A Rightward Leaning Perception of Japanese History and the Constitution of Japan

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Note: As there has been no change in the Japanese Government's general perceptions, Professor Takahashi has based his talk on a lecture from approximately one year ago while including recent developments.

1. Introduction
Today I would like to speak to you about "A Rightward Leaning Perception of Japanese History and the Constitution of Japan." Although I say “rightward leaning,” it is difficult to give a strict definition of what “right” means. If you say that it's a return to Japan's "militarism" previous to 1945, I don't believe that is the case. However, it is an undeniable fact that nationalism is on the rise in Japan. The first eruption of nationalism since that period was due to the conflict with North Korea (in particular, the kidnapping of Japanese citizens); presently, however, significant factors are rather conflicts with South Korea and China over historical and territorial issues.

The result is a sharp deterioration of sentiment toward South Korea and toward China by Japanese citizens. Conversely, there also appears to be a similar deterioration of sentiment toward Japan by South Korean and Chinese citizens. This is shown in numerous public opinion surveys recently conducted in each country. In a survey taking place in October 2012 by Japan’s Cabinet Office concerning feelings of friendliness toward Korea, only 39.2% of respondents had friendly feelings, a more than 20-point drop from the previous year; 59% did not have friendly feelings, marking a more than 20-point increase. As for China, a mere 18% had friendly feelings toward Japan, while 80.6% did not. According to data released in July 2013 by View Research Center in the USA, 77% of Koreans and 90% of Chinese answered that they had a “negative impression of Japan.” (In contrast, about 80% of Malaysians, Indonesians, Australians and Filipinos answered that they had a “positive impression of Japan.”) As well, the results of a joint opinion poll by the Japanese non-profit organization “The Genron NPO” and a Chinese media organization showed that 90.1% of Japanese held an “unfavorable opinion” of China, whereas 92.8% of Chinese held a similar view of Japanese; both results were at the worst level in the nine years of the poll. Regarding the possibility of military conflict between Japan, China and
Korea, 23.7% of Japanese and 52.7% Chinese respondents in the same poll either replied “There will be conflict within a few years” or “There will be conflict in the future.”

Being that this conference is held for the purpose of “building peace in East Asia,” I doubt that there is anyone here that does not feel apprehensive about this situation. As I believe that we absolutely must avoid letting animosity build to the point of war, I want to do my best to see that a calm, rational perception of Japan’s history takes root so that a dangerous nationalism that has forgotten to reflect on the country’s history does not escalate within Japan. When considering this, I think that one of the greatest threats in present Japan is that the seat of political power is now occupied by political forces that have completely forgotten to reflect on past history. The Abe regime along with the largest political party, the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP), have an extremely nationalistic perception of history and the Constitution, and, are arguably the most “right-leaning” political force in postwar Japan since the 1947 enactment of the Constitution of Japan.

But that does not mean that a large number, or even a majority, of Japanese citizens back Prime Minister Abe and the LDP’s perception of history and the Constitution. This may be somewhat confusing, but although Mr. Abe and the LDP obtained around 40% of the votes in the December 2012 general election and the July 2013 upper house election, these votes represented disillusionment with the former Democratic Party administration and expectations that Mr. Abe and the LDP’s economic reforms would be successful in reinvigorating the economy; it was rather a minority of voters that favored them due to their perception of history and the Constitution. However, while it is a reality that there are increased anti-Korean and anti-Chinese sentiments amongst citizens and in society concerning historical perceptions and territorial disputes, there is a growing likelihood that the Abe administration and LDP will take full advantage of this heightened nationalism by rolling out as policy “the most right-leaning” perceptions of history and the Constitution in postwar Japan.

2. "Breaking from the Postwar Regime"

One of Prime Minister ABE Shinzō’s most well-known political slogans is “breaking from the postwar regime.” He used this in his first administration [2006 – 07], but continues to assert the call today. By “postwar regime,” Mr. Abe is specifically referring to Japan’s postwar system that centered on the Fundamental Law of Education enacted to realize The Constitution of Japan and the ideals of the Constitution. In December 2006, as the first
stage of Prime Minister Abe’s “breaking from the postwar regime,” the Revised Fundamental Law of Education was executed. After enacting the 2007 National Referendum Law, which is essential for constitutional revision, Mr. Abe thought the country was on its way to revising the Constitution, but was unable to achieve this in his first administration.

In 2012, Mr. Abe staged a comeback as the LDP president; the general election in the same year led to the formation of the second Abe administration. There is no doubt that he is strongly determined to bring about constitutional revisions this time around. It is in Mr. Abe’s book “Toward a New Country,” a republished version of his earlier “Towards a Beautiful Country” issued during his first administration, that he asserted, “breaking from the postwar regime is still the most important theme for Japan, just as it was five years earlier when I was prime minister.”

Mr. Abe raised the slogan of “Take Back Japan.” in the general election. And printed in large red lettering on the paper band1 of “Toward a New Country” is written “In Order to Recover a Strong Japan.” What does this mean? At the close of “New Country,” Mr. Abe states:

“This did not mean only to take back Japan from the Democratic Party government. I’ll go so far as to say that we are in a battle to take back the country of Japan from postwar history by the hands of the Japanese people” (pg. 254).2

Prime Minister Abe is saying that “postwar history” took away “the country of Japan” from “the Japanese people” and so, “take (it) back.” Well then, when did “the country of Japan,” the “strong Japan” that “postwar history” took away exist? That can only refer to before “postwar history,” that is to “prewar” or “wartime.” I don’t think that even Prime Minister Abe is considering making today’s Japan once again a nation of “militarism.” But, anyone can see that he wants to reject Japan’s “postwar history.”

On the one hand, Mr. Abe is a strong supporter of the “Japan-U.S. alliance.” At various times he has repeated that Japan shares values of freedom and democracy with the U.S.,

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1 Paper band - a promotional strip wrapped around the cover of books in Japan.
2 Translation from “Shinzo Mr. Abe’s Civic Nationalism,” Kevin Doak, May 15, 2013, Center for Strategies & International Studies.
Korea as well as European and other countries. The following description is included in “New Country”:

“Over the more than half-century since World War II, the nation of Japan has protected freedom, democracy and basic human rights, and contributed to international peace. And, it is no surprise that the world has been watching these acts by the people of Japan. We should be unashamedly proud of the image of this country, which the people of Japan have created themselves. We have absolutely no intention of changing the nature of this country in the future” (pg. 73).

The “contribution” to “freedom and democracy,” “basic human rights” and “international peace” that he speaks of here is the “postwar Japan” clearly made possible by the Constitution of Japan enforced in 1947. Then that means in this instance, Mr. Abe is offering the “postwar regime” the highest praise. He even goes to the extent of saying that we must be proud because “the nature of the country” was made by Japanese themselves, and that “we have absolutely no intention of changing (it) in the future.”

Within the same book he has asserted the need “to take back the country of Japan from postwar history by the hands of the Japanese people” while at the same time saying “we have absolutely no intention of changing” “the nature of this country” followed “over the more than half-century since World War II.” This is a blatant case of self-contradiction.

How can there be such an obvious contradiction? Actually, the reason that Mr. Abe stresses “respect for freedom, democracy and basic human rights” is pure rhetoric to justify his visits to Yasukuni Shrine. He is trying to say that though Korea, China and other countries may criticize a visit to Yasukuni by a sitting prime minister as the militarization of Japan, just because he visits Yasukuni doesn’t mean that the country is returning to the path of militarism; that is proven by Japan’s postwar history. Mr. Abe’s opportunistic use of praising postwar Japan is a condition of self-contradiction.

Regarding the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, Mr. Abe says, “Protecting Japan means protecting the foundations of its political system, namely, freedom and democracy” (pg. 70). Isn’t it because of adopting the system of the Constitution of Japan, in other words, the “postwar regime,” which he is attempting to reject, that Japan is a nation with a postwar history that is one of freedom, democracy and basic human rights?
On April 28th, 2013, the Abe administration held a government-sponsored ceremony for the "Restoration of Sovereignty Day." Here, too, self-contradiction can be seen. On April 28th, 1952, The San Francisco Peace Treaty came into effect and Japanese sovereignty was restored, thereby returning the nation to the international community. Although Prime Minister Abe told government supporters that it wasn’t a celebration, it is a fact that LDP members intended to make the date a public holiday from the beginning. The previous year a bill was even submitted to do so. This move caused a huge backlash from the people of Okinawa who have remembered this day as the “Day of Humiliation,” when they were unilaterally separated from Japan. After doing away with the festive tone, the ceremony was pushed through. However, the postwar Japan, that is, the "postwar regime" that Mr. Abe has been attempting to reject all along, is the Japan that started with the return to the international community via the San Francisco Peace Treaty. Those who want to reject the "postwar regime" are celebrating the start of the “postwar regime.” I would have to say that that is a complete contradiction.

3・ Visitation to Yasukuni Shrine

During his first administration, Prime Minister Abe was dissuaded from visiting Yasukuni Shrine. This was immediately after relations with China had dropped to an all-time low due to former Prime Minister Koizumi’s repeated visits to the shrine. For Mr. Abe, who even more often than his predecessor had stated that it was the prime minister’s “duty” to visit Yasukuni, it “was a matter of great regret” that he still often mentions. But he has taken a half-hearted attitude of not definitively saying whether he will visit Yasukuni or not. Although there is no doubt that his true intentions are to visit as prime minister, he did not visit the shrine for the spring ritual, neither for August 15th (known in Japan as “the anniversary of the end of the Pacific War”). The scheduled presentation of this paper between October 17 – 20, 2013 falls exactly at the same time as the fall ritual, so it is possible that the prime minister could visit Yasukuni Shrine then.³

Details on my views of the subject of Yasukuni Shrine can be found in my book, “The Yasukuni Issue,” which is translated into Korean and Chinese. I will limit myself to refuting one of the justifications for Yasukuni visitation that Prime Minister Abe has recently repeated to various media outlets. The Prime Minister relies on the opinion of Kevin Doak, professor at Georgetown University in the U.S., for this argument. Professor Doak

³ Note: As of Nov. 2014, PM Mr. Abe has visited Yasukuni Shrine once, on Dec. 26, 2014.
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cmpares Yasukuni Shrine to America’s Arlington National Cemetery, where U.S. military officers and soldiers are interred. Although there are also Confederate soldiers who fought for slavery during the Civil War buried in Arlington Cemetery, no one imagines that when the U.S. president goes to pay tribute to the war dead that he/she is affirming slavery. That is because people consider the kind of ideology those soldiers held during their lifetimes to be separate from war memorials and tributes. In the same way, even if the prime minister of Japan visits Yasukuni Shrine, it doesn’t mean that he approves of the conduct of TÔJÔ Hideki and other Class A war criminals. According to Professor Doak, it is “natural” to mourn for a country’s war dead; therefore, the prime minister should be “encouraged” to visit Yasukuni Shrine. Prime Minister Abe has referred to this in saying, “It is right to show reverence for the souls of soldiers who died for our country.”

However, Kevin Doak’s argument and the assertion by Prime Minister Abe which is based on it ignore an essential difference with Arlington Cemetery. As America’s national cemetery, Arlington Cemetery represents no specific perception of history, such as that slavery supported by the Confederate army was justified or that justification for the abolition of slavery was not truthful. Neither is the U.S. government pushing this type of perception on society. What about Yasukuni Shrine? Yasukuni Shrine has two self-proclaimed roles: one role is to commemorate and honor the souls of dead soldiers; the other is to “to clarify the truth of modern history.” And what is this “truth of modern history” as taught by Yasukuni Shrine? That would be that Japanese military wars since the Meiji Era [from 1868] were wars of “Self-sufficiency, Self-defense” and were not misdirected battles. But, through defeat in the Asia-Pacific War, Japan went from being a victorious nation to unilaterally being labeled an aggressor state. And that because of the “victor’s justice” known as the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, falsely accused war criminals were categorized as “Class A War Criminals.” As a part of this “truth of modern history,” Yasukuni Shrine even displays Japanese military war history in Yûshûkan, a former military museum that was converted into a history museum in order to clarify that colonial rule and wars conducted by modern Japan were not mistakes. The enshrinement of Class A war criminals is just a further extension of this historical perspective. The point is that a visit by the U.S. president to Arlington Cemetery, which as an institution is in no way advocating slavery, and a visit by the Japanese prime minister to Yasukuni Shrine, which as an institution is working to convince the world of the justness of the Japanese military’s wars, obviously serve different purposes.
4. The Definition of “Aggression”

Even before Mr. Abe became prime minister he has said that he would like to review the statements made by former Prime Minister MURAYAMA Tomiichi on the 50th anniversary of World War II and by former Chief Cabinet Secretary KONO Yōhei regarding the issue of “comfort women” [military sexual slaves].

In 1995, 50 years after the staging of the Second World War, there was a need for Japan to face the global community and emphasize recognition of its history at a time when questions were once again being raised about its postwar responsibilities. Although efforts were made to apologize and demonstrate both domestically and overseas its will to renounce war through a parliamentary resolution, opposition by right-wing politicians meant that the resolution expressed neither an apology nor remorse, making a global appeal impossible. With that, the Cabinet-approved “Murayama Statement” was released. The latter half of the statement is as follows:

“During a certain period in the not too distant past, Japan, following a mistaken national policy, advanced along the road to war, only to ensnare the Japanese people in a fateful crisis, and, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations. In the hope that no such mistake be made in the future, I regard, in a spirit of humility, these irrefutable facts of history, and express here once again my feelings of deep remorse and state my heartfelt apology. Allow me also to express my feelings of profound mourning for all victims, both at home and abroad, of that history.”

It could be said that this was Japan’s minimal effort for the 50th anniversary. Thereafter, during times when problems arose with China and/or Korea centering on Japan’s perception of history, successive cabinets made it through the situation by declaring that they were following the Murayama Statement. Mr. Abe continually said that he would review even postwar Japan’s minimal effort.

On April 22, 2013, at Upper House Budget Committee proceedings after he had assumed office, Mr. Abe stated that his administration “isn’t necessarily inheriting the Murayama Statement as it is.” Taking advantage of that opening, LDP Diet member MARUYAMA Kazuya posed a question the gist being that wording such as “during a certain period in the

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4 Translation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.
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not too distant past” and “mistaken national policy” and furthermore, “colonial rule and aggression” are “vague” and apologizing with this kind of vague wording is a peace-at-any-price policy. To this Mr. Abe expressed his own negative opinion of the statement saying that it was true that this problem had been pointed out and that in this regard “the definition of ‘aggression’ is not firmly determined either by academics or the international community, and that it can be viewed differently depending on which side you are on.”

This shows poor awareness on the part of a prime minister. The definition of aggression was clearly approved by a December 1974 United Nations General Assembly resolution (UN General Assembly Resolution 3314 (Definition of Aggression)). Japan signed this resolution. When a member of an opposition party pointed this out, Prime Minister Mr. Abe responded that resolutions are for the UN Security Council’s “reference purposes” and, moreover, that “in the so-called academic field there are various ongoing debates and no firm definition.” Nevertheless, as prime minister, one should rely on the definition approved by the international community from the start, not an academic definition. In addition to this UN resolution, the International Criminal Court (ICC), which, as a matter of fact, tries acts of aggression, unanimously approved a provision on the definition for aggression in 2010. What is more, Japan played a significant role at the time of the approval. There is no possible way that the Prime Minister of Japan did not know that. Certainly, Prime Minister Abe believes he can deny Japan’s colonial rule and aggression by saying, “it can be viewed differently depending on which side you are on.” What he wants to say is that from Korea’s viewpoint, the Korean “Annexation” was unjustifiable colonial rule, but from Japan’s viewpoint, it was not; from China’s viewpoint, the Sino-Japanese War was aggression, but Japan does not view it as such.

However, this questionable awareness will not be accepted by the international community. Prime Minister Abe’s remarks were criticized by large numbers of media outlets in the West, including the United States. A report by the U.S. Congressional Research Service expressed severe criticism, saying that Prime Minister Mr. Abe “embraces a revisionist view of Japanese history that rejects the narrative of Imperial Japanese aggression and victimization of other Asians.”5 It was after this type of reaction from the United States that Prime Minister Abe started saying that the Murayama Statement would be upheld. For Mr.

Abe, a supporter of the Japanese-U.S. alliance, more than anything else it is essential to avoid U.S. criticism and conflict.

5. The Issue of "Comfort Women"

Remarks made in 2013 by Ōsaka mayor HASHIMOTO Tōru, leader of the Japan Restoration Party, have also caused controversy: "For courageous soldiers who were mentally on edge and had risked their lives in circumstances where bullets were falling like rain, if you want them to get some rest, a comfort women system was necessary. That's clear to anyone."

There is obviously a major problem with Mayor Hashimoto’s perception of history, but let’s narrow the focus to Prime Minister Abe. When Mayor Hashimoto’s remarks brought harsh backlash from Korea and strong criticism from the U.S., Prime Minister Abe stated that the mayor’s remarks “run completely counter to mine, the Abe Cabinet’s and the LDP’s.” And yet, Mr. Abe had previously praised Mr. Hashimoto for his historical perception, saying that they were “allies.” In an interview in the August 28, 2012 issue of the “Sankei Shimbun,” Mr. Abe raised Mr. Hashimoto’s criticism of former Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono’s statement, saying that the mayor’s contention that there was no material or evidence demonstrating that the military had coerced the “comfort women” was “appreciated as a very courageous remark.” Furthermore, he was delighted that Mr. Hashimoto had based his criticism on a cabinet decision made during Mr. Abe’s first term in which as far as the Japanese Government had investigated, it had found no material showing coercion, even adding, “He is an ally in the fight.” Finally, Mr. Abe declared that the Kono Statement, the Murayama Statement and, additionally, the statement by former Prime Minister Miyazawa concerning issues over Japanese history textbooks “must be reviewed” as a “readjustment in East Asian diplomacy” and moreover, “excessive consideration of surrounding countries did not lead to true friendship.” Mr. Abe is showing his true colors.

That Mr. Hashimoto and Mr. Abe are “allies” in their criticism of the Kono Statement is certain. In saying that no official documents exist demonstrating coercion of “comfort women,” they are trying to deny the Japanese Government’s responsibility concerning this issue. This mindset runs deeply among Japan’s right-wing, and ignores completely the results of successive investigations on the “comfort women” issue.
As soon as Mr. Abe became prime minister there were expectations that questions of historical perception would once again become an international issue. And it appears that just as before, every single remark regarding his perception of history has been questioned by the international community. In the end, this implies that their historical perception is only welcomed and consumed by a small portion of conservative and right-wing domestic media. A discussion is running rampant that says because of China’s and Korea’s retribution toward Japan, the countries will continually attempt to oppose Japan by using “history” politically. However, such discord doesn’t stop with Asia; this historical perception also results in clashes with the U.S. In other words, their views will never be accepted by the international community. Or putting it in the vernacular, it’s the “Galapagos syndrome” – it’s a discussion that can only happen in the isolated environment of Japan. Those with this perception of history are constantly stuck in this place, never understanding why there is so much criticism; then, after assuming an official position, they gradually reveal their perception, later having to pull back after receiving internationally criticism. This scenario is repeated over and over again. I would have to say that they are caught in a vicious circle of an increasingly perverted sense of victimization and growing obstinacy.

It is clear what Japan’s policymakers and political leaders must do: confront straight on the history that led to extensive damage in neighboring Asian countries and defeat, and acknowledge the fact that it was a mistake. And upon reflecting on these, demonstrate that they are now creating a Japan for the future.

6. The Historical Perception of the Mr. Abe Administration and the LDP
In Article 1, Clause 1 of the Liberal Democratic Party’s draft constitution, it clearly states that “the emperor is the head of state of the nation of Japan.” This is a provision that was not even included in the LDP’s 2005 “new draft constitution.” According to the LDP’s “Q&A for the Draft of the Constitutional Revision” the “head of state” is the “foremost figure of the country”; in short, the emperor is held above the sovereign people. As in the Constitution of the Empire of Japan [1890 – 1947], though the emperor is given no political power, he is given maximum authority.

In the “preamble” of the party’s Draft, the opening sentences set out that “Japan has a long

6 “Deep-seated resentment, frustration, and hostility accompanied by a sense of being powerless to express these feelings directly.” (Merriam-Webster on-line)
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history and distinctive culture, and is honored\(^7\) with an emperor who is a symbol of the unity of the people," proclaiming that Japan is an emperor-centric country. Looking at Japan’s “long history,” the era of the samurai government occupies a great deal of that past, whereas the era of an emperor system under an imperial constitution was quite out of the ordinary. However, this use of “honored” is applied precisely in a structure in which the emperor reigns over the people, making him more than a “symbol,” rather an object of veneration. Additionally, the description of Japan having “a long history and distinctive culture” amounts to a prewar view of the “kokutai (national body/essence)”; that is to say, it is expressing a set of values in which the authority of the state is derived from an “unbroken line of emperors.”

At the end of the Draft’s “preamble,” it says, “The people of Japan hereby enact this Constitution in order that our good traditions and our nation shall be inherited by our descendants for many years to come.” The nation of Japan is “a nation honored with an emperor” in which this “unbroken line of emperors” is made the “foremost figure of the country,” and that this nation has existed together with its “long history” of over some two thousand years, a “distinctive culture” and “good traditions” since before its generations of people and the constitution created by those people. This means that these many generations of citizens exist in order that this “nation honored with an emperor” “shall be inherited by our descendants for many years to come,” and for that purpose they “enact this Constitution.”

This reveals a fundamentally different view of the nation than the current Constitution of Japan. In the present Constitution, first of all, people existed on the islands of Japan and those people enacted a constitution in order to administer the nation, and that these citizens have sovereign power. This Constitution was created to protect basic human rights against the power of the state. These rights were held by people even before constitutions and nations as the “universal principle of humankind.” However, the LDP’s Draft rejects the existence of the “universal principle of humankind.” As explained during the “Q&A,” “We do not accept the theory of natural rights.” The Draft expresses that “a nation honored with an emperor” came before the people, and that to ensure that that nation was inherited by descendants a “constitution” was enacted, and that because of this constitution “the rights” of “the people” were first recognized.

\(^7\) 戴く (Itadaku), an honorific word meaning to have, receive or accept.
Moreover, Article 102 of the Draft, which covers the “obligation to respect and uphold this Constitution,” states that “members of the Diet, Ministers of State, judges and other public officials have the obligation to respect and uphold this Constitution,” but “the Emperor and the Regent” specified in Article 99 of the current Constitution, has been deleted. It seems the LDP would like to establish the emperor as a detached existence who does not bear the “obligation to respect and uphold this Constitution.”

And as well, there is newly added wording in Chapter 1, Article 3 of the Draft prescribing “the national flag be the Rising-Sun and the national anthem be Kimigayo [“His Majestic Reign”]. 2. The people must respect the national flag and the national anthem.” This is an upgrading of the present “National Flag and National Anthem Law.” It means that because Japan is “an emperor-centric country,” “the Rising-Sun flag and the national anthem,” which are symbols of the emperor, must be respected by the people through the constitution.

Even in the beginning when the “national flag and national anthem law” was approved in 1999, then-Prime Minister OBUCHI Keizō said in response to questions in the Diet, “I am not considering any requirements regarding the raising of the national flag.” But, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology created a situation in which many teachers were dismissed for their opposition to observance of “the national flag and national anthem” at school entrance and graduation ceremonies due to a “violation of duties.”

If the duty of “the people” to “respect” is spelled out clearly in a constitution, this could lead to some form of compulsory observance of the “Rising-sun and Kimigayo” at graduation and entrance ceremonies by children, students and parents. As well, for all citizens attending sports and other events that attract large numbers of people, it will intensify feelings that freedom of thought and belief are being violated.

In addition, raising the emperor’s status to head of state is closely connected to the LDP’s greatest objective – revision of Article 9. Their intent to turn Japan into “a country with fighting armed forces that is capable of war” is obvious in the Draft, which amends Article 9 for the worse by establishing the ”National Defense Forces” and specifying ”the right of self-defense” to enable exercising of the right of collective self-defense. But the Japanese people are accustomed to their postwar peace; it would not be easy for them to develop a “fighting spirit” even if they were told to do so.
In looking at the grammatical subjects of the previously mentioned preamble to the Draft, the first subject we find is “the nation of Japan,” followed by “our country,” and then finally, just when we think that the subject “the people of Japan” has made an appearance, it goes on to say “will protect their nation and birthplace with pride and spirit.” It is written such that “national defense” is the people’s greatest duty. Only after this does the provision on human rights for the people come up. This also clearly corresponds with the preamble’s thinking that first there is “a nation honored with an emperor” and the reason for the existence of the people is for their “descendants to inherit” the nation. In order for the descendants to inherit this “nation honored with an emperor,” all citizens must have an awareness of national defense. The “National Defense Forces” will exist as the vanguard. Even if Japan became "a country capable of war," it would have to be a nation that assumes that people will end up being killed. Bearing in mind that the present society and culture are accustomed to post-war peace, such an assumption will not be easy for the people to accept. Therefore, it will be absolutely necessary to inspire the people with a "sense of national defense" supported by "pride and spirit" such that they will be willing to fight and die for something. That "something" is not simply the abstract concept of the "state," nor is it the Prime Minister. It would be difficult to think of anything other than the "foremost figure of the country" – the one who rules over the people and embodies "the long history and distinctive culture" that could not be found in any other person – that is, the Emperor with supreme authority, and Japan as the nation that "is honored."

Moreover, if anyone is actually killed, there is no doubt that it would be difficult to maintain and/or increase the morale of “National Defense Forces soldiers” who also could be killed unless the nation and society appropriately expressed their respect and gratitude to them. Therefore, the emperor’s attendance at the supreme ceremony justifying the death of soldiers would be essential. And, of course, there is no place better for such an occasion than Yasukuni Shrine because it has been known as the "shrine of the Emperor" since its establishment, and considered to be a place for pledging allegiance to the Emperor and enshrining the "souls of the war dead."

Note the association in the Draft with Article 20 of the current Constitution, which provides for “Separation of Religion and State.” In the same way as the existing Constitution, Article 20 of the Draft specifies that "the state, local self-governments, or any other public institutions should not conduct education or other religious activities for specific religions,"
but has a new clause: "except for those activities that do not go beyond the scope of social manners or convention."

A number of cases were filed against former Prime Minister KOIZUMI Junichiro, who made official visits to Yasukuni Shrine during his term in office [2001 - 06], for violation of Article 20 of the Constitution. Of these, a case in 2005 tried in the High Court of Osaka ruled that the visits were unconstitutional. However, if this exceptional clause was specified in the constitution, official visits to Yasukuni Shrine by the Emperor, the Prime Minister or any other government official would be considered as "a social manner of paying respects to the war dead." Thereby, any suspicions of constitutional violation would be quickly resolved. (Neither the Showa Emperor (Hirohito) nor the current Emperor has visited Yasukuni Shrine since the revelation of the enshrinement service for Class A war criminals in 1979.)

Seen in this light, the raising of the emperor’s status to head of state cannot merely be swept away as a simple reactionary act or an anachronism. Since its formation in 1955, the LDP has always asserted its intention to "establish an independent constitution." This inclination toward strengthening the Emperor's authority is “Japan's true character” that still permeates the LDP today and is a negative legacy of modern history. But, more than that, it should be seen as an essential plan to “Take Back Japan.” for the people who have lost their identities because of globalization and an increasing societal disparity that tears apart individuals. As well, it would respond to the new demand of the time – America’s encouragement of Japan to exercise the right of collective self-defense, meaning collaborating in war together.

This is not only tied to a corruption of the very core of the existing Constitution, but also could link to a new demand of "Japanization" and oppression for people whose sense of identity does not include the emperor: Koreans residing in Japan [Korean-Japanese], Ainu, Okinawans and others. I am sure I am not the only one who is concerned about the present rising trend in anti-foreign movements represented by the anti-Korean group called “Zaitoku-kai.”

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