

*In New York, Think about Japanese Peace Constitution "Article 9" in the World*  
**Shinya Watanabe**

Panel Discussion 'Is a Peace Constitution Outdated? Japan Considers Rearmament'

Date: April 25th, 2007

Location: Asia Society, New York



**Moderator: Carol Gluck**  
(George Sansom Professor of Japanese  
History, Columbia University)



**John Junkerman**  
(Documentary Filmmaker,  
Director of 'Japan's Peace Constitution')



**Kunio Suzuki**  
(Political Critic, Founder of a  
Nationalist Group 'Issuikai  
First Wednesday Group')



**Frances Rosenbluth**  
(Professor of Political Science  
at Yale University,  
Specialist of Japanese Economics)

On April 25, 2007, prior to the opening of an art exhibition, a panel-discussion event on Article 9 of the Japanese Peace Constitution, hosted by the Atomic Sunshine Exhibition Committee and the Asia Society, was held.

After a short speech by Asia Society President Vishakha N. Desai, Professor Carol Gluck talked briefly about the historical meaning and the transition of the role of Article 9 before introducing all the panelists. It was short, but nonetheless an insightful and accurate speech.

The first panelist was Beate Sirota Gordon, and she talked about her experience in the days of the American occupation with great humor.

Beate was summoned by General Courtney Whitney, who worked for Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers. She was ordered to write a draft of a postwar Japanese Constitution with twenty other members. She was stunned, especially when told of the short schedule; she was allowed only seven days to finish the draft. Beate was in charge of the civilian-rights chapter, and since Beate was the only woman on the team, it was suggested by Col. Roest that she write the section of the Constitution

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addressing the rights of woman. Furthermore, she received from Col. Kades a message that because of the order from Washington D.C., certain articles needed to be included in Japanese Constitution, and, moreover, General Headquarters (GHQ) had adopted many ideas from the Japanese civilian's constitution research group "Kenpo Kenkyu Kai (Constitution Research Group)."

Before World War II, Beate saw the inconsiderate situation of Japanese women who had neither freedom of marriage nor rights of inheritance and divorce. It became her motivation to write a chapter addressing woman's rights. However, because her chapter regarding the rights of woman became two pages long, Col. Kades asked her whether Japan would have more rights of woman than the American woman had. Then, she answered, yes, because in the U.S. constitution, you cannot find the word "woman." When Col. Kades suggested that these chapters should be not in the constitution but in the civil law, Beate cried and appealed that if the constitution did not have a chapter about women's rights, it would be impossible to uphold the rights of woman. Because of this, Article 24, addressing the rights of woman, was protected.

Furthermore, Beate mentioned that this constitution

has suited Japan, and if Article 9 had been invoked before Iraq War, it would have been wonderful.

Mr. John Junkerman talked about why he decided to make a film which has Article 9 as a motif.

In winter of 2004, the Liberal Democratic Party announced that in 2005, the 50th anniversary of LDP's founding, they would make drastic changes to the Japanese Constitution. Since then, Mr. Junkerman began hurrying the production of his film. He was trying to go back to Constitution's origin, but when he tried to produce a film about it, because the drafting of the constitution was already 60 years in the past, Japan's memory of that time and the people who knew the process of drafting the Constitution were becoming really rare, and it was difficult to make this film. Furthermore, the population who knew about that time became relatively small, so the meaning of Article 9 had become difficult to appreciate.

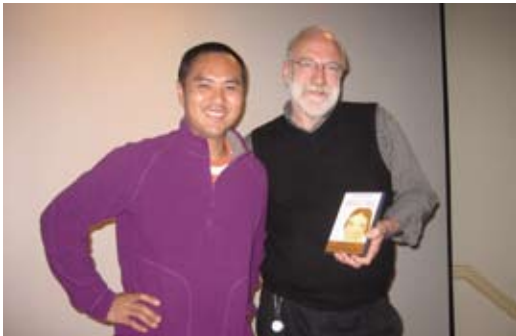
He also mentioned that it is impossible to solve international conflicts and create peace by using weapons; Japanese people who experienced fifteen years of war understood this very well. As a result, in the 20th century, the century of trying to find alternative ways to solve international conflicts, Japan started to have a constitution that renounces war to solve international conflicts and killing of other country's citizens, and this is extremely significant, he said.

The third panelist, Kunio Suzuki, mentioned that Japanese Constitution needs to be reviewed once. His idea outlined below.

For example, many people want to change the constitution: freedom of speech needs to be more emphasized, capital punishment should be abolished, and an appeal for nuclear disarmament should be made to the world. In other words, they are thinking about "the democratic amendment of the Constitution" in their hearts. But, if such words were spoken, one would become caught up in the Liberal Democratic Party's Constitution amendment argument, and Article 9 would be amended. That is what many of these people are afraid of. Therefore, these people oppose amending the Constitution, contrary to their own inclination. But if we do not talk about amending the constitution now, LDP will change the constitution in the way that they wish.

Mr. Suzuki made the criticism that LDP has tried to create a so-called autonomous constitution, just to make a military that can be dispatched to anywhere with the U.S. military. However, an "Occupational

John Junkerman with Hiroshi Sunairi, after the film screening of 'Japan's Peace Constitution' at New York University.



### Beate Sirota Gordon

(Member of the Draft Committee of the Japanese Constitution,  
Former Director of Performing Art, Film, Lectures of The Asia Society)







Constitution with freedoms” is much better than the “Autonomous Constitution without freedoms” recommended by the Liberal Democratic Party.

If people wish to protect Article 9, the Self-Defense Force, which violates Article 9, need to be abolished. If we have to admit the Self Defense Force, we can add that to Article 9. However, the situation can go much further. Then, Mr. Suzuki suggested setting a brake so that the conversation does not go too far.

For example, the confirmation of three points—“Bear no nuclear weapons. Dispatch no troops overseas. Have no military draft”—will make the person who wants to protect Article 9 join the discussion. Also, Japan is the only country on which atomic bombs were dropped, and because of this, Japan alone, “from the point of view of ‘self defense,’” should be the one country entitled the right to bear nuclear weapons. However, Japan relinquished that right permanently, so no other country should have the right. That should be clarified in the Constitution and made part of an appeal to the world.

Suzuki claims that Japan should recognize the self-defense force not as a military or national-security military, but as today’s self-defense force. Furthermore, in the future, it should be abolished, so as to come closer to the idealism of Article 9, and this needs to be written. While Japan has a Constitution that denies militarism, the National Police Reserve was created in 1950, and that became the National Safety Force in 1952, and the Self Defense Force in 1954. This course can be reversed. The National Police Reserve is the “Police”; Japan would have no military, so an appeal could be made to the world to “learn from Japan.” It was a magnificent speech, as if he were speaking from a Japanese election-campaign car.

The last speaker, Frances Rosenbluth, used charts, and by comparing Japan and Germany in postwar period, she elaborated her point of view toward the constitution.

According to the poll, the percentage of Japanese people who support an active foreign policy and the self-defense forces, and who also support Japan lobbying for a position on the United Nations’ Security Council, is becoming high, but the people who recognize themselves as nationalist has not changed. She explained this puzzle by comparing Japan and Germany.

Because of geographical and political reasons, Germany was embedded in a multilateral security treaty with its former victims. This made it imperative for Germany to make peace in genuine way, and its efforts were genuinely accepted by Germany's former victims. Japan, on the other hand, had a bi-lateral treaty with the United States, and because of it, Japan's security was guaranteed by the United States re-



gardless of Japan's relationship with its neighbors. So there is not the same kind of international pressure on Japan from the beginning to make genuine peace with its neighbors. This resulted in the difference of the two nations’ recognition of history, and the history-textbook problem in Japan.

In 1994, Japan changed its electoral rules and adopted a proportional representation system. This created a system in which the political left is relatively weak, certainly compared to Germany, which has a very strong leftist party, even with proportional representation system. However, even the right in Japan has been drawn to the middle. There is a kind of nationalism, which involves, for example, supporting Japan's public international role; but it is a kind of cool nationalism, and will not cause the same kind of military adventurism seen in the pre-war period. After all these speeches, there were questions and answers among the panelists, and then involving the audience.

From American people, there were questions such as whether there were any Japanese people who wanted to appeal to Article 9 on a global stage such as United Nations, or why there are two theories of Article 9—one being that it was imposed by the US, the other that it was originally a Japanese idea—or whether the Self-Defense Force is illegal, or some specialty questions such as the extent to which Japanese conservative media are guiding the polls.

It is hard to pull together this two-hour conversation, but I want to rectify this by publishing the whole panel and the ensuing conversation.

Many scenes—such as when Mr. Suzuki asked the U.S. audience how much they knew about Article 9, and when Mr. Junkerman, who knows the situation of both the U.S. and Japan, mediated

Japanese and American panelists—made this discussion event incredibly meaningful. Also, the amazing moderation of Carol Gluck, Beate-san's humorous speech and interesting story, and Frances Rosebluth’s presentation of a huge amount of information and research, made this event a profitable one.

According to one report, there are no more than 30,000 people who know the existence of Article 9 in the U.S. In this situation, with these unusual members, to talk about Japanese constitution with an actual drafting member was truly miraculous. As a curator, it was such a pleasure to organize an event like this, one that leads to mutual understanding, as an extension of the art exhibition that provided the occasion to talk about these things.