

Japanese Should Get Conscious of Amending Constitution

Tadae Takubo

The Constitution of Japan was created after Major General Courtney Whitney, chief of the Government Section at the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers occupying Japan after the World War 2, warned that the GHQ could not guarantee “the person of the Emperor” if Japan refused to accept the U.S.-drafted constitution. When hearing this episode, Japanese people may feel humiliated to different degrees. But I question how many among Japanese supporters of the present Constitution thank the GHQ seriously for its excellent job of destroying Japan’s militarism.

Japan depends on surrounding countries for its safety

The preamble of the Constitution says, “(The Japanese people) have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world.” How about adding “including Russia, North Korea and China” at the end of the quote? I don’t suspect that any supporters of the Constitution view these countries as peace-loving. It is abnormal for the Constitution to lack provisions about emergencies including armed attacks from abroad and devastating natural disasters. But a Democratic Party of Japan lawmaker has reportedly criticized proponents of these provisions as attempting to amend the Constitution to their advantage in a manner to loot during a fire. Supporters of the present Constitution may believe that those attempting to defend the lives and properties of Japanese people are looters.

I have insisted that Japan has had three chances to correct its abnormality. The first chance came when Japan signed the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951. Why did Japan fail to create its own new constitution upon restoring its independence?

The next chance came when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979. Then Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping urged then Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone to remove a cap at 1% of gross national product on defense spending. Then U.S. Defense Secretary Harold Brown during his Japan visit demanded that Japan make steady and significant defense efforts. The then international environment was paving the way for Japan to amend the Constitution’s war-renouncing Article 9.

Fourth chance

The third chance came during the 1990-91 Persian Gulf Crisis. Twenty-eight democratic countries led by the United States participated in multinational forces for a

war against then Iraqi President Saddam Hussein who refused to withdraw troops from Kuwait. Japan then contributed \$13 billion in cash, instead of blood and sweat. Japan was laughed for failing to be among 30 countries Kuwait thanked on a U.S. newspaper after the Gulf War.

Despite the three chances, momentum to amend the Constitution failed to grow in Japan. We now have the fourth chance as neighboring countries especially China maintain their hard-line foreign policy backed by military power. I have been tired of blaming politicians and mass media for failing to call for amending the present Constitution. Japanese people should get conscious of doing so. I would like to make this point at the upcoming event of the Japan Institute for National Fundamentals on August 3.

Tadae Takubo is Vice President, Japan Institute for National Fundamentals.