainland. Thomas L. Hughes, Director of the US Bureau of Intelligence and Research, wrote to the Secretary of State Dean Rusk that during a debate on Okinawa, Sato was compelled to repeatedly affirm the Three Non-Nuclear Principles due to opposition parties' continued pressure (Hughes 1968). In a National Security Council (NSC) meeting on April 30, 1969, U. Alexis Johnson, the US Ambassador to Japan at the time, similarly reported that Sato could no longer agree to unlimited nuclear storage in Okinawa to the US, because the Japanese domestic opposition will not tolerate it and it may result in his downfall (National Security Council 1969).

This is not to argue that the Okinawans accomplished their goals, as Japan and the US signed a series of secret treaties that granted the Americans the right to introduce nuclear weapons in Okinawa (Komine 2013; 北岡伸一 外. 2010). However, the Okinawan efforts strengthened anti-nuclear movements in Japan, which pressured Prime Minister Sato and the LDP leadership to adopt the Three Non-Nuclear Principles. Moreover, the US nuclear rights in Okinawa were conditional at best, as the secret treaty stated that the US rights would be recognized 'only

under emergencies’ and that prior consultation with Japan was required (Komine 2013, 829-830).

#### **4. Conservative Norm in the LDP Leadership**

If the three norms discussed so far constitute the bottom-up side of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, the conservative norm in the leadership of the Liberal Democratic Party constitutes the top-down perspective. Since the end of WWII, there have been two different groups with conflicting ideologies in the LDP: pro-American conservatives and anti-American conservatives (Samuels 2020, 109-127). While the aim of two groups were alike, they differed on how they should achieve it. The pro-American conservatives, also called ‘normal nationalists’, believed that Japan should cooperate with the US, and that Japan’s restoration to greatness could be achieved through the strengthening of the US-Japan alliance. In contrast, the anti-American conservatives, also called ‘neo-autonomists’, thought that the US was a threat to the traditional Japanese values.

Then, how were the conservative norms shared by normal nationalists and neo-autonomists respectively related to the adoption of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles? To begin with, the Three Non-Nuclear Principles were largely consistent with the ideas shared by the normal nationalists. The normal nationalists were characterized by their belief that Japan must continue to cooperate with the US and rely on the US nuclear umbrella, which would allow Japan to concentrate on its economy. The most well-acknowledged political figure upholding such a belief was Yoshida Shigeru, whose vision of ‘Yoshida Doctrine’ passed onto his conservative disciples such as Ikeda Hayato and Sato

Eisaku and became the key conservative ideology in the post-war Japan (Samuels 2010, 31-34).

In such background, it was no surprise that normal nationalists like Sato were quick to support the first two of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles: the non-production and non-possession principles. The two principles implied that Japan would remain firmly committed to the vision of Yoshida Doctrine, as they meant Japan would forgo its independent nuclear arsenal and continue to rely on the US-led alliance for security.<sup>6)</sup> Simply put, the two principles were little more than a “confirmation of his earlier policy” for Sato (Kusunoki 2008, 38). Such line of reasoning can be observed in Sato’s remarks to US decision-makers at the time. During the Nixon-Sato summit on January 6, 1972, Sato said to Nixon that the adoption of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles meant Japan “must rely on the US nuclear umbrella under the Mutual Security Treaty”, and while it was “quite natural” that Japan should play a larger economic role globally, in defense Japan had “no other recourse except to the United States nuclear umbrella.” (Holdridge 1972).

In addition, the neo-autonomists supported the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, but for different reasons. The Three Non-Nuclear Principles had two sides of a coin; while limiting Japan’s development of nuclear weapons, they also forbade the US from placing its nuclear weapons on Japanese soil. This strongly appealed to the neo-autonomists as a sign of Japan’s freedom from American interference, giving them reason to

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6) Ironically, this was also the reason why Sato and his fellow normal nationalists were reluctant to support the third principle, the non-introduction principle, as it could jeopardize US nuclear umbrella to Japan. The issue was resolved by a series of secret treaties between Japan and the US, allowing the latter to introduce its nuclear arsenal to Japan in secret (Komine 2013; 北岡伸一 外. 2010).

support the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, especially the non-introduction principle.

The empirical evidence shows that the neo-autonomists in the LDP did support the Three Non-Nuclear Principles out of their desire for Japan's autonomy from the US. Most prominently, Nakasone Yasuhiro, the Minister of Transportation at the time and future Prime Minister of Japan, was one of key conservative politicians that supported the inclusion of non-introduction clause to the Three Non-Nuclear Principles (Kusunoki 2008, 39). Being a hard-line advocate of Japan's autonomous defense, he argued that Japan should rely less on Americans and instead develop its own defensive capabilities. When Sato gathered his cabinet members to discuss the specifics of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, it was Nakasone who persuaded Sato that the non-introduction principle was vital to Japan.

Nakasone's key role in Japan's nuclear policy was acknowledged by the outside observers as well. After his visit to Japan, the US Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird reported to Nixon in 1971 that Nakasone will "remain influential" in the LDP, and the US will see "more of Nakasone over the coming years" (Laird 1971). Laird also wrote that he had to spend more time with Nakasone than Sato himself to consult US foreign policy and national security strategy. Henry Kissinger, one of key foreign policymakers in the US at the time, similarly reported to Nixon that Nakasone seemed to be a "dynamic and ambitious young politician" and expressed a "vague kind of assertive nationalism", which seemed to be aimed at "giving Japan a greater role" (Kissinger 1972).

Another key conservative against the idea of US nuclear weapons in Japan was Ishihara Shintaro. A former journalist covering the Vietnam

War, he was the first politician in Japan to win the Upper House election by more than three million votes. What was notable about Ishihara was that he was a strong critic of US influence on Japan (盛田昭夫·石原慎太郎 1989). In particular, he was highly critical of US nuclear umbrella, and even dared to declare on the floor of Diet that the US was unlikely to provide nuclear protection to Japan in case of a national emergency (Samuels 2010, 120).

## V. Conclusion

This paper explored the normative origins of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles in Japan through examination of its history in 1950s and 60s. By doing so, this study discovered evidence on correlation between the Three Non-Nuclear Principles and following four norms in Japan: 1) non-nuclear norm, 2) anti-war norm, 3) regional norm in Okinawa, 4) conservative norm in the LDP leadership. The findings show that along with security and international factors, not one but series of norms in Japan were linked to the adoption of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles in 1971.

The findings of this research have both academic and real-life policy implications. From an academic perspective, this paper can contribute to complete understanding on the adoption of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles. While the existing studies have considerable explanatory power in addressing the general course of Japan's nuclear policy, there were several gaps in addressing the normative origins of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles. Building on the existing studies, the findings

of this paper can contribute to filling such a gap and enriching study on Japan's nuclear policy.

In addition, this research can contribute to future studies on the durability of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles. This paper's goal is to examine what norms were behind the adoption of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, not necessarily meaning that the four norms have allowed Japan to *maintain* them afterwards. However, the origin and durability are not completely unrelated, because one can better understand how something continues to last when one has full knowledge of its origin as well. By uncovering their starting point, this study can help scholars in studying the durability of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles to present day.

This paper also has real-life policy implications. Most importantly, this study can aid South Korean decision-makers in preparing for changes in Japan's nuclear policy in the future. With China, Russia and North Korea all being nuclear-armed states, South Korea and Japan remain the only non-nuclear countries in Northeast Asia. When even Japan goes nuclear, South Korea will be completely surrounded by nuclear powers from all sides, which is sure to complicate its security policy.

To South Korea's woes, some conservatives in Japan have recently begun to openly question the credibility of US extended deterrence and the usefulness of NPT, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 (産経新聞 2022/08/03; 毎日新聞 2022/04/07). However, despite such voices of dissent, the Three Non-Nuclear Principles are still behind the Japan's nuclear policy, with Japanese mainstream politicians strongly re-emphasizing the importance of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles as the backbone of Japan's nuclear policy (NHK

2022/08/06). This means that as long as the Three Non-Nuclear Principles remain firm in Japan, its strong commitment to non-proliferation is unlikely to change significantly in the future. In this context, this research can assist South Korean decision-makers to better comprehend the background of Japan's nuclear policy and assess what factors can alter its course.

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요약

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## 비핵3원칙의 규범적 기원 연구

- 1950, 60년대 일본 국내의 반핵 여론을 중심으로 -

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1971년 일본은 향후 핵무기를 제조하지도, 보유하지도, 반입하지도 않겠다는 이른바 ‘비핵3원칙’을 도입했다. 비핵3원칙은 다른 국가들에 비해 유례가 없을 정도로 높은 수준의 비확산 정책이었으며, 오늘날까지 일본의 핵 정책의 근간을 이루고 있다고 평가받는다. 이처럼 강한 비확산 정책을 일본이 1971년에 도입한 이유는 무엇인가? 이에 본 논문은 당시 비핵3원칙의 도입을 찬성한 일본 국내 행위자들의 규범적 배경을 살펴보았다. 그리고 일본 특유의 4개 규범, 즉 1) 일본의 비핵 규범, 2) 일본의 반전 규범, 3) 오키나와의 지역 규범, 4) 당시 일본의 집권 여당이던 자유민주당 지도부의 보수적 규범이 비핵3원칙의 도입을 찬성한 일본 국내 행위자들과 긴밀히 연결되어 있었음을 확인할 수 있었다.

**주제어:** 비핵3원칙, 사토 에이사쿠, 일본, 핵무기, 비확산