

Genealogy of three Principles of the Constitution of Japan: Sovereignty of the people, Fundamental Human Rights, and Pacifism

Abstract:

In Japan, as the consequences of the election of the House of Councilors (*Sangiin*) in 2016, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP: *Jiminto*), Komeito and some of their followers won two-thirds of the seats in both of the House of Representatives (*Shugiin*) and the House of Councilors, and they are going to initiate the amendment of the current Constitution of Japan according to its Article 96.

The constitutional amendment has been the earnest wish of the LDP and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, because they firmly believe that it was “imposed” by the US government when Japan lost the WWII. This recognition is actually NOT appropriate, but nowadays even the ordinary people in Japan also seem to share it.

In order to discuss possible amendments of the Constitution, at least, we must share the basic and precise knowledge. This presentation intends to trace and clarify the roots of the ideas of Japanese Constitution, focusing namely its three principles: (1) sovereignty of the people, (2) fundamental human rights, and (3) pacifism. And finally, I would like to briefly mention E. Herbert Norman, Canadian diplomat/scholar in Japanese studies, who played an important role at the end of the WWII in this context, introducing the precious documents the UBC library owns.

Dr. Masahiro Nakano

Born in 1968. Graduate from Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies, Kyoto University, Japan. Ph.D. Had worked at Oita University, Japan and visited l'Université Paris 8. Currently, Professor at the School of Cultural and Creative Studies, Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo, Japan, and Visiting Professor at IAR, UBC. Main major is History of Social Thought but actually treats more interdisciplinary themes. In 2006, published *Money and Mind*, Kyoto: Nakanishiya Pub. Recently, concentrates to the birth history of current Japanese Constitution.



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