

Japan's Political and Constitutional Crossroads

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By John Junkerman, Gavan McCormack, and David McNeill

Japan is at a constitutional—and political—crossroads. In the wake of dispatch of GSDF forces to Iraq and the MSDF fleet to the Persian Gulf, the pacifist constitution faces the possibility of revision for the first time since its adoption during the postwar occupation sixty years ago. Also well advanced is a parallel effort to revise the Fundamental Law of Education, which was adopted as a companion to the constitution, in an effort to enshrine the nurturing of patriotism as a goal of the educational system. Combined with the deepening integration of Japan's Self Defense Forces and the US military in an expanded conception of the alliance, these moves signal the transformation of Japan's posture on the world scene.

Since its founding in 1955, Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has repeatedly called for revision of the constitution. Over the decades, attempts to carry out this policy faltered, primarily because the pacifist and democratic clauses of the constitution enjoyed broad support among the Japanese people. Unable to mobilize the two-thirds vote of both houses of the Diet required for revising the constitution, LDP efforts never went beyond the discussion stage.

In the late 1990s, the prospects for revision began to shift. The centrist Democratic Party of Japan, which is not averse to revision, replaced the strongly anti-revision Social Democratic

Party as the main opposition party, while continuing tensions with North Korea began to erode public support for pacifism. Sensing that its moment had arrived, the LDP set up research commissions on the constitution in both houses of the Diet in January 2000 to begin the lengthy process of building a consensus in favor of revision. While that consensus has been hard to come by (the commissions issued reports in the spring of 2005 that reflected a range of opinion), the LDP nevertheless drafted an extensive set of revisions, which it announced last October.

The Diet also began deliberating a national referendum law, establishing the process for ratifying constitutional revisions once they have passed the Diet (a majority vote of the Japanese public is required under the present constitution). Early drafts of this law contained controversial provisions that restricted media reporting before the referendum vote. These provisions have since been replaced by an appeal for media self-restraint. An agreement has not yet been reached on the age of eligibility to vote in the referendum and several other matters.

None of these legislative moves reached fruition during the Diet session that ended in June, and there is as yet no timetable for carrying out the revision of the constitution. The LDP is now preoccupied with choosing a successor to prime minister Koizumi Junichiro, whose term expires in September. While it remains to be seen how high a priority the next prime minister will place on revising the constitution, the process is likely to take several years to run its course.

The proposed revision has sparked considerable debate and citizen activism, which is in the subject of this “zadankai.” The zadankai—round-table discussion—is a staple of Japanese journalism. Bringing together commentators from divergent fields, the discussion is free wheeling.

The round table took place in mid-May at the International House in Tokyo. The participants were:

John Junkerman, a Tokyo-based American documentary filmmaker, whose latest film is the award-winning “Japan’s Peace Constitution.” The film addresses the history of the constitution and the implications of its revision from an international perspective, featuring interviews with historian John Dower, political scientist Chalmers Johnson, and sociologist Hidaka Rokuro, as well as writers and historians from Korea, China, and the Middle East. The English version of the film is available from [First Run Icarus Films](#).

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The Politics of Constitutional Revision

John Junkerman (JJ): We started production on the film “Japan’s Peace Constitution” in January

2004. This was just about the time that the Self Defense Force was dispatched to join the “coalition of the willing” in Iraq. Around the same time both the Liberal Democratic Party and the Democratic Party of Japan announced that they would each be releasing proposals for revising the constitution during 2005 (the LDP in time for the 50th anniversary of the founding of the party in the fall of the year). It was pretty clear what they had in mind: revise the constitution, particularly the no-war clause, Article 9, to make it easier for Japan to participate in America’s overseas military adventures. We set out to make a film that examines the implications of such a move from an international perspective.

The film was finished in April 2005 and it has been in distribution ever since. It’s been remarkably well received, far beyond our expectations, and for a documentary, it’s got very long legs. It’s been shown at perhaps 200 independent screenings, of which I’ve spoken at about 50 or so, and we’re still doing two or three screenings a week. It’s sold thousands of copies in DVD, which are often passed around or used for informal screenings, so its been seen by a fairly substantial audience. What’s been impressive to us is the level of concern; it’s a serious subject and not a very flashy documentary, but people come out in good numbers, and the film is being used in their organizing efforts.

I’ve been impressed with how rich a subject the constitution is. It’s a prism that lets you look at so many aspects of postwar Japanese history: the history of the constitution itself, the history of the practice of democracy as it developed in Japan, the relationship between Japan and the United States, and between Japan and its Asian neighbors. All of these things come into play, so when I talk about the film, I rarely focus on the constitution itself, but it’s these surrounding issues that we end up talking about. Particularly with the war in Iraq, what we have right in front of us is the kind of military

activity Japan would be enabled to engage in, so addressing the proposed changes to the constitution is not a theoretical discussion, it's a real, practical discussion. I thought perhaps we could talk about the specific issues and prospects for revising the constitution, as well as the broader context.

I'd like to start with an observation. When we did our first screenings of the film a year ago, people were very tentative, and there was a sense of "this is a very important issue but I don't know how in the world we're going to stop it." There was a sense of a locomotive in motion and it being essentially unstoppable. "How do we talk about the subject, how do we reach people and awaken them to its importance?" A large majority of Diet members favored changing the constitution, and public opinion polls showed the public supported it too. But as the year unfolded, that sense has changed, so now people are speaking with much greater confidence, they're saying, "OK, this is what we need to do, so let's go out and do it. Maybe we can stop this thing after all."

Constitutional Revision and the Citizens Movement

The big change, I think, has been the emergence of the Article 9 Associations (9-jo no Kai). These have been established throughout the country in response to an appeal to defend Article 9, which was put out by nine writers and activists in June 2004. Some 4,700 of these associations have now been officially registered. Their number is growing steadily, so two or three months ago their website said 4,000. Last week it was 4,700 and it's quickly approaching 5,000. [Editor's note: As of June 10, the figure stood at 5,174.]

David McNeill (DM): What's the character of the associations? When I look at their web page, I see that the leaders are quite elderly. What are the chapters like?

JJ: The chapters range widely. There are city-wide chapters, Nara has a very big one, Osaka also; then there are ward-level chapters in many of the wards of Tokyo; there are occupational chapters (I'm a member of the chapter for film people, there's another for mass media people, another for people involved with medicine). Then there are smaller ones, some on a neighborhood scale. I brought along some sembei that were produced by the West Kawagoe Article 9 Association, which had a screening of the film the other day, with over 300 people attending. I was at Shinshu University a few weeks ago, and they're starting one there, and others at other universities. Some are quite small; there's no threshold, and the only requirement is that you are opposed to changing Article 9. The Communist Party has gotten behind this in a big way and undoubtedly, with some of the chapters, the core is formed by Communist Party activists. But the appeal itself was issued by people who don't have a relationship to any party, they're basically veterans of the citizen's movements of the 1960s and 70s—Oe Kenzaburo, Oda Makoto, Tsurumi Shunsuke, and six others.

So, one, it's grown so rapidly that people are very much encouraged, and there is a real sense that there's a possibility that it can actually develop into a large citizen's movement. Second, the issue of the constitution has, in a sense, been taken back from the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party. By default, it was their issue, and a year ago, if you raised the issue of the constitution, you were seen as being likely a member of one of the leftist parties, because they were the only people talking about it until that time. But now, with this non-party affiliated movement around Article 9, a lot of mobilization, a lot of publicity, it's become once again a citizens' issue.

Gavan McCormack (GM): So it's a single, nationally coordinated Beheiren-type

movement, it's Beheiren [Citizens' League for Peace in Vietnam, active from 1965 to 1974] updated, in the sense that it brought together people who were against the Vietnam War, and whatever politics they had otherwise was irrelevant.

JJ: I think that's probably a fair way to put it. And the core activists are not in their 70s or 80s. Many are people in their 50s who were active at the time of the Vietnam War. But it's not centrally coordinated at all, it's very much a grassroots movement. The appeal was sent out, they publish a minimal amount of support materials, some pamphlets, some videos, but it's largely lacking in coordination, which is both its strength and its weakness, I think.

GM: This was true of Beheiren as well. Whoever wanted to could call themselves a Beheiren chapter, so in that sense it's not dissimilar.

DM: But that raises the question, how exactly are they going to apply pressure on the state to prevent constitutional revision. Do they have a plan of action, or are they simply a loose grassroots federation that hopes in some loose way to bring about change?

JJ: I think the latter, and intentionally so, because there was a sense that getting people to line up behind one core group of leaders was not going to happen. But it does leave every chapter with the job of defining their own direction, which means, for the most part, they've been holding meetings and doing education. They'll bring in speakers. For example, Komori Yoichi, the secretary-general of the association and a professor at the University of Tokyo, is giving talks two or three times a week. He's a very effective speaker and has a great way of making the issue accessible and compelling. So, there's a tremendous amount of education going on, and our film is a part of that, a way to get the conversation started. And from there, where do you go?

There's going to be a meeting in June for activists from this organization to share their experiences about how to organize effectively. Aside from that there was a gathering of 9500 people in Makihara last July, the first anniversary of the appeal. But other than that, it's very decentralized, which is a strength, since education really needs to be done with people reaching out to their neighbors and creating small organizations in their localities that rely upon natural networks. But the question is, where to go from here. From my perspective it would be great if someone were to come up with an alternative plan for revising the constitution. There's a widespread feeling in Japan that the constitution is in need of revision, and the poll figures show that. NHK did a poll in early April, which showed that 42 percent think the constitution needs to be revised, 19 percent say no, and 32 percent are undecided.

DM: I've got a different poll that Asahi did in April that says that 56 percent approved of constitutional revision, but there was a survey done by a group of activists in early May found that 77 percent were against changing Article 9, so you've got this profound discrepancy, haven't you, where quite a lot of people it seems want to change the constitution, but they don't know or understand or perhaps aren't aware of the implications.

JJ: Even the NHK poll, when they asked "Is it necessary to revise Article 9?", only 24 percent answered yes, 39 percent said no, and 28 percent were undecided. The poll that found 77 percent against changing Article 9 is a bit suspect, since they stood outside of train stations asking people to put stickers on a board reflecting their view, and people who supported changing Article 9 would avoid a public display like that, I would think, so it lacks the weight of a telephone poll, but the polls have been fairly consistent over the last year, showing that many think the constitution needs to be changed (I think to a large extent

they think the Self Defense Force needs to be incorporated into the constitution), but that the principles of Article 9 should be left untouched. It would be great if someone were to come up with an effective counter-proposal that galvanized people around those ideas. There are counter-proposals out there, but they haven't crystallized support.

The Constitution and the Reorganization of the Japanese State

GM: This being the 60th year of both the constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education, I perceive the process under way today as involving the constitution, the Fundamental Law on Education, and the general security arrangement, so the Japanese state is in a process of reorganization without parallel in the whole postwar period. It is clear that the pressure is on to get the Fundamental Law of Education done first in the current session of the Diet, and then to proceed to the constitution. Koizumi has talked very clearly about revising the state in a way comparable to the formation of the Meiji state and the occupation reforms, so this is the third wave of fundamental reform in modern Japan. Even though he's supposedly a conservative, he's the most radical politician in postwar Japan. Now we've had Kempo and Ampo, we've had the constitution and the security treaty, but in fact the key constitutional document has been Ampo, the security treaty; whenever there has been a conflict priority has been given to the security treaty. So the crucial process of revision that's underway now concerns the security arrangements, and they're the ones that don't go before the Diet. There's no referendum, they don't go before anything. And they're almost settled. Japan is slated to become the Great Britain of East Asia, irrespective of whatever may or may not be done to the constitution.

I look at the constitution as having these qualities: First, plainly, it's imposed on a

defeated enemy country by its conqueror. Secondly, it's unrevised after 60 years. Thirdly, it's democratic because of its inclusion of the principles of popular sovereignty, human rights, and division of powers. Fourthly, and very crucially, it's imperial. When MacArthur wrote that directive in February 1946, the number one requirement was that the emperor would be at the head of the state. So the No 1 "oshitsuke," or American imposition, was the emperor. The emperor was an absolute requirement for the United States, for reasons we might discuss later, but because of that, in turn, (fifth if you like) Article 9 was necessary. Otherwise in Asian countries, and Australia, no one would have accepted a peace treaty that installed the commander in chief of the old Japanese army as its head of state. It's as absurd as if, in 2003, the United States having overthrown Saddam Hussein, had insisted that he be the central figure in the new state. Articles 1 through 8 [establishing the emperor's role under the constitution] required Article 9, and the relationship between the two is fundamental. Sixth, the constitution was divisive, it's not often thought of in this way, but it severed Okinawa from Japan. Okinawa was the "war state," with the rest of Japan as the "peace state."

So what is the LDP proposal now for revision? First of all, a fundamental reworking of the preamble. The emperor system is to be elevated from the main text of the constitution into the preamble, therefore made sacrosanct, so it will be extremely difficult to address the emperor question thereafter. "Love of nation" is to be installed in the preamble. But two substantial revisions in the body of the constitution around which the LDP is concentrating are Article 9, to normalize the Self Defense Forces as a Japanese army, and Article 20, subsection 3 [which requires the state to refrain from religious activity], to legitimize Yasukuni. Finally, they propose the simplification of future revisions by lowering the requirement of a two-thirds majority of the

Diet to one-half.

Yasukuni and the US-Japan Relationship

What does this mean? What is Japan saying to the world, after sixty years? They're saying, we want to stand shoulder to shoulder with the United States. That's the crucial demand of the LDP. And secondly, to hell with Asia, we want to continue with Yasukuni and therefore we're going to legitimize it under the constitution because, as you all know, the courts have been saying it's unconstitutional, so we overcome that by revising the constitution. And thirdly, we'll proceed with more radical constitutional revision after these two things - satisfying America and saying to hell with Asia - are done. However, it's very difficult to take this before the Japanese people and say, this is our agenda. So it's been softened by the inclusion of a number of other clauses about freedom of information and environmental rights, which are the sop to Japanese public opinion, to say there's an idealistic dimension. Actually, the idealistic dimension was much stronger in the early drafts prepared by the Yomiuri shimbun, but as the focus is reduced to the really crucial issues, the issues that Washington is pushing and the issues that are demanded because of the collapse in relations with Asia, we get the focus on these two things.

Former prime minister Nakasone Yasuhiro, who for decades has led the push for revising the constitution, is of course the most antagonistic to this approach, because it deletes all of his pet agenda of extolling in the preamble the glories of the Japanese nation and the sacred tradition and so on, but he now takes the position that once we get these revisions through we can turn our attention to his agenda down the track.

What are the prospects? It seems to me that the Yomiuri has been quite unique in Western industrial democracies. The world's largest newspaper has been conducting a crusade for

the last 15 years to revise the constitution, never allowing an alternative, or a critical, or a hostile voice to appear in its pages. In the past two years, the Yomiuri said two things. One, in May 2004, it said "however, a few extremists still insist on keeping the current constitution intact," so the Yomiuri is furious that its campaign has not pushed people in the direction that it wanted, and there are people who are "extremists" for wanting to maintain the constitution as it is. But at the same time, in 2005, the Yomiuri said, we've got 43.6 percent for revision of Article 9, 46 percent against it, and it concluded that there is probably not enough political energy and will to carry the revision process through.

A couple of observations. One is, taking the structure of the state as a whole, it seems to me that Koizumi is trying to fuse neoliberalism and neonationalism, and that one requires the other. In other words, as you dissolve society, as you dissolve all the intermediate organizations that people depend on, then you need to reinforce the state, you need patriotism, you need nationalism. But it's not genuine nationalism or patriotism, since the key thrust of all of this is to turn Japan into what Gotoda Masaharu calls a "zokkoku," a vassal state. The more Koizumi structurally subordinates Japan to the United States, the more it's necessary for him to stand up and say, We Japanese are glorious and wonderful, and we go to Yasukuni. Yasukuni is required by the vassal-state status that he's embracing for Japan.

Constitutional Alternatives

What are the alternatives? In the book I jointly wrote with Glenn Hook in 2001, when the debate was at a fairly early stage, we featured the proposals of what we described as the Iwanami group, or the Sekai group (Wada Haruki, Koseki Shoichi, and others). They came out last year with a restatement of their position, which calls for adopting a

Fundamental Law of Peace. It seems that the Social Democratic Party came out in February with a similar proposal—they're not using the term Fundamental Law of Peace, but in fact their solution to the Article 9 and SDF problem is to divide the SDF into separate forces, for international cooperation, for defense of the national territory, and for emergency relief internationally and domestically. And that seems to me to be a sensible and politically realistic solution. It recognizes that the dilemma with the Article 9 group, the idea of *goken*, or defending the constitution, allows the initiative to pass to the other side, the side pushing for change, and to be presented as conservatives at a time when people are ready for some kind of change. That's a weak position to be in.

DM: Just to play devil's advocate here, when Watanabe Tsuneo, editor-in-chief of the *Yomiuri*, gave a press conference at the Foreign Correspondents Club a few months ago, it was quite interesting. He's quite old now, so he was very frank, and basically he said he would not support Abe Shinzo for leader of the LDP, because of his visits to Yasukuni, and that he favored Fukuda Yasuo, because Fukuda was older, more dedicated to international diplomacy, has a better head on his shoulders, and is less of a firebrand. Two things struck me about this. First is the amount of power that this man has. Effectively he controls the editorial policy of a newspaper with 14 million readers, right? For 15 years, he's pushed the constitution revision line. But at the same time, it seemed to represent a fracture at some level of, to use a very old phrase, the ruling class. There are disputes at the top about what exactly Japan should do, as you always have when a country embarks on the kind of changes that Gavan has summed up. Some people are afraid of the consequences, and it seems that one of those people is Watanabe.

The other semi-significant thing that has happened lately is, in the States, a senior

member of the House, international relations committee chair Henry Hyde, wrote to the speaker of the House, demanding that if Koizumi was to address a joint session of Congress he should first make clear that he would never again go to Yasukuni.

GM: So the issue is finally on the table. It's very late, with Koizumi only having a couple of more months to go, but of course Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni are an affront to the United States, even more than they are to China or South Korea, because neither China nor South Korea was there when the San Francisco Treaty was signed, but the United States was there.

DM: Is there a possibility that America is worried about the economic consequences of this dispute between Japan and China? When Abe was at the club last year, a lot of the questions were directed toward Yasukuni and whether he would continue going or not. Abe constantly separated the political and the economic, as Koizumi does. He said, our economic relationship with China is sacrosanct, but this is a political issue and it's separate. And you have to say, that, so far, things seem to bear that out. There's a lot of hot air, there's potential for trouble down the road, but a JETRO survey earlier this year showed that trade between China and Japan is onward and upward, barely a blip, despite the threats of a boycott. But the question for me is, are we beginning to see some movement around Yasukuni at the top of Japanese ruling circles and also in America, with members of the administration over there worried that this thing might get out of hand.

JJ: And the Keizai Doyukai, the Kansai-based business association, just last week appealed to Koizumi to stop going to Yasukuni, so you're getting the economic establishment weighing in as well, saying that it's time to stop that foolishness. But I think Gavan's right that it's very difficult to stop that foolishness because it goes hand in hand with the vassal state

relationship with the US, which has become so self-evident in the last year with the realignment of US bases and the integration of the command structures of the SDF and the US forces, and this absurd bill that the US is presenting to the Japanese to pay for the repositioning of the Marines from Okinawa to Guam, which is very hard to swallow, hard even for the LDP to swallow, but much harder for the general public to swallow. Why should Japan pay \$7 billion to move US troops to Guam? To build their schools and golf courses on Guam?

Getting back to the constitution, we have footage in the film of Koizumi addressing the Diet in October 2001, where he says, “To exercise the right of collective self defense, we’d have to revise the constitution, but the time is not right to do so. Instead, we are using all our wits to explore the gaps between the Preamble to the constitution and Article 9” to find a way to support the United States in their war on terror. What he did was to proceed to find a way, perhaps by crow barring those gaps a bit wider than they had been, to do exactly what he wanted to do. He’s managed to accomplish many of the things that were the goals for revising the constitution. In a sense it’s taken the wind out of the sails of revision. Likewise, the focus on the Fundamental Law of Education and the reorganization of the US bases are two other ways of accomplishing the same thing. Revising the constitution is no longer on the agenda for the remainder of Koizumi’s term (though they’re moving ahead with drafting the National Referendum Law). Once again, there’s the sense that they can do what they want without revising the constitution, so why bother.

GM: Or by revising the constitution through interpretation, *kaishakukaiken*. I think Koizumi has shown that it’s possible to do almost anything by saying, “Well, we interpret it to mean that we can do it.” But at the same time, the LDP has committed itself to try to get

revision, so it’s in a contradictory position. Yasuoka Okiharu, the man within the LDP responsible for the constitution, has said, “If you call a spade a spade (my translation for *sotchoku yomeba*, or reading it straight), the SDF are in violation of the constitution.” I think there’s no other Western democracy where the constitutionality of the state structures is in question as it is in Japan. So whether the constitution is revised or not, the state has been pulled and pushed in extremely dangerous directions. In other words, if the revision of the terms of the constitution can be stopped, that would be fine, but it wouldn’t really change the fundamental problems of the Japanese state.

The Japanese Media

DM: This raises the question of how well the media in Japan has done its job in alerting people to the profound changes that are going on. I think they’ve done an incredibly poor job. I was reading in the paper today that 70 journalists are covering Yankee outfielder Matsui Hideki’s press conference over his broken wrist. They’re permanently parked in America, on this baseball player’s doorstep. And to the best of my knowledge, there’s not a single journalist from a major daily or broadcaster in Iraq. If you look at the priorities of the media—of course, this is true elsewhere as well, but the media here are at the head of that trend. You’ve got a whole pack of media following Matsui Hideki, but they can’t somehow bring themselves to report what’s going on in Iraq. That’s a huge worry.

GM: It’s not only Iraq. When the post office bill was under debate last year, Koizumi was asked in the Diet, was this not in response to an American demand, part of a list of demands that the US submits every year.. Privatization of the post office has been at the top of the list for these last several years, and Koizumi said he wasn’t aware of this set of demands from the United States, which is inconceivable.

Who's to benefit from the privatization of the postal system? Well, American financial institutions. The Japanese media talked about rural post offices, but they didn't analyze the underlying issues at all.

DM: A lot of things seem to fly beneath their radar, really quite significant things. Anyone who's interested in the kinds of things we're talking about today knows they are important, but the media does not cover them. There was a demonstration in Shibuya three weeks ago. The police gave permission for the demonstration, which was quite small, only about 150 people; but then they waded into the crowd and arrested three of the activists and held them for up to ten days, the last one was released last week. For any media organization that has its eye on the ball, that's significant news, to give permission for a demonstration and then to turn around and, in effect, frame the leaders and arrest people. And things like that go on all of the time. This business with the Tachikawa incident, in which activists were arrested for distributing anti-war leaflets within SDF housing, is only the biggest in a large number of similar incidents, in which people are doing the same thing they've been doing for years, really quite harmless, to be honest, usually middle-aged or older people, who've been distributing antiwar fliers around the country. Now, suddenly they are being arrested by the Koan [security police] and thrown into detention centers for quite long periods of time.

JJ: And then they use that as an excuse to raid their offices as well and seize their computers. These are really remarkable police-state tactics. It's way out of line.

DM: It's way over the top, when you consider the "threat" that these people pose to the state. They don't pose any threat whatsoever. It's petty, it's vindictive, but it's linked in a way to what we're talking about today, which is laying the groundwork for these changes, getting these people out of the way, the last remnants

of the pacifists, the antiwar activists, and so on. And just to finish the point, the media does an incredibly bad job in reporting this.

GM: I agree, but I think the frame for seeing what the problem is requires understanding the media as well as thinking more about what Koizumi represents, what the Koizumi state is about. There is a failure to probe the possibility that Koizumi might be Washington's man in East Asia, essentially a puppet. To report Koizumi's "reform" without quotes, as if Koizumi were a reformer—if the media were serious, they would put quotes around it every time they used that term. Koizumi has appropriated that term, he's appropriated the symbols of Japanese nationalism, and he's not questioned about that. The subordination of Japan to the US is a key taboo question, and of course the ultimate taboo question is the tenno, the emperor. I was interested that Yasuoka Okiharu, the senior LDP official responsible for coordinating party policy on the constitution, talking informally to Takahashi Tetsuya of Tokyo University. He said, "We need to stress waga kuni no kunigara—our country's distinctive character." This is essentially the same as the prewar kokutai, it's almost the same word, it's just slightly different characters. He put it in the following terms (my translation): "Put simply, we mean national identity. For example, the emperor is the concentrated expression of Japanese history and tradition. Ours is seen by the world as an outstanding culture, unique in our emperor system that provides a symbolic pointer for expression of our people's sentiments and for their feelings of respectful devotion."

The Emperor, Japanese Uniqueness, and Subordination to the US

Coming back to the question of the United States' insistence that the Japanese state be emperor-centered. I think that went together with Japanese notions of separateness from Asia, Japanese uniqueness. That was the

insurance that Japan would never make peace with Asia, would never become part of an Asian community, and therefore would remain permanently subordinate to the United States. So the emperor is the linchpin of permanent subordination to the United States. Although the rightists can say he is the symbol of Japanese uniqueness and glory, actually he is the symbol of permanent Japanese subordination.

DM: My perspective on the emperor system is again narrowly focused on the media. The emperor remains a taboo, many people talk about how the taboo is fading, but it still is an enormous taboo and a kind of roadmap for other taboos. It means that other things are out of bounds because of the ease with which they lead toward debate about the emperor. I had this weird experience about two months ago. A Japanese television station, I think it was Nippon TV, for their 8:00 in the morning program, they asked me if I would comment on the pregnancy of Kiko-sama, Princess Kiko, the wife of the emperor's second son, Prince Akishino. They're often eager to get a comment from a correspondent from a British publication, because Britain also has a royal family. So they came to my house, which is two hours outside of Tokyo. They drove out and didn't arrive until 11:00 at night, set the cameras up, and said, "What do you think of the pregnancy of Kiko-sama, as a British correspondent?" I said, "It seems to me, to a lot of British correspondents, somewhat bizarre that a lot of the debate in Japan has to do with the uniqueness of Japan. I think I used the phrase *ketto no junsui*, the 'essence of purity'." And the cameras went off, and they said, "Chotto mazui desu ne, that won't do, you can't say that." So I said, "Let's try it again." And I essentially said the same thing, but I said it via the example of the UK, "In the UK there used to be a belief that the British royal family represented the uniqueness of the British people. But that belief has faded, and most people now know that the British imperial

family is made up of Germans and Russians and Greeks, so the belief that they represent the essence of the British people has faded, while in Japan it still survives. And that's rather scary." And I mentioned Hiranuma Takeo's point (in the debate over whether to allow a woman to become emperor) about how terrible it would be if Aiko, the daughter of the crown prince, married a blue-eyed foreigner. Again the camera went off and again they said, "No, we don't want you to say that." And this time they phoned the producer and asked her, "Can he say this, this is what he wants to say," and she said "no". Eventually I said, "Well, what do you want me to say?" And they said, "Can you say that the British people are very happy that Kiko-sama is pregnant?" And to my shame I said something like, "A lot of people in the UK are happy that she is pregnant, although most people favor a female emperor." Anyway the comments were never broadcast, after two hours coming out, two hours going back, a carload of five people. And that's happened a number of times over the years. You just cannot debate issues related to the imperial family.

GM: It's widely felt that the younger generation sees the imperial family as irrelevant or as stars of some kind, and I agree that that is the case. But at the same time, what Oguma Eiji refers to as the "nationalism consolation"—with everything collapsing, with a future of despair and darkness—young people want something to cling to. I think there's the potential for the emperor to be restored to a position as the central consoling, uniting, cohering figure in the culture. This is what Nakasone has always hoped to achieve, and I think it remains an extremely dangerous possibility. As long as the imperial institution is there, then how is it going to be used? It's going to be used in this way.

This is not to say that the Article 9 Society or any other constitutional movement should necessarily focus on the emperor, it's such a delicate question. But I think we should be

aware of it.

JJ: One of the things that occurs to me, and it has a lot to do with all of what we're talking about, is that for a country, for a people to have a clause like Article 9 in their constitution requires a higher level of consciousness about history and about the country's role in the world than is the case for most countries. It's rather easy for a country like the United States, which has a large military, for the people to be in tune with the constitution and the country's military presence overseas. But for a country to maintain the principles of a pacifist constitution requires a level of sophisticated understanding of history and international relations that isn't ordinary. One reason that the base of support for Article 9 is now weakened is because that level of consciousness hasn't been maintained over the years through the educational system and, as we've been discussing, through the media as well.

War Memory and the China-Japan Relationship

I was working this last week on an American film about the Rape of Nanking. One of the things we filmed was a classroom at a university in Kyoto, sophomore students talking about what they learned about Nanking in junior high and high school and what they think about the issue now. One of the students said, "It's been seven years, since I was in junior high school, since I heard the words 'Sino-Japanese War.' I don't expect to hear those words again for the next ten years or maybe for the rest of my life." And he was comfortable with that, he said, "and I don't think I need to." Others had a higher level of concern, but they basically had no knowledge of what happened in Nanking. I don't mean knowledge of details; they don't have any grasp of the size of the issue. They have no awareness of the scope of that large, dark episode of the war in Asia in Japan's past.

GM: How do they respond when they read, for example, about large anti-Japanese demonstrations in China, or that there has been no meeting between Chinese and Japanese leaders for five years?

JJ: I think they've bought the line that all of that has been fanned by the Chinese.

DM: That's my sense as well from teaching at Sophia. The students wrote essays on the anti-Japanese demonstrations last year, and in many cases it was like reading something out of the Yomiuri: The problem had nothing to do with Japan. Rather, the Chinese educational system was brainwashing Chinese students to hate Japan. They made the point that most Chinese don't know about all the ODA Japan has given China, an argument straight from the LDP songbook. There's an element of truth to this, but it is only a fraction of the whole story. When you raise issues like Nanking or Unit 731 though, there is a hunger for knowledge because many students have never studied them, and they understand the context for Japan's disputes with the rest of Asia much better afterwards.

Nationalism and the Classroom

GM: I read last night Kamata Satoshi's story in the latest Shukan Kin'yobi about a teacher who distributed copies of South Korean president Roh Moo-hyun's speech from March last year, talking about the Japan-South Korea relationship in a very critical way. She distributed copies of the speech to students as study material, and she did a few other things as well. She's just been sacked. First she was sent to a center for discipline, where you're surrounded by people who shout things at you all day and try to get you to repent. But she didn't repent. In addition, the mother of one of the students was an American woman, who complained that the education that her daughter was getting was anti-American. So the Sankei shimbun took up the case and

attacked her, and she was sacked. She's now fighting this in the courts.

DM: What was she sacked for?

GM: She lacked "appropriateness as a teacher." As far as I know, this is the first person to be sacked. Her name is Masuda Yuko. This kenshu ["training"] center she was sent to is a terrifying place. She was asked to do what the Christians were asked to do during the Edo period, fumie, to stamp on a Christian image, as proof of having renounced the religion.

JJ: And if the revision of the Basic Law of Education goes through, there will be a quantum leap in that kind of pressure. Whenever I speak with teachers, it's really sad to hear how constrained they feel and how difficult it is for them to raise issues like this. And it's not just teachers, but within the PTAs as well. There's an environment in which it's acceptable to stomp on those ideas as being unpatriotic or being out of line.

JJ: Returning to the Nanking issue, we were at a bookstore the other night, filming there. They have huge stacks of a new book by Higashinakano Shudo, who's one of the key and very prolific Nanjing massacre deniers. His new book, which argues that a Guardian correspondent named Harold Timperley, who was responsible for many of the reports to the West of the massacre and wrote a book called *What War Means*, was on the payroll of the KMT and therefore he was writing propaganda. This is based on a fundamental historical error. Timperley was apparently hired by the KMT to write foreign press releases and such in 1939, but he wrote his book in 1938, before he was on the payroll. But that doesn't really matter to Higashinakano. The point is that there were stacks of these books laid out flat at the end of the aisle with a big display, "the latest book by Higashinakano." One of his other books has sold 80,000 copies. Another example of rising

chauvinism is the recent *Hate Korea* manga that has sold 650,000 copies.

Hate Manga and Popular Culture

DM: That to me is much more dangerous than academic books. I know that academic books have an influence, as well. We went on holiday last year, my wife and I, with her son who's 21, and he's a smart kid and his mother's a progressive and his grandfather's one of the most famous activists in Japan, so he has every reason to have a different take on the way things work in this country. But all of his attitudes and beliefs were pro-Koizumi. "Why should he not visit Yasukuni? The Nanking Massacre has been exaggerated, it was not a massacre. There were no comfort women." All of it. Somehow he got all of these ideas, and he didn't get them from school. Because, if you read the students' essays, they say over and over again, "Well, actually, we don't remember covering the war issues." They spend so much time covering the long glorious history of Japan, for 2000 years that they often don't have a lot of time to cover the war. So they get it from popular culture, they get it from manga, they get it from TV.

Nationalism and US-Japan Relations

GM: One trend in recent years has been the split in the right about the relationship to the United States, in reaction to the subservience of the Koizumi line. Cartoonist Kobayashi Yoshinori, of course, is one of those. How do you read the significance of that split on the right?

DM: The post-9.11 developments have increased the amount of trepidation that people feel, on both sides of the political spectrum, about the American agenda. There's a sense that this is a power run amok, that it's out of control, that we cannot go along with this because it will destroy us as well. I think that's probably where the tensions are developing.

JJ: But I think there's something there that's not going to go away, which is a fundamental distaste for being so subordinate to the United States. You get it with that very fundamental idea of the constitution having been imposed on Japan by the United States, the "victor's justice" argument around the Tokyo war crimes trials, which is still a bitter pill to the right wing. And that antagonism toward the US continues.

GM: It is essential to have a structured understanding of how the relationship works, particularly that US policy throughout the whole postwar period has been to hold on to Japan as the center of American influence in the entire region. Recall John Dower's essay of many years ago, "Japan In and Out of the Pentagon Papers." To keep Japan separate from Asia, from the formation of the constitution and throughout, up until the Kuala Lumpur conference last year, the Asian summit, the American demand has been that Japan not be part of Asia, therefore it is subject to the US.

In bookshops yesterday, I found a couple of books that were kind of shrilly and hysterically anti-American without the depth you would need to understand the issues. So they were there, but in the mass media, it's impossible to find discussion of that kind. Even the idea that the post office reform was fulfillment of a pledge that Koizumi had made to Washington, it wasn't part of the debate either in the Diet or in the media. Yet there it is in the list of demands from Washington: privatize your post office. This is a problem for any kind of citizen politics, how to combat not only ignorance but distortion.

The political reality about all of this now is that Koizumi, having won his massive majority last year, is now cashing in his chips, and he's giving us the fundamental law revision, the revision of the immigration law, the crime of conspiracy law. All of these things, it's going to be like 1999, in between elections, where it's

possible because you've got the numbers in the Diet, you can push all these things through. That's what he's going to do and the next thing is going to be the constitution.

The Politics of Constitutional Revision

But if the Yomiuri could say it doubted it had the numbers to get this through, why would the LDP commit itself to a potentially massive loss of face? If the LDP pushes the revision through the Diet and it goes to a referendum, and the referendum says No, which to me seems quite likely, the LDP would suffer a massive loss of face. How do you read the calculations in the LDP on this?

JJ: It depends in part on how the referendum law shapes up. The original versions of it were quite draconian, very restrictive/ But even the modified version, if it goes through, would prevent showing my film in Japan, for example. Public employees and teachers won't be allowed to speak about the proposed revision, the media will be expected to observe self-restraint, all sorts of restrictions, which could create an environment in which people would be unable to discuss it in any substantial way. They will also be looking for the right, strategic moment. There is fundamental support for Article 9, but it's very mushy and weak. If there were to be another incursion from a North Korean boat, or if there was a clash with Chinese forces over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, that support would crumble overnight. Then they've got their referendum law, they take the revision to the Diet, you've got 60 or 90 days to hold the referendum, and the constitution gets revised in the heat of the moment.

GM: They have to represent it as, now Japan has to speak its own story, walk its own walk, and they have to conceal the fact that it's actually walking somebody else's walk and telling somebody else's story, that it's providing the Self Defense Forces as the British

contingent in East Asia,, ever servile to American interests. Can they do that? I suppose they can, especially with the media so debilitated.

JJ: When you think of the events that have been pivotal in shaping public opinion over the last five or seven years, it's that one North Korean missile shot over Japan, and the kidnapping issue. They've been able to utilize these issues to create this new atmosphere. In addition to 9.11, of course.

GM: The Taepodong missile, who knows what it really was, but the North Koreans say it was a satellite that was supposed to go around the world, broadcasting the Song of General Kim Il-sung. Of course it didn't make orbit and it collapsed into the sea, but it was supposed to go into orbit.

Nationalism and Apathy

DM: Are we being too negative? There's a tendency for people on the left always to talk themselves into a funk. We've had this all for five or so years, all of the time I've been in Japan. There was also that North Korean boat that was shot out of the water, and there are always stories about the North Koreans importing drugs (always with the help of the yakuza). But if you look at the surveys, like the one last week, over 70 percent of the Japanese population supports Article 9. When you consider the weight of the attacks on it, that's quite remarkable, and it shows that there is a core of support that is very hard to defeat.

JJ: The reality on the ground is that people are not at all interested in becoming a militarist society. That's clear in talking with students. They're very mealy-mouthed about it. There's this mocking of "heiwa boke" [peace-induced stupor], but they're not intense nationalists or ultra-right wingers, they're apathetic but not nationalistic.

GM: But so was Weimar Germany. There was little sign of militarism in 1920s Berlin. The Depression came. Economically, who knows what sort of world we're getting into, the global economy is in a very fragile state at the moment.

Korea, China and the US-Japan Strategic Relationship

JJ: It's hard to read. If there's some kind of crisis that presents the opportunity to raise nationalist fervor, then constitution change could be pushed through very quickly. But there's also the possibility of external events pushing in the other direction. I always think of Korea as providing a ray of hope...

DM: A "ray of sunshine" is what Gavan calls it.

JJ: If things start moving toward true reconciliation on the peninsula, or if in South Korea there's increased pressure against the United States and the US is forced to withdraw troops from South Korea, that could spark a wave that would influence Japan. That was a very hopeful development just yesterday, the meeting between Mindan [the pro-South Korean Residents Union in Japan] and Chongryon [the pro-North General Association of Korean Residents in Japan], the first time they've talked to each other in 60 years, really remarkable.

GM: You have to see it as prefiguring what's going to happen over on the peninsula itself, and everybody over there must see it in the same way. "Now they've done it, it's up to us to do the same thing." But America is determined to resist that. If Korean reconciliation takes place, then the only threat in East Asia becomes China, and I don't think they want a raw sort of America-China confrontation. If Korea is reunited and the North Korean threat disappears, then what are the bases for? And what is Ampo about? Is it just about China? Can you sell politically to the Japanese people, "We have to have American bases in order to

prepare for war with China”? It’s going to be much more difficult, whereas the hatred for North Korea is much more profound. So it’s important to keep that confrontation afloat, keep that in people’s minds, and they will accept the bases. In September last year, they actually reached an agreement in Beijing on North Korea, and within the next several days, the US government shifted its position entirely, forgetting nuclear weapons and moving on to crime and human rights.. What it shows is that the US doesn’t want the Six-Sided conference to meet again in Beijing because they lost control there. Control was taken by China and South Korea, the United States was isolated, and in the end it was virtually forced to sign that document. Then it renounced it straightaway.

JJ: But isn’t that trend toward reconciliation unstoppable, in a sense. Especially the South Koreans have such an investment, such a vested interest in keeping the process going.

GM: Yes, but the South Koreans don’t control the agenda. Now that the US has placed crime and human rights at the center of policy and thinking about North Korea, what can South Korea say? That they didn’t commit any crimes, or their human rights record is not bad? It’s impossible to say that. This all falls under the Patriot Act now, the suspension of financial transactions with banks and so forth. If you have any dealings with North Korea, the United States will freeze all of your global assets. Swiss banks are being treated like this now. They’re afraid, so they suspend their dealings with North Korea, which means the pressure on South Korea and China is stepped up. Having dealt with small banks around the world, Washington has now got to work out how to deal with the Bank of China. Do they try to pressure the Bank of China to cut its dealings with North Korea? That’s what they’re thinking about, and that poses a big problem for China.

JJ: That would, in a sense, be the nuclear

option, with the Bank of China holding \$260 billion of US bonds as a result of the US trade deficit and China’s purchase of vast amounts of US Treasury bonds.

DM: Is there any precedent for that, by the way, for a major power to be so in hock to a potential enemy? It is a very unusual sort of historical development. Japan is a different case, because Japan is an ally, but China is close to overtaking Japan in its holdings of US Treasury bonds.

The South Korean ambassador held an informal dinner last month and he invited a number of journalists along. Basically the government sees the transformation of North Korea as a long-term project. He said they see it in terms of a hundred years. He was determined to resist US pressure. He understood how dangerous North Korea could be, but he said, “There’s just no way the American solution is going to fix this. We’re much closer to it, we understand what’s at stake here.” And a key part of it is the transformation of the North Korean economy into a capitalist economy, that’s the way they see it. The Kaesong experiment on the border is eventually to employ perhaps a million people. Part of the American strategy to block this is to attack its human rights problems, saying they’re not paying people enough. My sense is that the Koreans have a very definite, clear strategy, whereas the American strategy seems much more ad hoc.

GM: Koizumi, to give him due credit (and there aren’t many things you can credit him with), went to North Korea twice. Each time when he came back, Abe stabbed him in the back and he made no effort to resist. The second time, before he went, he expressed splendid sentiments about normalizing relations, overcoming past hostilities, all of those things. And after meeting with Kim Jong-il he was asked what he thought of him and he said nothing negative at all. He said, “Well, he’s

very smart, very quick-witted, and really somebody you can talk to.” But faced with the abduction issue, he appears to be doing nothing to make good on his pledge to normalize relations by September. For a time he had the idea of a Northeast Asia Community, and embracing North Korea. He thought it would be his role in history to open the way toward this. But under pressure from Abe, he simply succumbed.

Asian Futures

JJ: So, how should we wrap this up? Are there any bright signs on the horizon? One thing that gives me some hope is the increasing amount of cooperative work, on the grass roots level, between Japan and South Korea, young Japanese spending time in Korea, learning Korean, etc. When we think about the problems of the movement to protect the constitution being primarily a conservative effort, it seems to me that young people in particular would be responsive to a larger, Asia-wide movement to build a regional alliance for peace. Han Hong Koo, the young Korean historian who appeared in our film, came to Tokyo last December to participate in a symposium we put on, and he said, to great applause, that he thought Article 9 ought to be designated a UNESCO world heritage property.

DM: Oda Makoto made the same point, that it’s not that Japan should get rid of Article 9, but that the rest of the world should take up Article 9.

GM: There is an international Article 9 Society. Charles Overby has been promoting this for years.

JJ: It hasn’t spread very far. There is a strong Article 9 Association in Vancouver, and there have been some organizations established to take the word about Article 9 from Japan to the world, to the UN in particular but elsewhere as well.

GM: I think it’s true though, as far as it’s seen as a limited, conservative effort it’s going to be weak, and the trick is to turn it into a positive vision for the world, with Article 9 as a kind of a peg in the process of establishing a regional and global order.

JJ: The popularization of Article 9 is really just beginning. Ota Hikari, one of the members of Bakusho Mondai, Japan’s most popular comedy team, is very outspoken about the constitution and political issues, and he’s very influential. There isn’t a lot of this, but here and there you see things. There’s Magazine 9 on the Internet, a very imaginatively done site on the constitution, put together by a group of artists and critics and activists (www.magazine9.jp). It has a very low threshold, broad-based appeal and aims to be accessible to people without a high level of knowledge or political consciousness. So there are a variety of efforts like that. There’s a group called 9Love that finds creative ways to popularize Article 9.

The Politics of Article 9 and Japan’s Political Future

GM: We’ve touched on this, but an Article 9 Society that limits itself to preserving Article 9 and doesn’t devote itself simultaneously to trying to resolve the major regional problems, like the problem with North Korea, is so partial. I see so little grass-roots resistance to the campaign to paint North Korea as a monstrous sort of place. I can never understand Abe’s popularity, but certainly one reason he is popular is that he is seen to stand firm against North Korea. He’s always close to the families of the abductees. When Koizumi went to North Korea, he apologized for what Japan did during the colonial era. But after he came back to Japan, he never once said, “Kim Jong-il apologized to me, but I had to apologize to him as well, because Japan did bad things.” He never once tried to explain that to the Japanese people. But, on the other hand, neither has any other politician.

If Article 9 is a single issue, it may be like Beheiren, once the war in Vietnam ended, Beheiren dissolved. So, if the referendum on the LDP revision is defeated in a few years time, then so what? Does that mean the Self Defense Forces won't be able to fight in Iran? I don't think so. If Japanese forces are given the order, they'll go to Iran.

DM: But is this not the best way of approaching something like this. There's a history of things like this in other parts of the world, where you have single issue campaigns, particularly in Britain, where people get together and say, "We disagree with each other on many things, but we agree in opposing this war in Iraq," for example, which is how they got two or three million people on the streets. There was considerable controversy on the left about this strategy. One of the reasons they got so many people on the streets is that they had Islamic groups as part of their membership. I understand your point, that eventually we have to come back to the question of what Article 9 means in the context of the wider Asian region and the relationship with America. But is this not the best strategy for the time being. I can see profound problems, if you started to debate North Korea, because a lot of people feel that North Korea is a very evil place. In talking with ordinary Japanese about this, I always hear that one of the reasons the Social Democrats collapsed so badly was because they were seen to be close to North Korea. Now I know that's a perception more than anything else, but it is a problem.

GM: What exactly is the Article 9 Association defending? Is it a principle that has been honored for nearly 60 years? Or does it acknowledge that it has been trampled on throughout those years, and now Japan should begin implementing it? Is this a constitutional state? That's really a problem that you have to discuss in these fora. Japan is an extremely unusual case of a government that has long been at odds with its people on a very

fundamental issue. And only with the Koizumi government did the LDP begin to get the confidence that it might be able to crush all resistance and push its agenda through. But now, maintaining things as they are, means you've already got the most powerful military force in Asia closely aligned with the world's most powerful military.

JJ: The Article 9 Association is a very low-threshold organization, it's not centrally run, so it makes it somewhat difficult to articulate a proactive agenda. For now, it is what it is, which is to say that it is limited to defending the principle of Article 9. I have the sense however, that with 4700 organizations around the country, a whole new generation is learning to put together meetings, to put together leaflets, to get people together, to carry off successful meetings. Those are important organizing skills. So there's something of a revival of grass-roots democracy taking place. As we know the constitution is only words on paper, unless there's that grassroots pressure to force it to go in one direction or another. These groups could move on to other issues, if the right circumstances allowed them to coalesce. I keep thinking about something like an Asia-wide nonaggression pact, or a conflict-free zone, something that would essentially make the US bases in Asia obsolete. It's difficult to campaign for the withdrawal of US bases directly, but if you had some kind of pact among the countries of Asia that "we pledge to resolve our differences through peaceful means, without resorting to the use of force," then suddenly all of those bases and the entire American approach become irrelevant. This is dreaming but that kind of shift is something we saw happen in Europe and it could happen in Asia as well.

An Appeal from the "Article Nine Association"

The Japanese constitution now faces a great

challenge.

Through the use of weapons reaching the cruelty of the atomic bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Second World War claimed over fifty million lives. As a result, the citizens of the world learned the lesson that resorting to force should never be an option, even for the purpose of resolving international disputes.

Bearing an enormous responsibility for having continuously pursued a war of invasion, Japan decided to work towards realizing this global vision, and thus established a constitution including Article Nine, which stipulated the renunciation of war and of military force.

Yet today, half a century later, the movement to “revise” the Japanese constitution, and Article Nine in particular, has risen to the forefront with an unprecedented scale and intensity. The proponents of that movement intend for Japan to follow the United States and change into a “war-waging country.” For that reason, they authorize the use of the right to collective self-defense, dispatch the Japanese Self Defense Forces overseas, allow their use of force, and commit other such actions that, for all intents and purposes, violate the restrictions of the constitution. Moreover, they are trying to do away with such important measures and policies as the three non-nuclear principles and the ban on arms exports. Finally, in order to raise children to become leaders of a “war-waging country,” they are trying to change the Fundamental Law of Education. This essentially alters the state of the nation that the Japanese constitution has aimed to achieve, threatening to convert Japan from a country that strives to resolve conflicts without military force to a nation that prioritizes military action above all else. We cannot allow that conversion to occur. The United States’ attack on Iraq and the morass of the occupation that followed makes it clearer to us day by day that the resolution of conflict through force is unrealistic. The use of force only results in robbing a country and its people of their livelihood and of their happiness. Since the 1990s, armed interventions by major nations into regional

conflicts have also failed to result in effective resolutions. That is why, in such places as Europe and Southeast Asia, efforts are being strengthened to create regional frameworks that can help to resolve conflicts through diplomacy and dialogue.

Today, as we question our path in the 21st century based on the lessons of the 20th, the importance of grounding diplomacy on Article Nine emerges with renewed clarity. To call the dispatch of Self Defense Forces into countries that do not welcome it an “international contribution” is nothing more than arrogance.

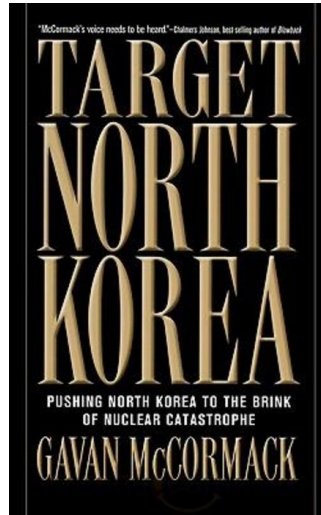
Based on Article Nine, Japan needs to develop ties of friendship and cooperation with the peoples of Asia and other regions, and change a diplomatic stance that only prioritizes a military alliance with the United States. Japan must play an active role in the tide of world history by exercising its autonomy and acting in a pragmatic manner. It is precisely because of Article Nine that Japan can engage its partner nations in peaceful diplomacy while respecting their various positions, and collaborate with them in the fields of economy, culture, science and technology.

In order to join hands with all peace-seeking citizens of the globe, we feel that we must strive to shine the light of Article Nine upon this turbulent world. To that end, each and every citizen, as sovereign members of this country, needs to personally adopt the Japanese constitution, with its Article Nine, and reaffirm their belief in it through their daily actions. This is a responsibility that the sovereign members share for the future state of their country. Thus, in the interest of a peaceful future for Japan and the world, we would like to appeal to each and every citizen to come together for the protection of the Japanese constitution: You must begin making every possible effort to thwart these attempts at “constitutional revision,” and you must begin today.

June 10, 2004

Leaders of the Article 9 Association include

Inoue Hisashi (author), Umehara Takeshi (author), Kato Shuichi (critic), Sawachi Hisae (philosopher), Oe Kenzaburo (author), Okudaira Yasuhiro (constitution scholar), Oda Makoto (author), Tsurumi Shunsuke (philosopher), Miki Mutsuko (UN Women’s Association). [Here](#)



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