

# Beate Sirota Gordon



photo Makiko Nawa

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## **A Chance for Peace: My Thoughts on Japan's Peace Constitution "Article 9"**

### **A Long Interview with Beate Sirota Gordon**

#### *ARTICLE 9.*

*(1) Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.*

*(2) To accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized. – The Constitution of Japan, Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet. Retrieved 29 June 2014. Quoted from Wikipedia, "Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution."*

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\* Based on the interview with Beate Sirota Gordon on April 26, 2007, this text had minimum editing to make it more readable.

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Translated by Michiko Owaki

**Ito:** Hi, I am pleased to meet you. I came to New York to meet you, Beate-san.

**Beate:** Oh really? I'm honored.

**Ito:** When I heard from Watanabe-san about his plan of this exhibition, I instantly felt an urge to meet you and listen to your stories. I didn't know back then that you used to visit Japan quite frequently. So, I have been thinking about coming to NY to meet you since about a year ago, asking Watanabe-san to give me an opportunity; and today I am finally here to meet you, after one year of waiting.

**Beate:** That's great. I am really happy to have you here – welcome! Yes, I have been to Japan so many times in my life... oh, by the way, if you are thirsty, please make yourself at home and help yourself to anything from that fridge over there. OK, so, what is the main thing you would like to ask me?

**Watanabe:** It seems Ito-san has studied a lot about the Constitution of Japan for today's interview.

**Beate:** Oh, you may be more knowledgeable about it than me then.

**Ito:** Oh no, on the contrary. I was born in 1975 and am now 31 years old, but I don't remember learning anything much about the Constitution at school in my childhood. To tell you the truth, I have never given it much thought in the past. When I was a high school student, the Gulf War broke out, and Article 9 of the Constitution got into the news media at the time. Ever since, I just regarded the Constitution as nothing more than Article 9 and didn't think much about it. However, my stance toward the Constitution drastically changed as I conducted research on the Constitution for this interview. Through reading various historical documents, I was astounded by the fact that some of the people who created the Constitution were still alive. All of a sudden the Constitution came alive in my mind. But I suppose that most of the people [who drafted it] have already passed away by now... am I right?

**Beate:** I suppose so. It is probably just me now who is still alive; I was the youngest in GHQ [General Headquarters, which was occupying Japan] back then.

**Ito:** Another younger person was Colonel Kades, who was one of the central figures of GHQ involved in drafting the Constitution – but he was already in his 40s back then, right?

**Beate:** Yes. I believe he passed away about 10 years ago, at the age of 90 or so... though my numbers may not be exact.

**Ito:** In Japan, a book about “Jiro Shirasu” became a topic of conversation again last year.

**Beate:** Has he passed away? I knew him quite well. He was a bit like a British gentleman, and he loved roast beef.

**Ito:** I see. I didn’t know anything about Mr. Shirasu until the media picked it up as a topic last year. While reading the book on him, I learned about you too, Beate-san. It ignited my curiosity so much that it became my dream to meet you and listen to your stories one day – to meet a person who interacted with historical figures like Mr. Shirasu, General MacArthur, and the then foreign minister Shigeru Yoshida, in person – that is my primary motivation of this visit.

**Beate:** I feel honored. By the way, did you study English in Japan?

**Ito:** Yes, although I only studied it at school for the entrance examinations. If English is easier for you, please speak in English. But you are still very fluent in Japanese.

**Beate:** Yes, because I frequently visit Japan and I also have many Japanese friends, including in NY. So I use Japanese all the time.

**Watanabe:** If I remember right, you are fluent in German too, and speak French as well, right?

**Beate:** Yes, I don’t use French at all these days, but I can still speak it. I learned all these languages as a young child. The only exception is Spanish... that was when I was 16. All the other languages I learned between 6 and 15 years old.

**Ito:** Is that the period when you lived in Japan?

**Beate:** Yes. I learned them in Japan. So, I guess you don’t forget the languages you learned when you were young. Even if you seem to remember very little, it will come back to you when you go back to the country.

**Watanabe:** So you can speak Russian too?

**Beate:** Certainly. Speaking of which, I think I have just talked with someone in Russian yesterday. My parents have already passed away, so I haven’t spoken German for a long time. I don’t use Russian in my everyday life either. I only get to use French every now and then. When my husband and I travel to Europe we always visit Paris, since he loves the city. So I speak French when we are on these trips. But here in the States, I mostly speak English.

**Ito:** I understand.

**Beate:** But it's a shame actually. Maybe I should start a salon or a club ... by gathering senior women like me.

**Ito:** I see, something like a conversation club?

**Beate:** We have already started a "book club". It is a trend here these days. How about in Japan?

**Ito:** Is it something like a reading circle?

**Beate:** That's right. The members read the same book and meet together every 2 to 3 weeks at a member's house to discuss the book, and we usually have lunch or dinner together too.

**Ito:** We have something like a public poetry recitation circle in Japan.

**Beate:** I see. So I think we can do it with languages too. I would need to think about how to recruit people though. I used to organize a friends' association called "Peers," so I think I will find a way. This idea occurred to me just now, while talking to you. It is a real shame [not to have opportunities to speak the languages you know]. I know some friends who can speak German and French but don't use them because they don't have opportunities to use them. So if I start a conversation club... Oh, but this is not an important topic for today's interview, is it? Let's go back to our main subject. And let's talk about something more important, shall we? [laughter]

## Part I: The Background of the Birth of “Women’s Rights”

**Ito:** I have so many questions in my head and cannot decide from where to start...

**Beate:** Go on.

**Ito:** I think I would like to start with the question about “Japanese women,” the subject with which I associate you more than anything else. You have written in your book that when you came to the States to study at Mills College, the principal made a speech about women’s rights on the first day. You must have had many occasions that made you think of women’s rights in your life ever since. When you became involved in drafting the Constitution of Japan, I think that the most important point you tried to make was “equal rights for men and women.” Having grown up in Japan, you have seen the adverse circumstances in which Japanese women were living in those days with your own eyes. I suppose that the fact played a major part in making you feel very strongly about changing that pitiful situation for Japanese women. Am I right?

**Beate:** Yes. When I came to Japan for the first time, I was 5 and a half, and I had never seen any Asian people before. There were not many Asians in Vienna in 1929.

**Watanabe:** I guess so.

**Beate:** I cannot recall which it was, Yokohama Port or Kobe Port, that we arrived into when we first came to Japan. But I still remember how I was amazed watching all these people walking on the streets: noticing that everyone had black hair, and different kind of eyes from ours, I asked my mother, “Are they all brothers and sisters?” [laughter] You know, I was just a child and didn’t know anything much about the world. But I guess my mother was shocked by my comment, and it seems that made her think that she would have to introduce me to Japanese society. My mother was a very liberal person: in Tokyo in those days there were an American Club, an English Club (British Society), and a German Club, and all the Western children were going to the clubs of their own countries, without mingling with Japanese children. But I joined the Japanese community from the beginning. Most Western mothers didn’t do that.

**Ito:** You used to play with Japanese children?

**Beate:** According to my father, I mastered Japanese within 3 months. It is not as difficult as you think, because, you see, topics of the conversations of 5-year-olds are not very complicated, and therefore their vocabulary is limited. So, as my father said, I could talk about almost everything necessary in a daily life in Japanese by then. But it was not the case with my father and mother, both of them were speaking very strange Japanese.



**Ito:** I am sure you have many episodes that made you feel so strongly about women's rights. But could you give me an example of particular episodes, if you have any, that made you think that women were not equal with men in Japan and that it really needed to be changed.

**Beate:** Yes, I can.

**Ito:** We know that Japanese women were historically not given enough human rights or equality with men, but we can only imagine what it was actually like for them to live in that era. Could you tell us what it was like, with factual examples?

**Beate:** A moment please... um, if you want ice in your drink, please let me know. I don't put ice in my drinks because I'm from Europe. ...well, it's not true [laughter]. I sometimes do.

OK, factual episodes. Since I was very small, we had this family cook called Miyo-san, and I used to listen to her stories a lot. In the Westerners' households in Japan at that time, most Westerners didn't enter the kitchen, since it was considered a place for the servants. But I found our kitchen a fascinating place. Miyo-san was a very interesting person; and very young too. She was 18 when I was 5 and a half.

**Watanabe:** Oh, she WAS young.

**Beate:** Miyo-san didn't know anything about Europe and America, and of course she spoke no English. But as my Japanese improved, I guess it became interesting to her to talk with me. One day Miyo-san said, "I would like to invite my sisters to this Nogizaka house sometime." [Translator's note: "Nogizaka" is the name of the place where the Sirota family lived.] I guess it was because we had a big house. So three of us met them, Miyo-san and two other sisters.

**Ito:** Her sisters too?!

**Beate:** Yes, sometimes two, sometimes three of them. They were mostly someone from Miyo-san's family. We chatted a lot. Women always do, right? There were also kids of our next-door neighbor and some others (mostly women), and we played from morning till night. We did so many things together – we ate together, and sometime met their mother too. One thing I remember well is that we used to play outside in "*juban*" (= underwear) only, when the weather was hot. I was wearing a normal western slip, of course, not a Japanese kind [\*Translator's Note: "*juban*" usually means traditional kimono underwear]. We would take our clothes off, leave them in the garden, like this, and play *Hagoita* [= Japanese traditional kid's game similar to badminton using a wooden shuttlecock and wooden rackets] or something else. Oh, we played lots of things. But such things were not really acceptable from a European viewpoint. You know, playing in underwear like that. But since everyone was doing that in Japan, I was doing the same. That is how I learned Japanese culture little by little. As we grew older, the same young ladies started to learn the *Okoto* [= Japanese harp] and *Ohana* [= Japanese flower

arrangement], which I found out was a part of domestic training to prepare for marriage. So I also learned some *Okoto*, and I did *Nihon-Buyo* [= Japanese traditional dance] too. [laughter]

**Watanabe:** Really?!

**Beate:** Yes. *Nihon-Buyo* is very difficult. You know that, right? It was too difficult for me, so I quit. But I think I did it for about 6 months, twice a week. The teaching method was very Japanese; we had to walk on *tatami* mattress properly [=without stepping on tatami edges – translator’s note]. Oh how I hated it. But I also learned ballet and modern dance with an American teacher, and I continued them for a long time. So, I became friends with young Japanese girls and we talked about everything. We sometimes went to watch movies as well. American Hollywood movies were very popular back then. A lot of musical films. Very old ones that you may never have heard of... Have you heard of Stokowski? A conductor who made a film about a chanteuse. An actress called Deanna Durbin played the chanteuse. The film is titled “A Hundred Men and One Girl.” “A Hundred Men” is the Orchestra, and “One Girl” is the chanteuse. The film was showing at a theatre in Tokyo... I cannot recall exactly where it was, but perhaps in the Imperial Theatre. And that was the only film they were showing there for more than a year.

**Watanabe:** That sounds like a long run.

**Beate:** Yes, more than one year. So we all watched the same movies, and talked about them. These were mostly Hollywood movies and very romantic, so as a matter of course, we all talked a lot about “marriage.” What astonished me was that these women unanimously said that they wouldn’t know who the groom would be before they marry. Some women would meet the man on the day of their wedding, and some would meet only a week before their wedding, they said. I couldn’t understand it at all. So I asked Miyo-san and my mother a lot of questions about it. My mother had some Japanese female friends of a high social status. Most of them were from very wealthy families, and they would make a trip to Europe, which was quite rare back then. When those women came back from their trip, they all said, “I have been to Europe and I felt so envious. I saw so many women walking on the streets as a matter of course, and doing all sorts of things just like men do. Whereas, in Japan, we cannot do anything.” I heard such conversations all the time in our household.

**Ito:** I see. Your views of Japanese women’s situation were largely shaped by such conversations between your mother and her friends, and those between yourself and your friends.

**Beate:** Another thing was that I had a female tutor. In Europe, it was normal to have a tutor for children, not only in very wealthy families but also in middle-class families. This tutor of mine was from Estonia, and believed in a religion called “Christian Science” – are you familiar with it at all? – it is one of those new religions that derived from Christianity, and it claims that all the diseases are to be healed by



praying, not by doctors. So my tutor was a believer in this religion. She was single, without a husband or a boyfriend. She was very interested in such topics too. For, none of us knew about Japan and its culture. So she was always curious and researching about these things by meeting many people. What kind of habits and customs are there in Japan? What do they do? In our household, we talked a lot about such things. My mother was quite liberal for that age; she even had experienced a divorce.

**Watanabe:** Yes, I remember.

**Beate:** In Europe in those days, divorces were rare. My mother was also forced to marry someone, just as Japanese women were. Her first husband was not a bad person, but my mother didn't love him. So when my mother met my father as her piano teacher and fell in love with him, she was so desperate to divorce. But since it would have been so difficult while her father (my maternal grandfather) was alive, she told my father that she could not divorce. My father said he would wait. Don't you think it sounds quite Japanese? And so he did. When my mother finally remarried him, she was 20 or 21, and he was 30 or 31, since their ages are 10 years apart. I heard this story much later while we were in Japan. They didn't tell me about the divorce until I was 12. They must have thought that they didn't have to tell me while I was small, probably because her ex-husband was in Vienna and we were living in Japan. But we went on a trip to Vienna in 1936, and my mother told me everything before the trip. She said that, just like Japanese women, she had also married her first husband because her father had insisted on it. That was when I was 12 years old. So I became intrigued by the subject very much afterwards.

Coming back to Japan after this trip, I started to feel strange whenever I came across with a Japanese man walking on the street followed by his wife from behind. I came to realize that men and women are not equal at all in Japan! My parents were very equal in our household. My mother was also teaching the piano – she taught beginner students, and my father taught advanced ones. Therefore, I never thought of men as higher or women as lower or anything like that. That's why I felt so strange [about Japanese women's situation]. I also thought that it was such a terrible thing to be forced to marry someone against your will, that it would be really hard on women. I guess I was a very romantic child [laughter].

**Ito:** But when you were told by your mother that her first marriage had also been a arranged marriage, how did you come to terms with it? It was about "yourself" too, in a way, wasn't it?

**Beate:** It is a very difficult question to answer. I think I was shocked a lot. I didn't know the concept of "divorce," you know. None of my friends in Japan talked about it.

**Ito:** I guess nobody would in Japan in those days.

**Beate:** So I don't think I understood it very well.

**Watanabe:** Were there divorces in Japan back then?

**Beate:** Of course.

**Watanabe:** There were divorces, but I guess it was only men...

**Beate:** ... who could decide on it. Women had no right to initiate it nor decide it.

**Watanabe:** So women had no choice but to accept their husband's decisions?!

**Beate:** Of course. And that was hard on women too.

**Watanabe:** I can imagine.

**Beate:** But I don't remember if I could make sense of all these things back then. The only thing I remember is that my mother told me about this on the train – during our train trip over 13 days.

**Watanabe:** Did you go by way of Soviet Union?

**Beate:** We took the Trans-Siberian Railway. I think it was my mother who had a hard time, telling me about it. I was so “innocent” – I really didn't know anything. I knew nothing at all. For example, I didn't know “that thing” – you know, “homosexuality.” I didn't know that it existed until I was 17. In today's America, even a baby would know about it. So, I guess I couldn't understand about the divorce very well either. From an outsider's point of view, however, I could see that Japanese women were oppressed, even though Japanese people may not have regarded it that way back then.

**Ito:** People who have never been abroad wouldn't have noticed it, but it was obvious to people who came from another country. Is that what you mean?

**Beate:** Yes exactly. It was striking to anyone who came from outside – in many situations. For instance, in parties: women didn't come out to parties. Wives didn't have conversations in parties.

**Ito:** What do you mean by “they didn't come out”?

**Beate:** Women didn't go out to parties. Only men did. I knew the wives better, but only the husbands came to our house for parties. When I asked why, they told me that it was a cultural custom for women not to go out very much.

**Ito:** I see. So you could compare the situation in Japan with that in Europe, but what about Japanese women themselves? For example, when you were talking with Miyo-

san, did you have an impression that Japanese women themselves were aspiring to change the situations?

**Beate:** Oh, most definitely. There was already a woman's suffrage movement as early as in about 1885. So Japan has a history [of women's movements]. You two might not know, but there were many women activists for women's liberation in Japan, such as Mrs. Fusae Ichikawa. So I would say that Japan already had a base [for women's liberation movements] by then.

**Ito:** I see.

**Beate:** Those women activists went through a lot of hardships for their movements: they did strikes, and were put in jail. So, Miyo-san, for example, was full of energy ever since she was born, and wanted to do a lot of things by herself. And she couldn't. My mother used to say, "If she had had an opportunity to get a proper education, Miyo-san could have become an empress, since she is such an intelligent person." She was surely a very wise, intelligent person and had done a lot of things without counting on men. But she was not very happy with her husband – she couldn't respect him.

**Watanabe:** Was she married at the age of 18?

**Beate:** I don't remember exactly how old she was, but I do remember well about her husband. They had two children too. She told me that she also had had to marry against her will.

**Ito:** I read in your book that when you were assigned to draft some provisions for the Constitution of Japan during what is historically called "the nine days in the secret room," you did rigorous research in preparation for drafting your provisions, thinking, "If I should miss any important provision, it would change the future of Japanese women significantly." Did you have Miyo-san and all these women you were close to in your mind when you were drafting them?

**Beate:** Absolutely. The situation which my friends were in at that time in Japan had left a great impression on me. I didn't know the concept of "feminism" back then, since I was just 7 or 8 years old. It was not until I went to the college in the U.S. that I came to learn about feminism. When I started working for "TIME" magazine, I then learned that there were actually discriminations against women in the States too. I think I started to understand feminism gradually since I was around 16.

**Ito:** I see.

**Beate:** In fact, American women didn't have such freedom in those days. But when the war broke out, women had to replace the men who went to the war, in factories, in offices, everywhere. Women thus started to take up all kinds of jobs in various fields during the war. In my college years, there were many lectures about feminism.

Once the president of my college said, “Women do NOT go to college to find their future husbands.” It is because in those days there were many jokes saying something like, “Women go to college to find her future husbands.”

**Ito:** In the U.S.?

**Beate:** Yes, in the U.S. My university was a women’s college, so we didn’t have men in our school. But we were very close to the University of California, and there were a lot of clubs there. Do you know about “Fraternity”? What can I call it in Japanese... It is something like a men’s social club. One day a friend of mine seems to have met someone in a Fraternity, and she later called and asked him to “bring 50 men to a party we are having in two weeks.” I didn’t like that idea at all. When I saw these 50 men came and standing there...

**Watanabe:** Wow, it sounds quite tasteless.

**Beate:** ... and we women stood in a line in front of them, so that each man could choose a woman he liked, it was as if we were cows or something. [laughter]

**Ito:** It does sound like a market.

**Beate:** Yes, it WAS like a market. The president of my college wrote in her book, “You [women] have received education in this college, so now you need to use it. It is a good thing for women to have a career just like men.” That was a basic principle of Mills College.

**Ito:** I see.

**Beate:** Another thing I want to point out is that I used to work in various governmental organizations. In these offices there were of course many intelligent women, quite a few of them being from Europe. I was the youngest among them: I entered my college when I was 15 and a half years old, which is very early in America. You usually go to college at 18, but I did it at 15 and a half. So I graduated 2 and a half years earlier than most people. Since I was the youngest everywhere I went, people who were older than me taught everything to me as if I were their sister. For example, I have an interesting episode to share with you: I never did “hand holding” when I went out with a man. Do you see what I mean?

**Watanabe:** You mean, you didn’t hold hands with men?

**Beate:** American people don’t know manners, you know [laughter]. Young people in Europe wouldn’t hold hands like that back then.

**Ito:** I’m surprised to hear that.

**Beate:** I think Americans do such things as early as high school age. I went to a German school when I was young, and the teachers would often say to us, “Americans have very bad manners.” In America, even high school girls would put lipstick on, hold hands with boys, and sometimes even kiss with boys. “Now, that is a very, very bad thing,” they would tell us dramatically. That had a huge impact on me. When I moved to an American school later, I said to myself, “Oh my goodness, the German teachers were right! The students here are doing such bad things!” [laughter]

I was still such a naïve girl when I went to college in the U.S. after two years of American school in Japan. During those college years, a navy officer asked me for a date. He had been learning Japanese as a Japanese translation trainee for the navy. I cannot remember how I met him, but anyway, on our first date, he tried to hold my hand, saying, “Let’s go out, shall we?” So I said to him, “Oh I’m sorry. I can’t do that.” When we became more intimate as the time went, he asked me, “Why don’t you want to hold hands? Are you afraid that you might get pregnant by holding hands?” I answered to him, “Oh, I know better than that [laughter]. But it’s just because I was brought up this way: I don’t want to hold hands with anyone until I am engaged or married to the person.” Then he said, “I would like to marry you.” So I replied to him, “I am still 17 years old and I am not thinking of marriage yet. So if you don’t want to go out with me, I would understand: please date with another person.” And of course he did. But he was a very good person, and now he is a professor at Princeton University. [laughter]

**Watanabe:** You’ve just told us a secret. [laughter]

**Beate:** Oh this is great fun. But I’ve told you such an episode because my way of thinking was born from just such a character of mine. I was so innocent and honest.

**Ito:** I understand. Your story does link to women’s rights. Please continue.

**Beate:** Really? But I don’t think you will be interested in this episode about me not knowing anything about “homosexuals.” Or are you?

**Ito:** Yes I am. [laughter]

**Beate:** OK then. Well, I had this friend who also grew up in Japan like me. She was a year older than me, I think, and she had a family in the States. So we went to Mills College together, and she later went to the University of California. One day she invited me along to a double date. “I met a man yesterday. Would you like to go on a double date with us, with his friend?” The man was from Europe, and I was happy to join them. During the date I sat in the backseat of the car, and my friend in the passenger seat. The man who sat next to me asked me where I came from, so I replied, “From Japan.” He then asked me what kind of things I had learned. I loved dancing, so I had taken a lot of dance lessons both at the German school and at the

American school. My dance teacher was a very good teacher. He taught us ballet and modern dance... I cannot remember what we call it instead of "modern dance"...

**Watanabe:** Folk dance?

**Beate:** It was a dance from Germany, and it was very popular back then... What did they call it? ... Well, anyway, this teacher had recently got a lounge and dining room near his dance studio and wanted to show his new place to his students. So I had been there just before the date. I had found it so fascinating that the interior was all in pink. [laughter] So, I mentioned it to my date while I was talking: "Don't you think it's funny that the whole room is in pink?" Then, the friend who was sitting in the passenger seat looked back at me in an upset face. I instantly thought that she might have thought I was not respecting my teacher. She never spoke ill of anyone because she thought it was an unrefined thing to do. So I hastened to add, "But I really like my teacher and I respect him very much." When we pulled up and got out of the car, my friend reproached me, "Why are you speaking of homosexuals on our first date?!" So I replied, "What is 'homosexual'? I have no idea what it is."

**Ito:** Did you learn about it for the first time then?

**Beate:** Yes. She took me to the Ladies' room and told me about it. I was just so shocked. [laughter] I was such a naïve, innocent girl. It was because of my upbringing. I had never heard of the word until I was 16 or 17 years old. Interestingly, my parents knew that I didn't know about "homosexuality". But they didn't tell me anything about it because they didn't think it was necessary.

**Ito:** I see their point [laughter].

**Beate:** One time my parents came to San Francisco. They came with a friend, a violinist from Vienna who was teaching in Japan. He was homosexual. We wanted to take him to some interesting place, there were a lot of those in San Francisco, you know. One of them was a famous cabaret called "Finocchio's Club". My parents didn't want to leave me alone in the hotel. I was staying at the hotel with them because, you know, Mills College is quite far away from San Francisco. This cabaret featured "transvestites", men dressing up like women, and women dressing up like men. I enjoyed it a lot, because they were so good at it. Their costumes were great too. They were all males, but I didn't care whether they were men or women. But I had never heard of the word. No one taught me about "transvestites".

On the next day, I went back to Mills College and was having lunch, when a friend asked me what I was doing during the weekend. So I said to her, "I went to a very interesting place, a cabaret club called Finocchio's." Everyone stopped talking and stared at me [laughter]. It was apparently a famous place. But these friends only had heard of the place, and had never been there. I didn't understand why, so I asked them why they wouldn't go. Later, I asked the same friend who taught me about "homosexuals" about "transvestites" too.



I learned about a lot of things this way, from people who were older than me. It was like that even after I went to NYC too. My senior colleagues taught me a lot of things like “politics” and “democracy.” Especially since most of these women were relatively progressive. One of them was from South Africa. She escaped from there. She was a Caucasian, not an African. But she ran away because she “couldn’t accept Apartheid.” She even ran away from her own family. Her parents were German-British.

This woman taught me many things. She wouldn’t lecture to you, saying things like, “Women have no rights!” but she would rather talk to you in a very casual, natural way. For instance, at the office of TIME magazine, where we were both working, she would say, “Do you see? Look at them. Writers are all men, and all the women here are only allowed to do research. Do you think it is ok?” Of course I would answer, “No, I don’t think so.” Then she would say, “Why [don’t you think so]? It is not right, is it?” Another friend said to me, “The company doesn’t want to pay much money to women, so we women are not allowed to write articles. About 150 or 200 people are working here, but how many women do you think actually have real power in this office?” My answer was, “I don’t know.” Then she told me, “There are only two women who have power here. All the rest are men. Therefore, this is a male sphere.” I didn’t ask any of them to teach me all these. But I was lucky to ...

**Ito:** ... have been guided through the encounters with all these people.

**Beate:** I was especially lucky that all these women I met were real intellectuals. They were such interesting women and knowledgeable about the world. In those days, a woman rarely travelled on her own. Please forget about your situation. It was so different back then. It doesn’t sound realistic to you, right? Today everyone can go anywhere she likes. But it was not like that at all back then.

**Ito:** I had no idea that it was like that even in America.

**Beate:** I also learned back then that although the United States was supposedly a democratic country, a true equality was not realized yet. Even after the war there were still many discriminations. But I was a little worried about my job, like, how could I secure my job? So I was hesitant to say that research work was not good enough. The job I was doing before then was paid well, because nobody spoke Japanese.

**Ito:** The job in a radio station, you mean.

**Beate:** My way of thinking has been formed through influence from these people, rather than books. I read many books too, but I did not read books on such topics as feminism very much.

**Ito:** Your identity was formed through actual encounters with people and your own experience.

**Beate:** Yes, from people. I am a people's person. I like people. I am always curious about people. I like reading books too, but I like to talk with people better. Most of my knowledge came from what I heard from people. What was fortunate for me is that I met people who really supported me. For example, when I went to Mills College I was 16, very young. So a music professor commiserated with me being so far away from my parents and took care of me in many ways. That professor was a very famous composer. You may know his name – "Darius Milhaud," a French modern composer. He was teaching composition in our college, and he lived in faculty housing on campus. He and his wife had a boy, and they invited me to live with them as a babysitter. Meals were included, cooked by the professor's wife. She was an actress – a French actress. I learned very good French while living with them. So when people hear me speaking in French, they think that I am French. It is because I lived with them. As an actress, she was quite progressive and had a clear vision about her own career and other things. She had a career as a "disease," a monologist. Her husband composed music or wrote lyrics for her monologues. Their collaboration seemed very natural, and I was yet again made to realize how Japan lacked an environment to allow men and women to be equal and to develop that kind of natural collaboration. I had many episodes like that all through my formative years, and they made a big impression on my way of thinking.

**Ito:** You certainly learned from people.

**Beate:** Many famous musicians visited their house too. I was so fortunate. You know Stravinsky, right?

**Ito:** Yes, I do.

**Beate:** It was in their house too that I met Mr. Stravinsky. He knew my father well. [Translator's note: Beate Sirota Gordon's father, Leo Sirota, was a famous pianist both in Europe and in Japan.] One day, when we were having lunch, I asked him to write his signature in my signature book. He scribbled some strange signature instead of his usual one. So I said, "Mr. Stravinsky, I want your real signature." He then started signing in Russian. So I said, "No, I want you to sign it the way you sign when you sign for people, in a hall." [laughter]. He did it in the end, of course [laughter]. And who else... have you heard of André Moreau? He is a very famous novelist, a French man living in Paris. He found me interesting and wrote "Beate, A mon collègue", in my signature book. The word "collègue" means "To My Colleague." He was in his 50s or 60s back then, but he treated me as if I was his colleague. I still keep it as my treasure. Would you like to take a photograph of it? [laughter]

**Watanabe:** Speaking of which, you have a really impressive collection of historical data.

**Beate:** I was so blessed with opportunities to meet such premier intellectuals. I majored in French in university, so I met quite a few literary masters, but I also met so many other people in different disciplines – pianists, models, conductors, musicians, and writers. It was thanks to the fact that Madame Milhaud's family was socially very active and they knew lots of people from all walks of life. Though I was just 16 or 17 and not a real adult yet, I was a sort of exotic existence to these people because I “came from Japan”. Everyone was interested in me thanks to my “Japanese” background.

Oh, and one more episode: there was a time when Madame Milhaud was called to San Francisco to play a role in a French play called “Molière” in a commercial theater. Do you know “Molière”?

**Watanabe:** Yes, I know “Molière”.

**Beate:** So they were going to produce this play, “Molière”. Someone asked Madame Milhaud if she knew a young person who speaks good French, and she recommended me, because I spoke good French. I had organized a “French Club” in Mills College, where we spoke French and did lots of other things. Madame Milhaud also gave us lessons for free. There were a couple of good students and I was one of them. So Madame Milhaud recommended me to the theatrical company. It was my first time to act in a real play on the stage. I think I was 18. I was so thrilled to act on the stage. My mother used to tell me that she had always wanted to become an actress, but her father would not have permitted it. In Europe in those days, an “actress” was not considered as a good profession. It was thought of as, say, a kind of “prostitute”. That was the common notion back then. But Madame Milhaud didn't have such a notion at all. And I knew that my university didn't have such views either. France was more liberal about it, I guess, at least than Austria.

**Ito:** I see. I think I started to understand better now why you were so determined to write about Women's Rights in the constitution and where your determination came from.

## PART II: GHQ and Constitution Drafting

**Ito:** Now, can we move on to asking you about GHQ and drafting the Japanese Constitution? Beate-san, you were 22 years old when you participated in drafting the constitution. And my understanding is that you had been keeping silent about your participation for a long time due to the fear that it might undermine the value of the Japanese Constitution. Is that right?

**Beate:** Yes, that's right. I visited Japan with Colonel Kades in 1993, and it was the first time that I finally got to talk with many Japanese people about the "Constitution" without restriction.

**Ito:** I see.

**Beate:** Well, not only with Japanese people, actually, but with American people too. But in Japan, it WAS the very first time. It was also the first time for Colonel Kades to appear on television in Japan. Someone asked him, "Colonel Kades, could you tell us a little about 'Women's Rights'?" To the question the colonel answered, "Mrs. Gordon is the expert on that matter. Please ask her." Was that exchange written in my book?

**Ito:** Yes, I think so.

**Beate:** Then the TV crew came to my house, and everything began. I had always thought that I had to do everything Colonel Kades told me to – because I had very high respect for him, although there were times when I was made to cry. He had such a smart brain. Do Japanese people know about it? That Colonel Kades was the actual leader during the Occupation?

**Ito:** No, we don't. The only thing we learn in our history textbooks is about General MacArthur, who was Supreme Commander.

**Beate:** The central personage was Colonel Kades.

**Ito:** In the TV program you have just mentioned, I think Colonel Kades said that when you were writing the articles about Human Rights, including Women's Rights, your boss Colonel Roast suggested... was his name "Roast"?

**Beate:** No, Röest. His name is "Röest." [pronounced as "rou-st".] In Japanese books it is written "*Ro-ost*" [pronounced as "roast"], but it is not accurate. He came from Holland, and his name is spelled "R-Ö-E-S-T". It is similar to the German umlaut: "o" becomes an "ou" sound. So, "Röest" is pronounced "rou-st".

**Ito:** I see. So, I read a passage about an exchange between that Colonel Röest and Colonel Kades in your book. I cannot remember which article it was that this

exchange was about, but according to your book, when Colonel Röst suggested to put a sentence “Forever No Change” in an article, Colonel Kades turned it down saying that it is as though their generation were depriving the next generation of their rights to solve the problem on their own. Do you remember that conversation?

**Beate:** I don’t remember that. But I would agree he would have said that.

**Ito:** MacArthur also said the same thing: “ ‘Forever No Change’ does not sound right. We should let the next generation think about it.”

**Beate:** I would say the same thing.

**Ito:** Please think about my next question regardless of the political discussion surrounding the “Revision of Japanese Constitution”, which is currently a popular topic of conversation in Japan: Did the members of GHQ, including yourself, share the views that Japanese people should be able to revise the constitution after the GHQ draft was made, so that the next generation of Japanese people could amend and fit it to the needs of the time through trial and error? I mean, were you thinking that Japanese people should be able to change the details if they needed to?

**Beate:** Umm. I was not really thinking about that matter.

**Ito:** You were not?

**Beate:** We really didn’t have much time. After the draft was finished, that was it. Eventually there were quite a few minor changes in letters and characters; Joe continued the revising work. And after that, the draft had to go through the Diet too. So, after the draft was finished I was not following any longer about what would become of it. For I knew that they couldn’t make any major changes.

**Ito:** Do you know, then, about the “Right to Life” (Article 25), which was discussed in the national assembly and added to the constitution later?

**Beate:** What is the “Right to Life”?

**Ito:** How can I explain it... It was proposed in the assembly by a politician named Tatsuo Morito, and the article defining that “All people shall have the right to maintain the minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living” was newly added to the constitution. There are also other changes that were made; for example, regarding the article about “compulsory education:” it was defined as “elementary education (which is for 6 years)” in the GHQ draft, but there was a discussion to extend it to 9 years by including what we now call junior high school education. Like this, I think they revised the constitution little by little. But did you, and all the GHQ members, not follow the process after the draft was completed?

**Beate:** No, not really. We were too busy with “addenda” – and they were very difficult too.

**Ito:** I understand.

**Beate:** The Japanese government made a list of addenda and we had to research about all of them. There were so many of them, and we had to prove each of them one by one, so there were many things for us to do before I went back to the U.S. I guess it is natural for you to expect me to have been interested in what would have become of the draft that we had worked so hard for, from your viewpoint. However, I was a very optimistic person... I thought that the draft was well written and would be able to stand on its own. After I came back to the States, I was really ...

**Ito:** ... busy with work and raising children?

**Beate:** Yes, it was totally a different life. We had only a little over a week to draft the constitution. It was a very special time, as if it were a dream. For me, it was the most intense week of my life.

**Ito:** I see.

**Beate:** During the week when we were drafting the constitution, our intention was very sincere and directed toward the goal of having “democracy” take its root in Japan, despite the fact that we had been enemies until just a little while before. We really didn’t think of Japan as our enemy. All of us – not just myself – about 20 of us were like that. Well, perhaps a few people may not have been like that... but most of us shared the same atmosphere and intention.

**Ito:** This may be a very difficult question for you to answer ... but may I?

**Beate:** Go ahead.

**Ito:** OK. So, my question is about the controversy regarding the fact that the Japanese Constitution was initiated by GHQ. Some Japanese politicians claim that “the Japanese Constitution was forced upon us by the United States.” But we, the people of our generation, tend to think that it is fine even if it WAS forced upon us: the fact that the constitution has been observed for more than 60 years seems more important to us. However, what I really want to know is this: what would it have been like, if the GHQ’s drafting committee had been composed of different kind of people and hence if they had drafted the constitution from the so-called “*sensho-koku*” viewpoint...? Do you understand what “*sensho-koku*” means?

**Beate:** Yes. “The victor.”



**Ito:** That's right. Simply put, my question is, what would have been the outcome "if" GHQ had tried to make the constitution in favor of and in order to profit the U.S. from the victor's standpoint ...

**Beate:** Should it be the case...

**Ito:** What kind of constitution do you think it would have become? What would have been the major differences you can think of? In your book, you have also mentioned that the Japanese constitution turned out the way it did, because the drafting committee was at work with a "pure mind"; not seeking to take advantage of it as a victor. Which articles do you think could have been different, for instance?

**Beate:** For instance, other countries among the Allies were arguing against maintaining the Emperor and the Imperial system. So, that's one. Another is the article on women's rights – in those days, there were not many countries that had such articles to promote women's rights in their constitutions. American men were not that liberal back then. So, if a man, instead of me, had drafted the article, the constitution would have been quite different.

**Ito:** I am with you on that.

**Beate:** If another woman who has travelled around the world as widely as I had written it, she might have written a similar article. I was young, but I had been to many countries in Asia, Europe and other continents. I was a cosmopolitan. So I would say that a person without such experiences or cosmopolitan viewpoints would not have been able to write women's rights as explicitly as I did. Perhaps, similar things can be said for other articles... such as those pertaining to civil rights. Do you know this American author who wrote an amazing book? Professor John Dower. As he pointed out in this book, *Embracing Defeat*, the articles on civil rights in the Japanese Constitution made it the world's most progressive constitution at that time. And I would say it is still the most progressive, even today.

**Ito:** I agree.

**Beate:** Of course there were not so many people with such progressive views in those days. It was fortunate that many of us among the 20 members of the Government Section shared similar views, and thereby the Japanese constitution turned out the way it did. If a different set of people had written it, the constitution could have turned out very differently in so many ways, including the "Renunciation of War" chapter. However, I disagree with the movie director Mr. John Junkerman's opinion on this subject: he suggested yesterday that the "Renunciation of War" chapter was originally proposed by the then Prime Minister, Kijuro Shidehara. I know that the rumor has been around. But I don't buy it. I cannot believe that someone like Mr. Shidehara would have ever been able to think of something like that. Such a way of thinking would not come from a military clique.

I believe that the constitution would have been very different if people like them had written it. But I also have a hard time believing that MacArthur could have thought... Oh well, I should stop here and let's listen to your next question.

**Ito:** Thank you. I am not intending to focus on "Article 9" too much today, but as Mr. Junkerman says, there are several theories as to who actually introduced the idea of Article 9 into the constitution. Who do you guess it was?

**Beate:** I really don't know. I asked Colonel Kades about that too. He said that it might have been MacArthur, or it could have been Hussey. The way the sentences were written reminded him of Hussey's writing. But the handwriting looked like Whitney's. Whitney's handwriting and MacArthur's were...

**Ito:** ...very similar, I have heard.

**Beate:** Yes, they were very similar. So I really don't know. I had long thought that it was Colonel Kades, but he said it was not the case. He just "revised" what someone else had written, which was the part regarding "Defense". Colonel Kades told me in person: "It had said that 'Japanese people should not have or use any force, including a Defense force.' So I deleted that part."

So, nobody really knows the truth [about who wrote Article 9]. Did MacArthur really conceive of the renunciation of war? I don't know. I wouldn't call him a very progressive person. What all of us were thinking then was that he probably wanted to become the next president of the United States. We all thought that MacArthur's endeavor to make a good constitution for Japan was driven by his ambition to leave his mark in history, and to become a U.S. president. He must have been thinking that if he could make a good constitution for Japan, American citizens would be more likely to vote for him in the election. Such was the view we all shared back then.

**Ito:** I see.

**Beate:** MacArthur didn't say anything at that time, but the fact is that most Americans don't like to have a president who used to be in the army. For example, Eisenhower resigned from the army and became the president of Columbia University before he was elected as the U. S. president.

**Ito:** I have never thought of that.

**Beate:** He served as a president of Columbia University for two years or so. Then people forgot about his past as a former military officer, you know. I think that was his plan. He became a "civilian" for once. So everyone voted for him. Such a thing might have been in MacArthur's mind as well.

**Ito:** That is one way of looking at it.

**Beate:** But no one can tell if it was true or not, now that MacArthur has passed away. There are many different theories about this matter, right? But try as I might, I just cannot think that someone like Mr. Shidehara could have conceived ...

**Ito:** ... of such an idea as the “renunciation of war”.

**Beate:** That’s right. Mr. Joji Matsumoto (the then Minister of State) did not write anything democratic when he drafted the constitution, either.

**Ito:** That is my understanding too.

**Beate:** Mr. Shidehara might have been a little better than Mr. Matsumoto, I would say...

**Ito:** Just relatively?

**Beate:** Yes, only relatively. But I just cannot make myself believe [that these men could have ever conceived the idea]. For, as far as I remember from my early childhood, pre-war Japan was a country of military cliques in so many ways. It had been like that for a long time. I didn’t know Mr. Shidehara so well in person, but I have heard a lot of things about him. I might have heard of something related with this matter too. Mr. Shidehara and MacArthur may have talked about this [Article 9] a little... I don’t know. What are your thoughts? What do you think about a person like Mr. Shidehara? He might have been a good man. I don’t have a clear memory about him any more these days... though I still remember quite well about Mr. Fumimaro Konoe. Anyway, I just simply cannot believe that Mr. Shidehara thought of the idea [of the renunciation of war].

**Ito:** It is meaningful for us even just to hear your honest feelings about these men, since you knew them in person. It was also great for us to learn the fact that there were so many various “theories” about this matter. We Japanese never learn such things at school.

By the way, could you take a look at this document? It is about an organization called “SWNCC”.

**Beate:** Yes.

**Ito:** You see, this word “SWNCC228” in the document... I have no idea what it means. Could you tell me?

**Beate:** SWNCC means, “State, War, Navy”. S is for “State Department,” W is for “War Department,” and N is for “Navy Department.” And then what are the rest?

**Ito:** Followed by “CC.”

**Beate:** Uh-huh. I guess it is a “Committee” of some kind.

**Ito:** I see. Was this document treated as an especially important one among the other ones in the Government Section?

**Beate:** Colonel Kades used to share it with those who were involved, since SWNCC was a part of the U.S. government.

**Ito:** These SWNCC documents were the “directions” given to the Government Section by the U. S. government?

**Beate:** Yes, they were the directions.

**Ito:** I see. [Pointing at another document] And what is this?

**Beate:** These people are the members of SWNCC. They were of course superior to MacArthur, since they were in Washington, DC. There were lots of directions coming from them [to MacArthur], though I don’t remember those very well. Do you have any documents in your hand that show what they said?

**Ito:** No, I don’t. But there are many organizations other than GHQ in this book... such as SWNCC and JCS...

**Beate:** Excuse me?

**Ito:** “J – C – S.” I think it is translated as “Togo Sanbo Honbu” in Japanese. I suppose that they also had its headquarters in the U.S.

**Beate:** “Far Eastern Commission”?

**Ito:** No, I don’t think so.

**Beate:** Wait a moment, please. I’ll ask my husband.

[One moment later]

**Beate:** I got the answer. As I said earlier, my husband never forgets things. “CC” of “SWNCC” is “Coordinating Committee”. And JCS means “Joint Chiefs of Staff.” What it means is, the individuals of the highest rank in SWNCC were all “Chiefs of Staff”, and all of these highest rank chiefs constitute “Joint Chiefs of Staff.”

**Ito:** Oh I see.

**Beate:** You understand it now?

**Ito:** Yes, I do. What confuses me is that any discussion about our Constitution in Japan always ends up pivoting on the point of whether or not it was “imposed” by the U.S.

**Beate:** Yes, I know.

**Ito:** This is my personal opinion, but I think it is the presence of “Article 9” that ignites this kind of discussion, that is, discussion on whether the constitution was imposed or not. Many Japanese people seem to think that the Japanese constitution would have had Article 9 even if someone other than the historical drafting committee had written it. In other words, many people think that something similar to Article 9 would have been put into the constitution even if it was written by the U. S. government from the Victor’s standpoint, taking advantage of Japan. Am I making sense to you?

**Beate:** Yes, of course.

**Ito:** That is, the victor’s intention to “prohibit Japan from owning military force” and the desire of Japanese people for “peace and renunciation of war” are two different things in their origins, and yet the end product in the constitution will be the same or contain very similar sentences. The difference between the victor’s order to the defeated “not to own military force” and Japanese people’s abhorrence of war is a very fine line. I always feel confused between these two.

**Beate:** Well, let me see... What would it have been like...? What would other people have thought of it...?

**Ito:** I know this is a tough question.

**Beate:** Yes, this is very difficult. What everyone says to me is that if we hadn’t written it – if it was other people who had written it – the constitution would not have turned out as well as it did. As you are saying, ordinarily the victorious nation would want to take advantage of the opportunity to write the constitution in its favor. At that time, however, MacArthur and the U. S. government were not thinking that way. At least while we were drafting it. Just several months later, when the Cold War began, I think things changed. In the U. S. too. Therefore, should we have drafted it just a little later than we did, the constitution could have come out very differently. It would have been in favor of the U. S. – in favor of the victorious nation.

**Ito:** You mean, if you had drafted it at a different time, things could have been different?

**Beate:** That’s what I think. Yes, it would have been different, I’m certain of it. But when we were drafting it, the Cold War hadn’t begun yet. I am talking about Russians, you know.

**Ito:** Yes, I understand.

**Beate:** The Cold War began soon after [the Japanese constitution's promulgation], right? It began when President Truman made that famous speech.

**Ito:** Yes, that's right.

**Beate:** I think it was right after the constitution's promulgation. Do you want to know the exact timing of these events? My husband might remember.

**Ito:** No, that's ok. But thank you.

**Beate:** Well, I guess you can look it up later if you want, can't you. By the way, are you interested in what Professor Takako Doi said to me?

**Ito:** Yes, very much so.

**Beate:** OK. When I participated in an event together with Professor Doi, I said to her, "Doi-sensei, I am embarrassed to take part in this event with you because you are a professor and a scholar of the constitution, whereas I am just a lay person. I am totally a lay person in law."

**Ito:** I see what you mean, but I don't think you needed to be THAT shy. [laughter]

**Beate:** I also told her "I was not even a lawyer". Then Professor Doi said to me, "I think that is the exact reason why you could write these articles on women's rights. Lawyers would not be able to write things like this in such a short time frame as 9 days. They would be caught up in discussing very fine details such as the meaning of a word, or the definition of a right, and so on. When I read the provisions written by you, I can tell that these were written from the bottom of your heart. Because these were written from your heart, they are different from what a lawyer would have written. Lawyers wouldn't have been able to write such articles." I think it is very true. I really hoped, from the bottom of my heart, to give these rights to Japanese women. So, as I listened to her telling me all this, tears welled up in my eyes. But isn't it considered disgraceful to cry in front of someone of a high position like that in Japan?

**Ito:** Probably.

**Beate:** I learned that kind of "feeling" from Japanese culture too. The old Japanese custom precluded women from screaming even in occasions like childbirth. But when I gave birth to my first child in America, I couldn't help screaming. Do you understand the word "scream"?

**Ito:** Yes. You could not help crying out. [laughter]



**Beate:** My husband was beside me and I said to him, “Oh, I have just screamed. I couldn’t help myself.” Then he said, “That’s OK. There are many women here and everyone is screaming.” “But I think it is a disgraceful, embarrassing thing to do” I was insisting, when the doctor came in. My husband said to him, “Beate is very upset, because she has just screamed.” Then the doctor said, “Oh, I have brought a medal for you, but I guess I cannot give it to you any more because you screamed.”

**Ito:** He said that? [laughter]

**Beate:** Yes. And he was laughing. My husband was laughing too. And all that time I had so much pain [laughter]. So I asked, “Why are you two laughing?” Then the doctor said, “Oh, should I cry?” ... Well, that was the end of the silly exchange, and I gave birth soon after that. Anyway, as you can see from this story, back then I was really thinking and acting like a Japanese woman.

This is another reason why I was wishing sincerely for women’s rights for Japanese women. Another American person would not have felt the same way; especially if it were a man. In those days, very few men had really progressive views even in the United States. Professor Doi was right when she pointed it out. However, I didn’t know that my ideas were considered so progressive back then. I assumed my ideas were normal. It was true that none of the other countries’ constitutions I collected for research had all the provisions I wanted to include. It was like, one constitution had some, while the other had some others. So I collected all the important provisions from all these different constitutions. And I put them together in “one constitution”. As an expert in Japan said, “It is as if GHQ had collected all the wisdoms from all over the world and put them together in the Constitution of Japan.” It is different from the U.S. Constitution, too. Yes, it was Mr. James Miki who said that. “There are historical wisdoms in this constitution. It is as if all the world joined together to write it.” I totally agree with him. Among twenty or so of us who drafted the constitution, there were only a couple of experts in law, and the rest of us were laymen, such as teachers and public officials. There were four university professors, as well as several businessmen. It was a mix of people from various social positions and occupations.

**Ito:** And I guess it is the very reason why you and all the people in the committee had a flexible approach, differing from law experts, collecting and selecting the best provisions from other countries’ constitutions.

**Beate:** You are right. For, you know, no one had imagined that we would draft a constitution. Not at all. Originally, MacArthur had ordered the Japanese government to write it. But the draft proposed by the Japanese government turned out so conservative. It was barely different from the old Meiji Constitution, apart from minor differences in kanji [Chinese characters] and expressions here and there.

The Potsdam Declaration had demanded that “the Japanese government had to write a democratic constitution” – and they had given an order to MacArthur to

supervise the process. The draft proposed by the government, however, turned out to be not democratic at all. That was how everything was decided so suddenly during that weekend, when no one had any idea about it. It was Friday or Saturday. And we were told on Monday. I don't think even Colonel Kades knew about it, though maybe he knew by Sunday. Whitney probably knew on Friday or Saturday, since MacArthur ...

**Ito:** ...trusted him?

**Beate:** Yes, very much so. The interesting thing was, MacArthur's office was very close to our Government Section office.

**Ito:** Weren't they on the same floor?

**Beate:** Not only on the same floor, but it was very next to our office. I heard that Colonel Kades talked with General MacArthur in person only twice. Just twice. For the rest of the time, every piece of information was passed to MacArthur through Whitney.

**Ito:** Really?

**Beate:** Yes, just twice. So, in fact, many ideas actually came from Colonel Kades. He was the brain behind not only the Government Section, but also all the other sections. To my eye, he was the actual leader.

**Ito:** But it is really surprising that it was only twice that he got to talk to MacArthur in person.

**Beate:** Yes, just twice. MacArthur was, for us, someone almost like an "Emperor." Though, of course, some people like Whitney [=General Whitney] and Willoughby [=Major General Willoughby] were talking to him more frequently. But I was also really surprised because I had assumed Colonel Kades would report the progress to MacArthur everyday.

**Ito:** I would too.

**Beate:** Virtually everything went through Whitney. But Whitney liked Colonel Kades very much. I think he understood that Colonel Kades had a good brain.

**Ito:** This might be a silly question to ask after you told me all that, but have you ever talked to MacArthur in person...?

**Beate:** I saw him at a cocktail party once.

**Ito:** Just "saw" him?

**Beate:** Yes, I just “saw” him. He was a sort of misogynist. Especially in his work environment. There was not a single woman in his office. There were just men.

**Ito:** So, even though your office was next to his, there was just that kind of rarefied relationship, like meeting just once during a cocktail party.

**Beate:** One time, when I was just about to get on an elevator, MacArthur came back from lunch, so I saw him in the lobby. But I hid from him. I didn’t want to meet him. I was very scared of him. He was very scary, although I guess he loved his wife. There was some sort of trouble related with a woman, in Australia. A general who was working under MacArthur had an affair with a female driver of his jeep, and it became a scandal. After that, MacArthur ordered not to assign any woman in his office. Ha-ha-ha, a lot of interesting stories come back to me now [laughter].

**Ito:** That episode is so intriguing. But I just cannot get over the fact that even Colonel Kades got to talk to him only twice... that is so surprising.

**Beate:** I was totally surprised too. Oh, is that possible? General MacArthur did not talk to anybody, I thought.

**Ito:** That kind of episode rarely appears in the documents I read.

**Beate:** I guess so. I myself didn’t know that until two years ago, either. ...Um, no, it was four years ago. I saw Colonel Kades just before he passed away. I used to see him from time to time when I was living in New York City. After he came back to NYC, we occasionally went out for dinner.

**Ito:** I see.

**Beate:** He was a lawyer, and working as a partner of a big law office. So we had opportunities to see each other, though not so often. He liked both me and my husband. Yes, he liked us [laughter]. I once interviewed him officially too. Columbia University was creating files about “Japan Under Occupation” and I interviewed various people upon request from the university.

**Ito:** If I understand correctly, when the Japanese government opposed the articles on women’s rights in the GHQ draft as “too radical,” it was Colonel Kades who advocated the articles, is that right?

**Beate:** Colonel Kades did not oppose my thoughts and wishes for “the rights of Japanese women.” But he considered that “it was not suitable for the constitution” to write them in detail. He thought that all the rights regarding social welfare “should be written in the Civil Code.” So I thought about that a lot too. He was very knowledgeable about the U. S. Constitution. All the other members of Steering Committee knew about the U. S. Constitution very well too, because they were all working in the U. S. government. One of them was Lieutenant Colonel Rowell,

“Governor of Puerto Rico,” and the other was Commander Hussey – they shared similar views. Both of them were always claiming that “the U. S. Constitution was the best.” You know such a way of thinking. They were like that from the beginning. They had never read constitutions of European countries. In the U. S. constitution there are no articles about social welfare rights. So these three people regarded the social welfare rights “not suitable for the constitution.” They said, “Such articles are not constitutional materials.” They thought that a constitution should be something like...

**Ito:** “principles”?

**Beate:** Yes. So they said, “such articles are not to be included [in the constitution].” From Colonel Kades’ point of view it was not a problem, since he thought that they could put them in the Civil Code. But I said to him, “The bureaucrats who would be assigned to write those statutes for the new Civil Code would be undoubtedly so conservative they could not be relied on to extend adequate social welfare rights”. I knew that from my own experience.

When I was living in Japan, I used to translate for my parents. There were opportunities to contact policemen and other kinds of officials during that time. So I had to meet Japanese bureaucrats from time to time. Even though I was young, talking with them as a translator, I would think that “these people have no imagination.” Also, they were very conservative. Such people would not write articles in favor of human rights like these if they had no incentives. But if the provisions were already in the constitution, of course they would have to follow them because they are the law. But otherwise it would not happen. I thought about it really hard, for a long time. Even after Colonel Kades passed away. He and the other two men considered it “really improper” to write detailed articles on civil rights in the constitution, though Colonel Kades was not against these civil rights themselves. But he could have been lying to me. I could not tell his real intention. What he told me at that time was, “Please don’t worry. I will stay in Japan for a long while yet, so I will keep my eye on the development of the new Japanese Civil Code very carefully.” I don’t know if he really meant it.

One thing I want to point out is that much later on, when I called Colonel Kades to ask if my daughter, who was a lawyer in the making, could get a post in his law office, he answered, “Yes, she shall, because she is very smart. But please tell her this: while I am in this law office, a woman can never make it to the top.” In his office there were about 10 partners, and they were the people who earned most and decided everything. What he meant was that a woman could never become a partner while he was the executive in his office. That kind of remark made me wonder, you know ...

**Ito:** ... if it might have shown his true feelings about the matter?

**Beate:** When I told my daughter Nicky, she said, “I will not go to that office then.” And she found a job in another very good law office. Nicky is now 52, so that was 30 years ago. Anyway, that’s what Colonel Kades said to me then. And interestingly enough, right after he retired a woman became a top partner. So on this point only, I have some doubt about his views. For, you know, if he had such views, he might have had the same views about social welfare issues too...

**Ito:** I see.

**Beate:** I really cannot tell his true feelings about this matter now that he has passed away. The only thing I am certain about is that he actually said to me, “I am not opposing what you wrote. They shall be written in the statutes for the Civil code.” What Professor Doi said is so true: we have such different ways of thinking, between a lawyer and a layperson like me.

## Part III: The Past and the Future of the World and Article 9

**Ito:** In Japan, discussions on “whether to revise the constitution or not” have been brisk recently. Trying to decide our standing position between “constitution revisionist” or “constitution advocate” from a political viewpoint would be a very difficult discussion, so let’s put that discussion aside: but what would you feel like, if you were living in Japan as a Japanese person for instance – would you want to revise the constitution? For example, as you have just mentioned, some articles written by you were precluded from the constitution through exchanges with Colonel Kades. Would you like to add them back to the constitution?

**Beate:** I feel that an “amendment” [to the constitution] is dangerous. It seems to me that this would open a “Pandora’s Box”. Should we open the “Pandora’s Box”, what would come out of it? For example, suppose we say, “Let’s review the constitution to change a certain article;” it might be okay if we really change only that article, but I don’t think it will be the case. Do you know what “Pandora’s Box” is?

**Ito:** Yes, I know.

**Beate:** If we open it, we never know what will come out of it.

**Ito:** So, do you mean that a “revision of the constitution” is the same as “opening Pandora’s Box”?

**Beate:** Exactly. For, if they manage to change one article, they will do another later. They can do it again. In my opinion, if Japanese people want to change something, instead of opening Pandora’s Box, they can add them to the Civil Code. [laughter]

**Ito:** I see. [laughter]

**Beate:** They should leave the constitution intact. Why don’t they add them into the Civil Code? The Diet should be able to make new laws anytime they like, right?

**Ito:** I understand your points. I have two questions regarding that: do you feel this way because you still associate Japanese politicians with the military clique government during the war? Or, is it because you have a philosophy that says that a constitution should not be changed to begin with? In other words, do you think that the U. S. Constitution, for example, should never be changed either?

**Beate:** No, it’s not that. My standpoint is that people do not change so quickly. Considering what it was like in Japan during the war 60 years ago, and considering the nature of the military clique – I think 60 years is a “short” period of time. I think it takes a long, long time to change from a feudal country to a truly modern, liberal country. That is my personal opinion. For example, someone told me this story: a young woman wants to marry a young man. He has quite a few faults, but according



to this young woman, “If I marry him, I can change him. If I do this and that, I can change his character.” I don’t think so. By the age of 18 or so, one’s character has already been molded. My husband hasn’t changed at all since we first married [laughter]. I haven’t changed, either. That is my view. Therefore, 60 years does not seem to me a long time at all. That is why I am afraid of opening the “Pandora’s Box”.

**Ito:** I see what you mean better now.

**Beate:** It is really scary. By the way, are you a friend of Mr. Kunio Suzuki, who was on the stage with us at yesterday’s symposium?

**Ito:** No, I met him for the first time yesterday.

**Beate:** I was very worried about participating this event. Did Watanabe-san tell you about it?

**Ito:** Yes, he did.

**Beate:** I didn’t want to go, to tell you the truth. Watanabe-san had sent me some materials to read about Mr. Suzuki, but they arrived only several days ago. I had never heard his name before that. Among the materials was a photograph of Yukio Mishima, and there was a photo of *Harakiri*, too. Oh, I shouldn’t say *Harakiri*, should I? [laughter] So, among the documents, there were mentions of *Seppuku* (= disembowelment; *harakiri*) and such. I felt I didn’t want to be in the same room as such people. It was quite a shock for me. I still don’t understand what he was saying. I cannot believe him, whatever he says... He calls himself “ultra-nationalist”. What do you call it in Japanese?

**Ito:** I guess it is “Shin-Uyoku” [= “New Right-Wing”].

**Beate:** “I am a right-wing but progressive,” he said. I don’t understand what that means. I have read many books written by Nazis and such nationalists, so I know that they interweave lots of lies in what they say. Therefore I think that the Japanese military clique people haven’t changed so much, though I don’t really want to compare Japanese military cliques to Nazis. In my opinion Japan and the Nazis were very different; for, Germany before Nazis was a very progressive country.

**Ito:** You mean, based on a comparison between the two countries’ constitutions?

**Beate:** I admit that the Weimar Constitution was a very good constitution, but my point is that Germany, especially its “culture,” was quite prominent in Europe in those days. Germany had produced very famous poets such as Göethe and Heine, and famous musicians such as Beethoven. Which means that the citizens of Germany had a very high educational standard. And yet, these well-educated people became Nazis. In Japan, on the other hand, they didn’t have such a good educational system back then. So the Japanese people were engaged in the war under a feudal system, in

which the Emperor and the high-ranking government officials ordered around the lower class people. Right? Therefore I don't think that ordinary Japanese people were to blame. Germans, on the contrary, must have understood what they were doing. Therefore they were "guilty". Do you understand what I mean?

**Ito:** Yes, I do.

**Beate:** So I have never been to Germany. I don't want to go there. I don't want to meet such people. Well, that's about it. My attitude has softened a little these days, though.

**Ito:** In any case, 60 years is not long enough. You feel that [revising the constitution] is as scary as opening Pandora's Box, is that right?

**Beate:** Absolutely, absolutely. But Japan is really different from the Nazis. It is true that Japan did a lot of things in other countries; I know that. Japan did really horrible things in Nanjing, China. But other countries did a lot of things too. Nazis, in particular, were a special case in that people who have produced such fine culture did such terrible things... I still cannot understand it... Do you know the history of Nazis?

**Ito:** I don't know it in detail, though of course I know at least about "the Jewish Holocaust" ...

**Beate:** It is not only Jewish people [that they killed]. They killed Jews, Catholics, and many others in whatever places they occupied. It is indisputable. It is true that Jews were killed in the largest numbers, but they killed so many non-Jewish people as well. But it seems that nowadays Germany is doing a lot of good things for Jews [laughter]. They built the Holocaust Museum too, right? In Berlin. I heard that it is very highly acclaimed. Perhaps young people today are acutely aware of the crime in their history. But people of their parents' generation may not. They don't have good feelings toward people of races other than their own. I don't go to Austria either, since there are still so many Nazis in Austria.

**Ito:** Really?!

**Beate:** That is the big problem. I haven't met many young Germans, but I met a couple of them here. They were both very nice people [laughter]. I wonder, however, if there are many people like them over there? If I go now, I am sure that there are people who still retain the same way of thinking as during the war – therefore I do not want to go there. If I go on a trip at all, I want to go where I can thoroughly enjoy myself [laughter]. For, I was really surprised when I found out that Nazis still exist. I heard that it is the same in Hungary. Someone told me about that. When he asked me why I wouldn't go to Austria, I answered to him, "Because there are Nazis there." Then he said, "But Nazis are everywhere." It is actually true. They are even in France, though relatively fewer.

Just three weeks ago, my daughter's husband told me that he would like to show their child Vienna, Austria. Because I was born there and grandfather and other family members had died there. He pleaded with me to go with them. But my answer was "no." "I don't want to go because Nazis are there. I don't want to meet any Nazis," I told them. He said, "Isn't it in the past?" But it is not, in my mind. So they went on their own.

And I received an email from Vienna. They went to visit my family's grave, and asked for my grandfather's grave at the office telling them his name was "Abraham Holstein." Do you do the same in Japan too? The office clerk told them that there were "no Jewish graves" there. I was so surprised to read the email. For, my grandfather's grave certainly was in that graveyard when my cousin had visited 4 years ago. So I replied to them, "Did you write his name properly? Maybe the clerk didn't understand you." But they said, "The clerk said that there were no Jewish graves there." So they went out of that office, and then noticed another smaller office about one block away. It was in the same cemetery. What do you call "cemetery" in Japanese?

**Ito:** "Kyodo Bochi," I guess.

**Beate:** I see. And when they went to that section of the cemetery, they noticed a big sign that said "Jewish Committee." So they went into that office and asked for "Abraham Holstein." The clerk there said, "Just a moment, please. We have everyone's name in the database on computer." However, they could not find any information about my grandfather's grave on the computer. There were Jewish graves in that cemetery, but something must have happened since my cousin had visited there. When they went to the Jewish section of the cemetery, my grandchild and son-in-law found that the graves there were not standing properly, and that the stones were all scattered around. So I guess something had happened. I want to investigate where my grandfather's grave is now; even the Jewish committee didn't know, although many different names came up on the computer...

Please imagine: someone travels all the way from the United States. At the cemetery office, the administrator says to the person, "There are no Jewish graves here". What kind of person would say such a thing? From my viewpoint, it is only Nazis who do such things. Who else? Don't you think so? That's why I don't want to go there. These people have not changed yet. In fact, I went there a couple of times after the war, because my father's house was there. After my parents passed away, I had to go there a few times to sell the house. I was so sad. But there was no other solution then. So, I believe it is best not to open the Pandora's Box. At least for now – at least for another 10 years, or even 20 years.

**Ito:** To tell you the truth, I have felt, like many other people, that "it has been 'already' 60 years [since the constitution came into force]". What you made me realize is a very important perspective.

By the way, considering your experiences, what do “nation” and “constitution” mean to you?

**Beate:** Well, to be honest, I don’t find much significance in these things personally. Wherever I go, I am happy as long as I can be with my family and if it is a nice place. I live here because I love New York City so much. Some people say, “New Zealand is a very good country,” but I don’t feel that way with any particular country. A “cosmopolitan,” that’s what I am. I like Japan very much too. But I don’t have any kind of special “patriotism” for any specific country. That is probably because I lived in so many different countries. I have long been this way. Of course, it was hard for me during the war. I didn’t know what was happening to my parents for 5 years. But I think I am more optimistic than many other people; I used to tell myself that “everything was going to be fine when the war ended.” And I would keep working hard, believing that people with high morals would win in the end. So, I don’t understand “patriotic” feelings and I feel fearful when I see someone like Mr. Kunio Suzuki.

My belief is that “a person is a person” regardless of nationality – whether one is Japanese, Chinese, or Indian. I feel that way especially with women. We all cry and laugh. Humans are basically the same. But education or training can change people; if it is a bad kind, it spoils children. Many countries have made that mistake in their history all over the world. Some people blame children. But I don’t think it is fair. It is a result of the education provided by parents and/or the government. I want to emphasize that we humans are basically the same, though “cultures” are different. Cultures are different from place to place.

I have travelled through most of Asia on my own, except for Bangladesh. I have visited many countries in Europe too, though not all of them. I saw many theatrical plays, dance, and music for my work in these countries. I went to Himalayan areas too, including Bhutan and Tibet, by myself. What I can say from these experiences is that the basics of a traditional dance in one country is very similar to the ones in other countries. There are some differences, of course, but on the whole the basics have so much in common. You have Kendo and Judo in Japan, but you find something very similar in China, Indonesia and India too. These martial arts share the same origin, though they have developed into different versions in different countries little by little over time. That’s all. It is also common that they use these martial arts for educational purposes in all of these countries. That’s it. We are all humans, so we all have similar “hopes” I think. Therefore, I am not interested in “patriotism.” [laughter]

**Ito:** I think I understand your stance on the “nation” much better now. So, with the fact that you have no patriotic feelings in mind, I would like to hear what you think of a “constitution.” I have been thinking about it myself and still have not figured out how to make sense of it yet. Through reading many books on constitutions in preparation for this interview with you, and having met and talked with you today, I

came to realize that a constitution is supposed to be felt more intimately by its citizens, and to be thought of in relation to “how we want to live” and “what kind of life we seek to live.” Discussions about whether the GHQ or the government forced it upon us are not so important here. What is a “constitution” for you, to sum it up in a few words?

**Beate:** Every country needs some kind of “laws” at least for another long while, right? We all need some sort of reliable way to organize ourselves. Otherwise we would all just mind our own business. That wouldn’t be terrific [laughter], because things would become very chaotic. So I believe that we need some laws that define the fundamentals of our life, such as, “We should not kill other human beings,” etc. A “constitution” can define the fundamentals of all aspects of our life, society and nation, so I think we should define the best principles for our life in the constitution.

**Ito:** Is there any part that you want to “change” in the American constitution, for example?

**Beate:** I think it would be best if we can revise the constitutions of every country all over the world and add the pacifist ideals of Article 9.

**Ito:** I see.

**Beate:** For, world peace has not been attained so far. Everyone fought or has been fighting in the past 60 years, right? Look at the world. Africa, Indonesia... Tell me, is there any country that has not had a war [in the last 60 years]?

**Ito:** A country without a war...

**Beate:** I guess New Zealand is one. But almost all the other countries have engaged in some kind of war. Therefore, I would like to stress “the importance of peace”. It is most important and imperative. We, as humans, have been continuously trying to realize peace, haven’t we? Do you know about Mahatma Gandhi of India, for example? Despite all of his efforts, however, peace has not yet been attained. We humans have done so many things in history. Do you know Greek history? In Greece, a long, long time ago, there was a big movement involving women protesting against war. Women went “on strike” and would not have sex with their husbands or lovers unless peace would come. Have you ever heard of the story? It’s so interesting. It is a classical Greek play called *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes. I recommend you read it. In that story, women protest war by not having sex with men and not giving birth to children, until men stopped engaging in the war.

This is a story from the ancient history. That suggests that there have always been wars in our history, from such a long time ago.

Therefore, what would happen if we do not do anything to promote “peace”? Today, it is even more important to take some action and organize movements. I really

meant it when I said that during yesterday's symposium. Why does Japan not aspire to become the world leader, when it is possible thanks to "Article 9"? Why does Japan not advertise Article 9? Japan has never advertised it anywhere in the past 60 years. Not even in the U.S. I think America is partly to blame too, for the U.S. has never spoken up for the Japanese Constitution's Article 9. No one knows anything about it. Perhaps about 20,000 or possibly 30,000 people may know about it, but not more than that. That number is far from enough to have any impact on a country as big as the United States. And because they know nothing about it, Americans have no interest in this issue. Americans seem only worried about their own country these days. It is so sad.

**Ito:** So you are suggesting that "Article 9" has the potential to foster world peace. If we look at the current situation from that viewpoint, what do you think of Japan's Self-Defense Force? Do you think it is "unconstitutional"? In other words, do you consider that it is contradictory to Article 9?

**Beate:** What I hear is that the Japanese SDF [Self-Defense Force] is "growing bigger." I do not know if it means that they now want to "dispatch" the SDF more frequently and in a bigger scale, and then move toward attacking other countries using the SDF. They must be importing and manufacturing lots of weapons now. But Japanese people went through such a hard time during the last war, especially with the atomic bombs dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. People who experienced the misery of war at first hand are still alive. I think that these people, especially women, who experienced the war and are still alive, must have a big influence on Japanese society. I believe that the importance of peace is deeply engraved in the minds of Japanese women.

I don't have many opportunities to meet Japanese men. Even when I give lectures in Japan, I only see a few men in the audience. So I cannot really say much about Japanese men. I don't know much about them... though I think I started seeing more men in my audience in the past few years. I used to see mostly women for a long time, but recently the number of men in the audience has been slowly growing. Young men, especially, become "fan" of mine after listening to my lectures [laughter]. I think they understand deeply the importance of peace.

We still have a chance. As for the Self-Defense Force, I understand that Japan would have to defend itself if another country should attack Japan, as Colonel Kades said. As I mentioned earlier, he protected Japan from losing its "right of self defense." Belligerently attacking another country, however, like the "Pearl Harbor Attack," would be of course inexcusable, I would say. But I think that Japan has mostly observed the constitution's main principle that "Japan will not use the military force as a means of settling international disputes." What I have collected from the news is that the Japanese Self-Defense Force has not engaged in a fight in Iraq so far. Is it true? Is it reported in the same way in Japan too? I hear that they have been making something there. I also hear that they have a limited field of activity and try not to go beyond it. Is it true?



**Ito:** That is what is reported on news, and that is basically what I understand as the activity of the Japanese Self-Defense Force to be.

**Beate:** I also hear that there are doctors and nurses among the Japanese Self-Defense Force, and that they do humanitarian relief work such as fundraising and cooking for Iraqi citizens with that money. I don't know the truth because I have never been to Iraq myself, but if all these are true, I think it is ok for Japan to be engaged in such activities under this constitution. However, if the Japanese Self-Defense Force should become a really big military force with a lot of arms and weapons, they certainly would be very keen to use them. Like any other military force would [laughter]. That is what I mean by "Pandora's Box." So, in that sense, my understanding is that Japan has been observing the constitution so far – though not without any risk, of course. After all, Japan "has not killed anyone" in the past 60 years. Right?

**Ito:** I have never thought of that, but you are actually right. Japan has not killed anyone in the past 60 years. However, if we are to preserve the current constitution, including Article 9, do you think the Japanese Self-Defense Force can be interpreted as compatible with Article 9? Today, the Self-Defense Force actually owns a lot of weapons, with the world's second-largest military expenditure, even though it is called a "Self-Defense Force." I heard that there are also political groups who claim that the Japanese Self-Defense Force should be disbanded if we are to preserve the constitution. What do you think?

**Beate:** Well, that is not for me to judge...

**Ito:** Yes, it is very difficult to judge, isn't it? It is even more difficult when you take "the Japan-US security treaty" issues into consideration...

**Beate:** Yes, it is difficult, of course. But isn't Japan a really "free" country now? Japan doesn't have to listen to the U.S., and should be able to do what it needs to do on its own. That is Japan's true "independence," isn't it? That is what I think.

**Ito:** "Independence" in a true sense.

**Beate:** Yes, true independence. I am afraid that it would be really dangerous if Japan revises its Constitution and turn its "Self-Defense Force" into a real "Aggressive Force." Other Asian countries are especially very sensitive about this issue, right? For they know and still remember about Japanese "Aggressive Forces." Just as Japanese people still remember the atomic bombs, other Asian countries still remember the military attacks and the rapes committed by Japanese armies. So, if they really change the "self-defense force" into an "aggressive force" again... it would be a horrible disaster. I would say it would be "the end of the world."

**Ito:** "The end of the world"?



**Beate:** The end of the whole world.

**Ito:** You mean, changing the Japanese Constitution, or opening Pandora's Box would be the end of the world?

**Beate:** Yes, absolutely. It would help the Iraq War become even worse, with Iran joining the war for example – it would be “the end of the whole world” then. Professor Doi was saying the same thing: “I’m afraid that the whole world will be burned down within 20 years.” It was during my birthday party in October, in Nagoya. Professor Doi came to the party, and while chatting I asked her, “Are you still optimistic [about the world]?” Her answer was, “If we do not reconstruct something right now, if we do not do something right now, I’m afraid that the world will see its end in 20 years.” It is so sad, but I agree with her. For, I won’t be alive then, but you young people would still be alive. So will my grandchildren. I feel so sorry for you all. That’s all I feel. Other people may have different opinions, but I am not optimistic at all, at least at the moment. It is a really, really bad situation right now...

**Ito:** Not only Japan, but the whole world, do you mean?

**Beate:** Yes, the whole world. The whole wide world. If you really want to escape, where would you go? New Zealand? Canada? It is not easy though. Costa Rica has no army, and there seem to be other countries whose constitutions declare that they “seek to keep peace”, but there is no other constitution in the world that declares the renunciation of war so explicitly as the Japanese Constitution’s Article 9. So, if all of us seriously speak up for it in the U.S. and everywhere else... Why don’t you try it for once? You know, many countries have nuclear bombs – because when one starts it, others start doing it too. Why can’t we do the same thing with peace?

**Ito:** I assume that it is of course difficult for the U.S. to have its own “Article 9,” but do you think it may be possible for the U.S. to take initiative and speak up for Japanese “Article 9” in assertive and effective ways?

**Beate:** Do you mean, if the U.S. would advertise Article 9 for Japan?

**Ito:** Of course Japan would advertise it too, but if the U.S. can help to spread “Article 9” to the world – then it might be able to actually change the world.

**Beate:** I think so, too. But what I really want is to add “Article 9” into every single country’s constitution throughout the world. I once heard a famous peace movement leader saying that the “Japanese Constitution’s Article 9 is the most powerful and supreme, so we should all copy it.” And then we made a documentary film based on that idea, and released it a few years ago. So, I hope, I hope.

**Ito:** I can feel how much you are worried about the current situation. As a last question, is there any word for the young generation readers of *GENERATION TIMES*, regarding the Constitution of Japan?

**Beate:** Well, what I would like to say to young people is this: if you want to “go on,” you must observe and preserve your constitution and speak up for Article 9, no matter what it takes – for your own self and for the whole world. You must join hands with other countries, and campaign for the cause together with them, really seriously, from morning until night, everyday. That is what I am hoping for. But who am I to say all that? ... I am an amateur in that kind of thing[laughter].

**Ito:** What did you mean by “if you want to ‘go on’”? Do you mean “if you want to live”?

**Beate:** Yes, if they want to “live”. to survive. I really mean it. I am not saying this as an armchair critic. For, I have seen “Hiroshima”. I have seen “Nagasaki”. I have seen “Tokyo”. I have seen “Austria”, too. I also went to “the Soviet Union” just after the war. And I saw it there too. The scars left by war were still there. 25 Million people were killed there. Twenty-five million people died in the Soviet Union. Did you know that number? It will be an innumerable number if we add up all the victims of war in Germany, Japan, and all the other countries. I have seen that with my own eyes. Therefore, I am really disappointed now. I am really scared of the future. Really, really scared.

When World War II ended, people of my generation all thought that, “At last peace would come.” I did not doubt it when I came back to the U.S., until the Cold War started. I had really believed that there would never be a war from then on and that peace would come, for we all experienced the horrors of war to our bones. However, what happened in the past 60 years? Peace was never realized. So many people were killed again. At this moment [more people are being killed] in Iraq, and in Africa... And in many other countries... We don’t know what is going to happen. But we should not give up. We must go on with whatever we can, like voting, or something else. Gandhi and other peace movement activists did not succeed, but this time it might succeed. Right? For, in the past 60 years, at least Article 9 has been successful in Japan. We can take it as an example. Don’t you think?

**Ito:** An example of a success.

**Beate:** A big success.

**Ito:** To show to the world...

**Beate:** Japan is really amazing. Japan’s economic power has become so strong too. It may be in a recession now, but today’s Japan is so different from how I remember it was. I get amazed each time I visit Japan. For example, whenever I visit the countryside in Japan for my lectures, I admire the buildings and lecture halls in

these small local towns. I have been to many places: Okinawa, Sendai, Aomori, Hokkaido, Gifu... and everywhere I visit, I always see some kind of local women's groups or organizations there, and I always get impressed by their facilities. In such buildings women are always learning something like *Ikebana* and English, and usually there is a childcare room right next to the classroom so that the mothers can see their children as needed. So there are few children crying. They have some childcare staff in the room as well. It is really impressive. Even in quite remote, rural areas there are such facilities. It's wonderful. It is great if Japan is going in that direction.

But if they should ever revise the constitution, they would not revise it for better, would they? For, as you know, the current one is the best. As Professor Dallas, who was the special envoy at the time, was saying, this constitution is "the model [for the world]". What he had in his mind when he said that were Articles 9 and 24, among others. He also said that the Japanese Constitution was "the body of the world". He was a very intelligent person, and had a deep understanding of these things. I don't want to sound repetitive, but it is really amazing that Japan has such an opportunity. You know, an opportunity to promote world peace.

I am aware that "a human is a human." It is not easy to practice idealism. We all make mistakes. You find a difficult situation no matter where you go. But at the same time, many things, such as women's rights and economics, have been improving in various places around the world. In Third World countries in particular, it is getting better, albeit slowly. There is still a lot to improve, of course – when I once went to Africa, I could not help asking to my husband to go home: "I cannot bare to see this. Let's go home," I said to him. It was the same in Indonesia too. As soon as you step out of the airport, there are rows and rows of homeless people sitting over as long as 25 miles. Yes, 25 miles (=40 km)! Can you imagine? As humans, we need to do something to improve all these things. Is it happening in Japan too, the same thing as is happening in the U.S.? The rich become richer and richer, and the poor more and more poor...

**Ito:** Yes. We have the problems of economic disparity in Japan too.

**Beate:** I used to admire the fact that in Japan, for a long time the gap between the rich and the ordinary [middle-class] used to be much less significant. It is true that rich people were more luxurious in some ways, such as owning better *tatami* mats, using silk fabrics, and eating better food, but still the differences were not too big. However, I hear that it is not like that anymore.

**Ito:** Yes, you are right. The economic disparity has been growing bigger and bigger in Japan.

**Beate:** So it is in the U.S. too. There are tremendous billionaires in the U.S. nowadays. I feel sorry for your generation, for young people. It is not too much of a big deal for us, the old generation, because we will die sooner or later. It is just a matter of

whether we die a year earlier, or a year later, you know [laughter]. So it is not a big deal for us. But for you...

**Ito:** Thank you very much. I can do only little by little, but I haven't given up my hope. "I never give up," as we say.

**Beate:** You never give up. Good! That sounds great. You must get it across to other people in your generation. It is not easy, though... For, if other people do not share the same idea and aspiration with you, you will be alone... But we all – well, not all, but quite a few people – actually are working toward the same hope with you. Though they are becoming fewer, there are still such "positive" people around. But we really need to do something. Just contemplating is not enough. You have to do something, with everyone together.

I wish Mrs. Fusae Ichikawa was still alive... I had lunch with her just two years before she passed away. Do you know a place where you can eat lunch in Tokyo Tower? While eating lunch there, I asked her, "What would you like to do next?" Then she answered, "I am going to Iraq!" So I asked her, "Why are you going to Iraq?" She replied, "I must teach women in Iraq about women's rights." She was 86 years old then. And she really went there. After coming home, she got ill and passed away. People like her never change. They are always acting without giving up. Mrs. Ichikawa was a very pure person. She was wonderful. I respect her very, very much.

**Ito:** I am so glad to have come and seen you today, Mrs. Beate. I am deeply grateful to you. I cannot quite put together all of the things we have talked about today yet, but I really appreciate that you told us so many valuable stories.

**Beate:** Thank you. Arigato. I understand. We have lots of difficult tasks. Very difficult.

**Ito:** But I am so glad I came.

**Beate:** The fact that you came here today means that you are determined to do your best to help make this world a better place. I saw it today. I didn't know about you at all until today, since Watanabe-san didn't really tell me much about you. I was very busy as well. To be very honest, I think very highly of Japanese women, though I know I shouldn't say this to men [laughter]. I have been observing Japanese women for a long time. I have been visiting Japan every year since 1993, and have met many women. You can see independent women who have made it in many fields now, though making it in corporations is still a different story, of course. But I have seen many women doing great jobs in the media industry too, and when women do achieve something and become famous, what they have achieved is really significant. What always amazes me is that when such Japanese women come to me, they have always organized an "executive committee." They raise money for that by themselves, too. Japanese women don't realize how amazing they are, and what impressive things they have done. So I tell them how great they are, for they really

don't seem to know it themselves. And these things used to be so difficult for women to achieve in Japan just decades ago, you know.

**Ito:** You are absolutely right. Women are much more active and in higher spirits than men in today's Japan [laughter].

**Beate:** But I'm very happy you came. I am really glad to meet a person like you, especially a man like you. I have met many [Japanese] women like you so far [laughter], but not men. Therefore I am really happy. I think Japanese people are very smart. And very competent. There are still many people who are genuine and honest. So, please do your best to use the most of Japan's chance to promote peace. Not only for Japan, but for all of us, for the world around. I'm very glad. I am praying for your success.

**Ito:** Thank you so much again for your time for this long interview.