

Amend Constitution in Pursuit of Peace

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As Japan observes the 60th anniversary of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, debate is growing on its constitution. The question each Japanese citizen must answer is why Japan has failed even over 60 years since its independence to amend the constitution that was imposed on Japan with no resistance measures during U.S. occupation. Some Japanese have criticized the United States for imposing the constitution on Japan. But the Japanese have left the constitution unchanged as long as 60 years since Japan's independence. Such criticism may only embarrass Americans.

Imperial traditions characterize Japan

The English word of "country" may represent home. "State" may usually refer to the government. "Nation" may sound like community. The Constitution of Japan focuses on the state while ignoring the nation. I have no willingness to emphasize Japan as preeminent in the world. But I believe that Japan as a nation features its unique history, cultures and traditions that center on the imperial family. Japanese citizens should acknowledge that the Japanese emperor has been a priest king who conducts rituals for people, differing far from the emperors of Sui or Tang dynasties of China or European conquerors.

Criticizing the extravagance of Marxists and fanatic military leaders, aggressive liberal Eijiro Kawai said in his book "Message to Students" in 1940: "The emperor is not only the head of state but also the center for people's natural feelings. People's feelings develop into their worship for the emperor. Such relationship between the emperor and his subjects represents Japan's essential national system." Remember that the Japanese government gave top priority to defending Japan's national system during World War II. The way Japan has been shaped during its long history may represent Japan's identity.

Japan cannot depend on others for national security

Has Japan which has tradition of respecting conciliation and loving peace worked as a nation after the war? Japan has taken no effective measures against foreign countries' invasion of Japanese territories or territorial waters or against a foreign country's abduction of Japanese citizens. May we believe in the Japanese Constitution's preamble that says "we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world?"

This is the question supporters of the current constitution should answer. Why do they fail to believe that the constitution should be amended to restore the Japaneseness and reject foreign countries invading Japan.

A tiny island country with serious disputes between conservatives and liberals, or between hawkish and dovish people, cannot survive the present situation. I believe that movements will begin in Japan to amend the constitution in pursuit of peace.

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