

A Silent Light

The Spirit of the Ideal and Japan's Article 9

(Part Two of Two Parts)

Robert Kowalczyk

Prologue to Part Two

The following essay is the second of two parts. The first segment appeared in *Konton* #6 , 2009. The first version of the complete essay was written in 2007.

Although it appears in original and complete form on a webpage <<http://homepage.mac.com/journey04/asilentlight.htm>>, along with a number of photographic images that enhance the text, the current *Konton* publication is the first time these thoughts appear in printed form.

Since the original writing a number of changes have occurred in Japan and other countries. Although seemingly important on the surface, such as changes in political leadership, these transformations have curiously not yet resulted in the need for any revisions to the text, which was intended to be as non-political as possible. Perhaps this points to a trend in which politics is beginning to take a back seat to more powerful cultural and economic forces. Whether such a tendency is for the better or for the worse has yet to be revealed.

The issue of Japan's Constitution and the importance of *Article Nine* remains as relevant as before. With the continued rise in China's influence on world affairs and the recent instabilities in the economies of both Japan and the United States, perhaps the future will take us back to a debate on the issue of *Article Nine* and its regional and global importance. If that should be the case, this essay and others that complement it may become more timely than ever.

Most importantly, the core thoughts of the essay concerning the "spirit of the ideal" and the education and involvement of youth in the creation of a more holistic future retain their meaning and significance. This is particularly true

in the complex and fragile situation the world now faces. As the writer Eckhart Tolle has remarked, the world appears to be simultaneously coming together and falling apart. Globally, humankind finds itself in a state of grand transformation. As our awareness of sharing the same home increases, we are currently in a state of conflicting hopes, interspersed with hints of fear. Our propensities towards developing global awareness and sharing are working against deeply ingrained thoughts of self and national preservation. A recent example of this was the hopeful expectations before the recent Copenhagen Climate Conference, the nationalistic realities revealed during the conference, and the disillusionment that quickly followed.

This is the Tao of our age. We live in hopeful yet fear-permeated times.

How this conflict will be resolved greatly depends on the best qualities of the human spirit and how they are utilized. This is the main concern of the essay.

"The Group of 21"

Memories now take us back to a living room in Kyoto in early 1997. David Korten, author of *When Corporations Rule the World*, had just given a talk at Kyoto University which I had not been able to attend. Some of my friends had been at the talk and we decided to gather together for a Sunday coffee-and-doughnuts discussion so they could relate what they had heard. That was the first of many such meetings. We found ourselves gathering once or twice a month to discuss what was happening to our world and what we might possibly do about it. The number of people who came each time began to increase. Phil Grant and I had long talked about "doing something" and the David Korten talk had been the catalyst for us to bring together like-minded spirits. The talks went on for a few months and were enjoyable but were getting us nowhere, being just discussions without any plans, ideas without any concrete steps. The number of members began to decrease and the quality of conversation was beginning to deteriorate, as we could not find any definite issue to base a stand upon.

Then someone asked, "Did you hear about the COP3 meeting?"

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, known in short as COP3, was to be held in Kyoto that December. This fact provided a realistic focal point through which we could employ the spirit of the ideal. After some deep thought and many further discussions, we came up with an inspired idea, an appropriate symbol, and a series of tactics to make that symbol visible to the world and, perhaps more importantly, to the conference delegates who would be meeting that winter in Kyoto.

From the wide international community that resided in the Kyoto/Osaka area, we would assemble a group of twenty-one young people, aged one to twenty-one, from twenty-one different countries. These young people would act as representatives of the coming century. We would name them *The Group of 21*. Once the youthful members had been found and their parents had agreed to our plan, we would gather them together to take a group photograph and caption that photograph, "Remembering the Future". Then, through a widening network of friends in Japan and throughout the world, we would initiate a global campaign to collect postcards and signatures calling for concentrated international action from the conference delegates to help combat the growing threat of global warming. Just before the conference was to begin, we would have a presentation ceremony in front of Heian Shrine in central Kyoto, one of the trademark sites of the city. The young members of *The Group of 21*, would present the collected postcards and signatures to the delegates of the conference and ask them to remember their futures. We would notify the local, national, and international news media of our intentions so that they would be there to cover the event. Finally, some of us would accompany elder members of the group to the COP3 conference to talk to the delegates and to make a personal appeal.

"Mere idealism"? No. It was much more than that.

It was a set of carefully measured tactics based on a clear and realistic goal and carried out by a group of committed individuals who were infused with the spirit of the ideal. This small group quickly attracted many others who were mysteriously pulled into its positive energy field and eventually helped in countless way, both large and small. Each individual contributed what they could, with the time they had available. Once the spirit of the ideal is activated, as was

seen in Moscow, it enlists a higher consciousness on the part of all who believe in its goals. This consciousness moves the efforts of the group in a continually forward direction, over difficulties, through small doubts, and around all barriers, until it reaches the intended goal. Once believed in and activated, nothing can compete with its compelling allure, nothing can detract it from its intended path, which is always in the direction of the light.

As we started our journey in the early spring, with only eight months between the conceptualization of the project and the global warming conference, the hurdles in our path were of incredible heights. How were we to gather such an impossibly diverse group of young individuals? Could we really collect a sufficiently impressive number of postcards and signatures from other countries? Since we had no funds, nor any sponsor, who would pay for all of this activity? Would the eight to ten members that initiated the plan be able to stay together and see it through to success? Would the media come? Would the conference delegates? Would we be allowed to legally assemble in front of the shrine without a permit, or would the police arrive to tell us to disperse?

Hundreds of tough questions. Hardly any moments of serious doubt. Our own beliefs, the beliefs and assistance of others, and the inspiring photograph of those twenty-one young people looking up beyond the camera lens and into the hope of their futures were all that we needed.

More than twelve thousand postcards were collected from fifty-five countries in support of *The Group of 21*. Reporters from all of the Japanese major media sources and many from the international media appeared at the presentation ceremony in front of Heian Shrine. Conference delegates from Canada, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the European Union attended the event and graciously accepted bundles of postcards from the young members of the group. Photographs of the ceremony appeared on the front page of almost every Japanese newspaper and also in the international press. Finally, four elder members of *The Group of 21* attended the conference to speak with and hand postcards to a highly attentive and sincere Senator John Kerry. He promised the four that he would pass them on to then Vice-president Al Gore, a keynote speaker at the conference, on their return flight to Washington.

The Kyoto Protocol, after a great deal of discussion and disagreement, was somehow worked out in the early morning hours of the last day of the conference. Since its initiation, it has been signed by 169 countries and other government

entities. It is now considered the flagship international agreement that clearly acknowledges the grave threat of global warming and lays out initial methods for halting its advance.

Two years later, Al Gore narrowly lost his bid to become president in the most crucial and controversial election of our times, but he eventually went on to produce *An Inconvenient Truth*, an award winning documentary on global warming. Soon after his inauguration, George W. Bush announced that the Kyoto Protocol was “dead” and went on with planning for an oil war in the Middle East. In the last presidential election of 2004, John Kerry made the mistake of placing patriotism ahead of more universal ideals and was narrowly defeated by a man who, while waving a very American flag, appealed to his countrymen to join him in continuing his “war on terrorism”. His self-proclaimed “mandate” spoke of a country whose only option left seemed to be force. It would be through further aggression that they would continue to deal with the “realities” of their times.

All of the fine, highly committed people who participated in allowing *The Group of 21* to become a significant symbol of those hopeful years knew that they had contributed in a “small but significant” way to making the future more sustainable for coming generations. The ideals that began to formulate themselves one Sunday morning among a few friends in a Kyoto living room are still spinning their effects on the spirits of others throughout the world.

What would the world be like if the spirit of *Article Nine* were able to be spread in the same way?

What will the world be like if *Article Nine* is crudely erased from the hearts and sad memories of the Japanese people?

Preparations for War

What would the world be like if Article Nine is missing from a new Japanese Constitution? Of course, no can say exactly, except to consider past history and the current geo-political balance in East Asia and then attempt the best of estimates.

Is it possible to imagine that the disappearance of Article Nine will leave the international relationships in the region as they are now, or even improve them?

Would a militarily independent Japan be able to break its dependency on the United States and create an "arc of freedom and prosperity" in East Asia, as the current Foreign Minister recently predicted? Would a fully armed Japan be more welcome into negotiations with North or South Korea or China? Will the abolition of Article Nine bring the region closer to more harmonious relations with increased economic, social and cultural ties? Would Japan's new standing army make the Japanese people less, or more, vulnerable to attack from North Korea or China? Would a Japanese military armed with advanced weapons make the Chinese and Koreans more, or less, secure?

Does one really need to ask these questions?

The answers should be quite obvious to anyone in the region or in the world.

That is except for those who prefer to return to the painful days of the past and restore what they consider to be the "pride" of an independent nation that can defend itself from any potential threat. Or except for those others who may be moving their forward pieces to a more advantageous position in a deadly game of international chess, heedless of the fact that no one could possibly win such a game in the nuclear age.

The current Prime Minister has said that he would like to make Japan once again proud of itself. One of his main themes is that he considers it his personal duty to create what he calls "a beautiful nation", declaring that 2007 would be "The First Year for Creating a Beautiful Country." He followed that sloganeering with the following words, "With all my heart and soul, I will stand at the fore and lead the way, with unwavering determination, to realizing various reforms together with all the people who have the courage to take up the challenges of the future." Among the many pledges that followed was one to "restore Japan as the safest country in the world".

Most Japanese and foreigners have long considered Japan one of the safest countries, and probably THE safest country, of the world. It is one of the widely acknowledged characteristics that the Japanese people have cultivated over the past sixty years. This positive image of Japan is mostly due to the fact that it has not shown any aggressive action towards other countries since the end of the last

world war. Even its joining the United States in the Iraq War as a non-combatant served as a visible testament to its non-aggressive nature. Moreover, the peaceful, friendly, and cooperative atmosphere that one finds in both the large cities and rural areas of Japan has been an attribute that has long been envied and praised throughout the world. Of course, as in all countries, there have been incidents that can be and often are used, by both a sensationalist media and calculating politicians, to prove otherwise. Fear is a highly useful tool to both get attention and retain control. Tragic incidents naturally produce a certain amount of civic apprehension, particularly in close-knit Japan. However, comparatively speaking, these incidents have been few and are relatively minor. When one thinks of Japan, one thinks of the social and national safety, stability, and sanity that make it, in most eyes, a truly beautiful country.

The planned abolition of Article Nine will change that image overnight. In recent years, both China and South Korea have expressed great displays of anger and protests over any signs of nationalistic rebirth in Japan. Painful memories of the past activated by even the slightest moves in that direction, such as the government directed "adjustments" written into school history textbooks or former Prime Minister Koizumi's defiant visits to Yasukuni Shrine, have raised loud outcries of protests from both the governments and peoples of those neighboring countries. These former victims of wanton and merciless aggression consider Japan's "Peace Constitution", a term based primarily on Article Nine, to be a form of written apology for past crimes and a promise that these acts will never occur again in the future. One can imagine the extensive damage that will be done if that sixty-year apology and promise should suddenly disappear without a trace.

Although many Japanese visitors and tourists are currently warmly welcomed in both Korea and China, as individuals and groups from those countries are frequent visitors to Japan, and economic trade in the region is running at a high pace, this will almost certainly change if Article Nine is removed from the new constitution. The restoration of nationalism and militarism in Japan, the most passionate and radical of intentions behind the proposed reforms, will rapidly transform the image of a now beautiful country back to the dark shadow it cast across much of Asia in the past. In doing so, it will instigate nationalism in both South Korea and China. This chain reaction will suddenly transform the region from an area of peaceful cooperation into one of heightened tensions with a greatly enhanced probability of armed conflict.

In short, the abolition of three sentences from the Japanese Constitution will be a major step in the direction of renewed conflict in East Asia. There is no way around that most obvious fact. Empty political slogans of a happier and more beautiful future will never be able to conceal the volatile impact of this elemental truth.

It seems likely that without the protective shield of Article Nine, the Japanese must once again begin to prepare for war.

Striving to Retain Peace

What would the world be like if the spirit of the ideal conveyed in Article Nine were to be adopted by other countries in response to the current world crises? What might be the effect if Article Nine came to be used as a paragon of international relations and global law? How might that change our current world structure?

It might be insightful to inquire into these possibilities a little further.

What if citizens of other countries were to call on their governments to follow the spirit of the ideal as expressed in Japan's Article Nine? What if the nations of the world were summoned to "sincerely aspire to an international peace based on justice and order" while "renouncing war as the sovereign right of the nation"? Are these not core ideals that humankind has tried to achieve throughout history? Are these not basic principles every nation must incorporate in order for world peace to prevail? Doesn't humankind need such a clearly conscious paradigm to survive?

Particularly since the September 11th terrorist attacks and the subsequent illegal war on Iraq, the world has been wobbling on unsteady legs. All the while, efforts have been made to keep the international community at a functioning level while hoping that balance might eventually be restored. This places us in highly precarious times, an age full of stress and doubt. It is an age where humanity itself appears to be on a life support system, the patient barely capable of breathing. All are wondering whether the next stage will bring an expected escalation, or a surprising easing, of anxieties. It seems there has never been a moment in history more in need of the spirit of the ideal. This moment calls for the people of the world

to clearly renounce "the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes". It is time to return to the diplomacy, open and sincere discussions, and united cooperation of the past. We must somehow transcend the suspicious, fearful, and antagonistic attitude we have been descending towards.

Caught in such a downward spiral, the preservation of any law that speaks the name of peace and cooperation must now be struggled for at all costs. In these increasingly perilous days, the highly conscious sanity expressed by Article Nine is an essential code of conduct humankind can ill afford to lose.

Current local, regional, and international crises and conflicts appear to be an extremely dangerous but minor preview of the global challenges we are about to confront. The threats of global warming, nuclear weapon proliferation, and world-wide health epidemics, such as avian flu, are becoming increasingly visible. Any of these issues is a clarion challenge to all nations to either work together or perish together. If we are able to keep our balance, through belief and adherence to existing international codes, we will ride out the current storms. The coming global threats will unite humanity in highly conscious and selfless efforts to preserve our only home. There will be only one voice, that of a united humankind, in the politics of the near future. That is, if we are able to meet our present challenges and make it that far.

In this setting, the world shall now turn to Japan to see what will happen with its "Peace Constitution" and particularly the three sentences of Article Nine that give it its breath. Since the Japanese people are not known for their outward expression, the importance they place in the retention of their law appears to be a calculated guess. The low public support of the current political leadership might be a positive sign that the Japanese are quietly moving in the right direction. Decisions in Japan are often the result of a mysterious sensing of the collective mood and will. Although Japanese may not be quick to vocally express their feelings, these emotions are often conveyed in a deeper, less visible, and therefore more effective manner. This quality gives Japan its inner balance. A national issue of global significance depends on what the Japanese sincerely feel about a law which has provided them with a peaceful and therefore beautiful nation over the past sixty years. The question of whether they will be able to protect it from the powerful nationalist and geopolitical tactics that now threaten its survival should be of worldwide concern. For as Japan goes, so may go the world.

“Youth at the Millennium”

In 1999, most of us still lived in a much less confused and seemingly more stable world. In Japan, the economic bubble of the 80's had long before burst. The crusade of attaching corporate shares to all that can be sold was initiating its advance into Japan's larger cities. Neoliberal doctrine was just beginning to push both family shops and steady jobs out of its determined path. However, the full effect of its threatening reach had not yet been felt. Time was still moving at a relatively human pace, with computers being useful but not yet an integral component of the human mind. There was still time and space for reflection and discussion. There was time to consider and appeal to the spirit of the ideal, and to share that attempt with a younger generation.

Ideals have always been the natural territory of the young. As one ages, the realities of life take their toll. There are families to feed, education to be paid for, attractive devices to be purchased, homes to begin paying the mortgage on. Age brings on insecurities. With those mature fears, all ideals eventually grind to a halt.

The young, however, are different. To begin with, they feel they have much less to lose, not yet being mortgaged for life or burdened down with their own hoard of material goods. On the other hand, they have much more to gain in the possibilities they can create for themselves for the years ahead of them. They all need to believe that they will have a healthy and safe, if somewhat different, future. They believe this in spite of the discouraging signs that surround them. When they speak of their dreams, they do it with a sincerity, belief, and trust that can tear at the heart, especially if that heart takes into account the realities of where our world appears to be heading.

Nor do youth choose to see the fracture lines that appear to be spread across the planet. Many of them have traveled to other countries or have the hope to do so in coming years. They have met with and talked to people of other cultures, encountered those of other customs and beliefs in their own country, or experienced these things through books or the cinema. Their world seems so wide and open and welcoming. The aged cynicism that comes with a fixation on the global crises of dwindling resources, religious and regional conflicts, national and personal debt, and the quickening disappearance of life-long employment, has not yet poisoned their dreams. They still have hope, as well they should. For in their hope, we may once again be able to find our hope. But this will not occur unless the young are put in touch with their own potentials, unless they are empowered

to believe that they can change current world conditions, both peacefully and holistically.

In 1998, Phil Grant introduced me to Johan Galtung, the founder of the Transcend Peace Network and called by many “the father of peace studies”. Little did I know the effect that meeting Dr. Galtung would have on me. During the year of that first encounter, Johan and his wife Fumi were in Japan to conduct a series of lectures at a university in Kyoto and other locations. We had a number of occasions to meet and discuss the state of world affairs and what could be done to improve it. In those talks, I began to understand the Transcend Method through which all sides to a conflict end up not only satisfied with its resolution but actually gain from it. Before leaving Japan for further world-wide lecturing and advising peace negotiations, Dr. Galtung suggested to Phil and I that we work with our friends involved in creating *The Group of 21* to form a conference in Kyoto that would discuss important world issues.

Once again we gathered our team and started to throw around ideas. Since many of us were teaching at universities in the area, we came up with the idea of “intergenerational dialogues” in which a wide variety of committed social activists would discuss their experiences with a core group of both Japanese and international youth. But more than just lectures, these talks would allow the younger generation to clearly express their own thoughts and ideals. They would have a voice, and having that voice heard would empower both them and their colleagues. The timing of the event, late November 1999, provided us with our title: *Youth at the Millennium: An Intergenerational Dialogue on Global Issues*.

As one of the guiding lights for our efforts, we used the following words by a man who employed the spirit of the ideal to bring the Cold War to a peaceful end, Mikhail Gorbachev,

“After the fall of the Berlin Wall, there are two walls left to fall – the wall between rich and poor that is getting higher and the wall between us and future generations. Unless we telescope these concerns into the conduct of our daily lives, the very sustainability of the global system is in question. To meet that challenge, we need to change our mentality just as we did to end the Cold War; we need to take down the wall that separates the future from the present. I don’t want to paint a bleak picture. One feels something in the air. I am a realistic optimist. Walls do fall. People do unite. Problems can be solved. Recent history has taught us that.”
(from an interview in Geneva, 1999)

Borrowing on past success, this group would consist of twenty-one students but would simply be called *Group 21*. We would plan for a three-day symposium and invite speakers whom we felt would have a strong influence on empowering youth to face the challenges of their future. It was important that these speakers also be effective listeners so that there would be a true dialogue between generations. The talks and workshops would include both Japanese and English speakers. And aside from the *Group 21* members, we would also assemble a large number and variety of other students from the many universities in and near Kyoto. The idea was to make *Group 21* the active core of a large gathering that would encourage all the other youth who attended to fully participate and express their own thoughts. Using the assembled international core, we would exemplify the spirit of the ideal.

We discussed our ideas with Professor Ikuro Anzai, director of the Kyoto Museum for World Peace of Ritsumeikan University, and he told us that we would have his full support. The twenty-one core students would stay at the third floor dormitory of the museum, the second floor would be used for workshops, and the large main hall on the first floor would be reserved for the keynote addresses. We would work to get funding from a number of sources since the expenses would be considerable. Having the free use of the peace museum's facilities and the full support of its staff was essential and deeply appreciated.

None of those who were involved in the planning and administration of this program received any payment, even though the tasks set before us were enormous, frustrating, and highly complex. There was a main group of perhaps eight to ten members, most of whom had worked together on *The Group of 21* project in 1997. We had great support from another ten to twenty other volunteers. We received funding from The Mitsubishi Fund, The Japan Foundation, The Anzai Peace Fund, Ritsumeikan University and countless donations by individuals to pay for the necessary expenses. In addition, we received an official endorsement from UNESCO.

The featured speakers and workshop leaders included Johan Galtung, Satish Kumar (editor of *Resurgence Magazine* and world renowned environmentalist), Arun Gandhi (founder of the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Non-violence), Nandini Iyer (Professor of Religious Studies), Kinhide Mushakouji (Professor of

International Relations), Aileen Smith (anti-nuclear power plant activist) and Paul Leslie (Community Links, UK, an urban youth support NGO), among others. Each of these speakers brought her or his own charisma to the symposium and inspired the more than 200 youth who attended into believing in themselves and in the power they had over their own future.

Looking back, one can say we accomplished our goals because we were working toward the light, we were all moving together in a highly conscious direction. Moreover, the symposium was highly successful because we were listening to the young, thus inspiring them to continue that long and arduous task, each in his or her own way. Upon completion of the event, most of the guest speakers deeply thanked us for providing them with an opportunity to listen to and be inspired by the young individuals with whom they came into contact. Johan Galtung was particularly pleased with the “deeply interesting questions” that the students asked him. And upon return to England, Paul Leslie was to write to the organizers,

“I felt I had to write to thank you all for a fantastic and moving experience. I will never forget you or the vibrant young people and adults who took part in the symposium. In this busy life I lead, I have found little time to write to you or anyone else, but I have not forgotten and never will forget the power, passion and love which was displayed by many people on so many different levels. I only hope that I was able to touch just one life in as positive a way as my life has been touched.”

As Paul Leslie so movingly expressed, those that were at the Kyoto Museum for World Peace for those three days in late November saw the power of the ideal in action. One wonders what would occur if this formula were applied to the youth of Japan and the world so that they could express themselves concerning the ideals found in *Article Nine*? Would they be able to inspire their elder generations in the same way? Would they be able to ask the elder generations to remember *their* future? Can this still happen in an age of corporate induced consumerism, career and time related stress, and the atomization of society into isolated, thereby controllable, individuals?

Needless to say, it can happen *if* given the opportunity. For past millennia, human consciousness has been eagerly waiting for that wake-up call. Most

unfortunately, all lines now appear to be busy.

Inner Feelings, Clearly Expressed

Although most Japanese may be hesitant to express their inner feelings, particularly in public, they will readily do so in writing if asked. In a way similar to the methods used during "Youth at the Millennium", a workshop was recently held at a university in Kyoto explicitly for this purpose. It was felt especially important to know what young Japanese are thinking about *Article Nine*, for, as stated above, it is they and their international colleagues who can best lead us into the future.

As the only introduction or explanation of the workshop, the following words were written on the blackboard,

The film that you are about to see is being shown to you so that you might be better able to think about what your grandparents will never forget.

Twenty-six third-year college students were then shown a BBC production of the bombing of Hiroshima. This drama/documentary is part of the BBC series, *Days That Shook The World*. It depicts the events that surrounded the bombing of Hiroshima from a well balanced human perspective. The fifty-minute movie presents us this devastating page in world history from well researched and highly probable perspectives of both the United States bombing crew, who were doing their duty as soldiers, and four Japanese civilians (an elementary school boy, a female high school student, a photographer, and an elderly man) who were in Hiroshima at the time of the bombing.

Some of the students were asked to comment on the film at its conclusion. A number of them did so with tears welling up in their eyes, others had detectable anger in their voices. A few of the students had had relatives who lived in or near the two cities at the time of the bombings. Others had family members who spoke of the horrors of war from their experiences in Japan and in the fighting overseas. All of the students seemed deeply moved by this objective depiction of average individuals caught in both the operating and receiving ends of the machinery of

death that is war.

After the students spoke, they were shown short excerpts from *Japan's Peace Constitution*, a film by John Junkerman. This documentary contains interviews with leading international thinkers concerning *Article Nine*, each focusing on how this clause has made a significant contribution to world peace and understanding. It is emphasized in the film that Japan has never been allowed or able to express itself concerning peace except for the silent way that *Article Nine* has spoken for the spirit of a now peaceful nation.

Following the showing of the excerpts, the students were given thirty minutes to express themselves in written English concerning *Article Nine* by addressing the following question: Even if the Japanese Constitution were to be changed, should the Japanese people insist on keeping *Article Nine*? They were asked to vote either "yes", "no" or "undecided" and then to explain some reasons for their decision.

Twenty-five of the students voted "yes". The only student who voted "no" seemed to either not understand the questions or was unable to formulate his thoughts clearly. His opinion is included here for fairness and completeness. Ten of these student excerpts are included below. Although each of the twenty-six participants expressed highly individualistic, heart-felt opinions about *Article Nine*, ten are perhaps a sufficient number for the purpose of this article.

There are those who may criticize the method used as "leading" the students in the direction of a "yes" vote. This may have some validity. However, another way to look at the method is to consider it a way to allow students to enter a thought process that they normally are not exposed to, while allowing them to consider what is at stake should *Article Nine* be abolished. Since the issue concerns the citizens of Japan, particularly the young whose future depends on their understanding of both sides of the debate, it is only normal for an educator to present the issue as he or she sees appropriate, and then allow the students to express their own minds without further influence. Both sides to such an important issue must be fairly and clearly presented to assure a valid vote. Anyone wishing or legislating for less hinders freedom of speech, the most essential freedom of any state that considers itself a democracy.

It should be noted that mistakes in grammar, syntax and spelling have been corrected. In addition, only the students' first names are used in order to retain

their privacy, particularly in light of the proposed censorship law mentioned earlier. The numbers that appear refer to the documented essay number.

(YES) "After the Pacific War, almost all Japanese felt the terrible tragedy of war including my grandparents and their siblings. Especially, my grandfather's younger brother experienced war's most horrible aspects. He went to an Asian country to fight. When the war was ending, he was told to return to his base camp. On the way back to the camp, all of his colleagues were killed. He had to crawl on his stomach through a sewage ditch in order to get back to the camp alive. He said that he could not even look up and had to keep his head partially in the sewage so that he would not be seen. Even when he was old, he would often tell his relatives of the horrors of war. I heard him speak about this and believed what he said. Because of this, I am against Japan becoming a 'normal country' which has an army." (Nahoko 001)

(YES) "After losing World War II, the Japanese people must have realized that war has no meaning. They learned this lesson because they lost everything. The only thing that remained was fear and starvation. Because of our grandparents' hardships we have Article Nine and can now live safely. If Article Nine is abolished, the Japanese people will have to go to war again. And if we enter war we are sure to experience the same tragedy as World War II. If this is the case, all the years that Japan retained Article Nine were for nothing and all hopes for a peaceful future will be lost forever. We will make the same mistakes and go through the same hardships again and again. So Article Nine is needed forever." (Satomi 003)

(YES) "We should keep Article Nine because it gives the Japanese people a sense that we object to war. Renouncing Article Nine means that the Japanese people admit that war is one of the ways that a country can make itself have more power. Also, if Japan gets rid of Article Nine, China, Korea and other Asian countries will take action of their own. Japan emphasizes that our country was a victim because it was attacked by America, using Hiroshima and Nagasaki as an example. But before that happened Japan did terrible things in China, Korea and other countries. These countries are now closely watching Japan to see what is developing. For them, abolishing Article Nine means that we are ready to repeat

those terrible acts. And finally, we must free ourselves from America. Japan has followed the U.S. for too long. And America is always engaged in a terrible war somewhere in the world. War makes people sad and depressed and produces no profit. Japan has to be brave and has to try to stop America from constantly making war. We can only do this if we have Article Nine.” (Chieko 009)

(YES) “Today is a gift. We have to take care of that gift. We have to study and learn more about war and tell these terrible facts to the coming generations. I think it is our duty because we Japanese particularly know how horrible and sad war is. We have to take an initiative to stop war and to rid the world of nuclear arms and armies. Even if we are called a “naked country”, we don’t need to worry about it. World war must never happen again.” (Megumi 011)

(YES) “Japan is the only country where an atomic weapon was used. So the Japanese are the people who are most fearful of atomic or nuclear weapons. Only we know how horrible these weapons are. Japanese need to clearly tell others about the realities of war and the horrors of nuclear weapons. If Japan has nuclear weapons, there will no longer be any meaning or force to what we say. The Japanese people must call on other people of the world to build bridges of peace. If Japan acquires weapons, I think the possibility of war will greatly increase and many innocent people will die. It is impossible to defend Japan in a time of nuclear war. If such a situation should happen, all Japanese people will be destroyed.” (Kanna 013)

(YES) “Japan should keep Article Nine because if Japan has an army again, it will become a target. Japan doesn’t have to repeat a wretched war. I was born in Hiroshima where we often study about war. The people of Hiroshima know how important peace is because we study about war more than in other prefectures. Japan is the only major country in the world that does not have a regular army. Japan should be made a model for world peace. Japan is now probably the most peaceful country in the world.

In my childhood, I often asked my grandmother, ‘What is your memory of the war?’ My grandmother always replied, ‘I never think about the war.’ So I didn’t ask her any more. A few years ago my grandmother suddenly began to talk about the war to me. She said that she had lost a lot of friends in the war and that she

saw many terrible scenes. 'This town was not such a beautiful town before the war, but after the war the town was complete debris with almost all of the houses burned down. I never want to see such a terrible scene again.' My grandmother really prayed for peace. After seeing many pictures of the war, I know that war has no meaning. Peace is the most beautiful thing that we can imagine." (Motoki 016)

(NO) "In my opinion, the Japanese government will find it easy to change their minds if the constitution is changed. For example, in the Iraq War, the Japanese Self-defense Forces went to Iraq as a contribution to the war effort. This is the first time that they went outside of Japan to contribute to a war effort. In that case, the Japanese government made a new law which allowed them to cooperate without using weapons. I think that this new law is based on American opinion, not Japanese opinion. As America asked Japan to help, Japan made the law to respond to America. In examples such as that, one can see that Japan can change its mind easily if a large country, such as America or Russia asks them to join in a war. In the same way, the Japanese government will bend Article Nine for their own purposes. For example, if they want to invade another country, they will simply pick up some words from Article Nine and use them to achieve their purpose." (Tasuku 020)

(YES) "If the present constitution changes, Japan will become similar to North Korea. Having an army means that we will be ready to kill people. The government has said that we are going to have an army in order to make a peaceful world. That is ridiculous. What does it mean to declare peace while standing on a pile of dead men? We must realize that the ability to kill others itself is wrong behavior. This can never be called peace. In Japan, the thoughts of the authorities have been changing. I want them to reconsider whether following the path of the U.S. is really right. Many young people aren't interested in international problems. Most of them think that Japan is a peaceful nation and always will be. They may be surprised at what may happen to their nation. I want them to know that whatever change happens to the nation should come from us. The nation is us." (Hisaya 023)

(YES) "I believe that Article Nine is the most precious thing that Japan has.

In 1945, Japan lost a war. That war was very terrible and sorrowful. Japanese experienced bitter poverty, horrible death, the sadness of losing loved ones and the agony of having to kill others. Because of these experiences, the Japanese created Article Nine so that these things would never happen again. That desire of those Japanese has to be preserved by present Japanese. It is our duty as Japanese. We should be proud of Article Nine. We have not made war for over 60 years. This is a very rare thing in this world. Most major countries of the world can not avoid war, but Japan has been able to. This is a wonderful thought and a true treasure for our country.” (Yukiko 024)

(YES) “The meaning of Article Nine is Japan’s apology to the countries that we occupied during the war. At the same time, Article Nine shows that Japan will never go to war to settle a dispute by force. There are still many atomic bomb victims living in Japan. Even if 60 years have passed, their memory is still unforgettable. I think Japan’s best contribution to world peace is to keep Article Nine in its constitution. Although it sometimes makes Japanese feel guilty for the war, it also means that we will take on the responsibility to avoid such a war forever. Japan’s role in the world should be to show how to solve disputes without using force. Only a Japan under Article Nine can do this.” (Yoshihiro 026)

If the above sample expressions from this workshop are an indication, and if educated Japanese youth were allowed and able to express themselves concerning the content of a new Constitution, it appears certain that they would be in strong favor of retaining *Article Nine*. As to what will actually happen, knowing the concealed tactics of those who plan to abolish it, combined with the natural reticence found in Japanese culture, to once again quote my Russian sister, Elena, “Only time will tell.”

Two Proposals for Our Common Future

Must humankind now sit back and watch the world situation slowly and steadily worsen without thinking about our younger generations and their hopes for a better future? These hopes exist in every village, town, and city on this planet. One need only look inside a classroom or listen to the laughter in a

playground to hear the voices of that hope. These are things that nationalistic politicians feel they understand and can respond to by handling them in their own myopic ways. But in a world that has become so interdependent and yet is showing signs of splintering, these old ways of dealing with problems can no longer take us into the future. This is quite obvious. Our current emperors have no clothes. They stand before us naked, still trying to appeal to our greed and fear rather than to our deepest hope, which is a world that aspires to the finest qualities of human consciousness. The results these old-time politicians have been producing can be seen by simply opening the daily newspaper.

Their future is no future.

Johan Galtung told me, "Its not about more blah, blah, blah but rather about coming up with solutions that work." I have always tried to follow Dr. Galtung's advice. Ideals without a realistic plan or method are merely sugar coated hopes. I expressed this to the professor in the Kyoto *izakaya* when I said we must work with the reality of any situation but always work towards the ideals that we seek. By doing this, I have witnessed the spirit of the ideal at work in numerous other endeavors besides the three mentioned in this essay. In that light, I would like to make two proposals that somehow might help us through to a better future. These proposals will not be easily accomplished. On first thought, they may appear to be quite impossible. And if this essay cannot inspire others to believe that humanity is still capable of employing the spirit of the ideal, perhaps answers will come from other sources. However, this writer would prefer not to take that chance. By proposing these methods, I am doing what I can. More than that, I am doing what I deeply feel I *must*. They are the purpose of this essay.

The first of these proposals is to nominate the Japanese people and their peaceful approach to international relations and diplomacy during the past 60 years for the Nobel Peace Prize. This nomination would draw world attention to the importance of the current battle for Article Nine. More importantly, it would encourage and inspire those in Japan who are currently fighting for its preservation. Such a movement would also allow the ideals of Article Nine to be better known throughout the world and may empower other citizen movements to incorporate such ideals into their own thinking, and perhaps into their own

Constitutions. The time to do this is now, before Article Nine is permanently erased as an historical anomaly that humankind felt was impractical and overly idealistic. The world needs to assist the people of Japan to realize that they now have “a beautiful country” based on a Constitution which they should be proud of. It needs to empower them to express these thoughts to their own government and the governments of other nations. Perhaps then, out-dated nationalistic politicians would begin to understand that the time had come for their natural and necessary retirement. This is a spirit of the ideal that the entire world would recognize as coming at precisely the needed moment. It would allow the Nobel Peace Prize Committee to not only honor those who have lived without supporting an offensive military, but also demonstrate that such a national policy is an essential element for regional and world peace.

The second proposal is simply to allow knowledgeable, open-minded, and optimistic youth from around the world to have an open forum through which they can express and discuss their ideas with elder generations. If this could be achieved, these elders, including world leaders and statesmen, would better understand the depth and width of youthful vision, and would thereby be inspired to work with them to fulfill their holistic ideals. The wisdom of this concept was clearly seen and eloquently expressed by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1999. It was also seen in the minds and hearts of the thousands of students who were in my classes over the past thirty-four years. It is visible in the upturned eyes of The Group of 21. It was heard in the voices of those who joined “Youth at the Millennium”. It can be read in the student excerpts on Article Nine that appear above. The voices of our future are waiting to be expressed and, more importantly, to be heard. World elders must not be too busy or too pompous to ignore the future, which can best be realized by those headed in its direction, with clear hope in their eyes and the spirit of the ideal waiting to be empowered in their hearts. Such an open forum could be held not only at the United Nations but also at many other venues throughout the world including universities, town halls, peace institutes and museums, places of spiritual worship, and other highly visible locations. It should be as international as possible so that the youth are not merely discussing local or national destinies, but those of the entire globe, issues that affect all of humankind. Leading globally-concerned elders must also take part in the dialogues in order to bring their wisdom into the creative mixture. As with the first proposal, now is the moment to

begin such a movement. Otherwise, we may not have time left to reach any kind of future at all.

Are both of these proposals “mere idealism”? No. They can be much more than that, but only if we have the spirit left to believe in them and then to work together towards their fruition. As we move with the spirit of the ideal in that direction, countless other creative ideas and possibilities will surely make their appearance. The current dark shadow that has recently been frightening our world back to past mistakes will then not be able to survive in such a brilliant and steady light. The first step is to sincerely believe that these goals can be reached. If experience is a guide, once that initial step is positively taken, subsequent steps will naturally begin to appear that will lead us on our way towards an increasing consciousness of our world and its inhabitants.

Reflections Three

One must be able to clearly differentiate between ideas and ideals. Too often these are harmfully confused. To understand this difference, let us briefly return to “Voices from Moscow”. One of the interviews conducted was with Svetlana G. Ter-Minasova, then Dean of the Department of Foreign Languages of Moscow State University. Speaking of the fall of Communism, Professor Ter-Minasova said,

“The people in the West should not be clapping and dancing on the grave of an ideal that many people truly believed in. There was nothing wrong with those ideals. They were not worse than any of the accepted religions. They were not worse than Christianity, than Islam. They were wonderful, human ideals and I still believe in them. The way to implement those ideals was wrong, but it is wrong in the religions as well. What is much worse is to live without ideals and that is what we are left with now. The pursuit of money is not an ideal that people can really believe in. Their minds and eyes and hands yes, but their hearts no, never. The people who are now rejoicing over the death of a belief will someday know that the bell was tolling for them as well.”

Communism was an ideal that obviously failed.

Neoliberal global capitalism is an idea that is failing us.

Who is willing to agree with Francis Fukuyama's proclamation that we are at the "end of history" and that we only have one way to proceed into the future? Global acceptance of the *idea* of neoliberal capitalism is not leading us toward the light of higher consciousness but rather taking us backwards into the darker chapters of history. These are chapters containing lessons which we should have learned by now.

As previously mentioned, throughout the world countless individuals and groups continue to work towards ideals, whether these be concerned with health, our environment, peace, nuclear non-proliferation, the widening economic gap, religious or ethnic conflict, or education. They are all trying their best and often achieving significant results. However, an allied counterforce is clearly at work. The forces of neoliberal global capitalism, rampant consumption, growing nationalism, inhuman technological speed, and nuclear proliferation continue to damage and threaten our planet on a daily basis. The human spirit needs a completely new paradigm through which it can once again evolve towards higher consciousness, a more holistic understanding of life itself. The disparate forces of a thousand ideals are not sufficiently equipped to withstand the degenerative counterforce that is destroying our world while we stand by and watch, lost in denial or transfixed in disbelief.

As Susan Sontag has written,

"The truth is that Mozart, Pascal, Boolean algebra, Shakespeare, parliamentary government, baroque churches, Newton, the emancipation of women, Kant, Marx, and Balanchine ballets don't redeem what this particular civilization has wrought upon the world."

Who is to blame for this "particular civilization"? Important questions such as this can never be solved by entering into the surface generalities of the political arena. The limitation of political discourse is that it almost always points fingers

of blame. Even in the above lines of this intended “non-political” essay, that attitude can be observed. Criticizing others is one of the easiest and most common of human failings, since it is always only partially correct. Particularly in the situation humankind is now confronted with, it is truly impossible to accuse and challenge those at fault.

Nevertheless, we must sincerely inquire into who or what led us into our current state in which we find the growth of human consciousness so severely stunted. If one looks with great honesty into this most important question, the answer is surprisingly obvious. Essentially, it is not our political leaders or the corporate structure that has brought us to where we now stand. How can we blame our public or business leaders? They are our agents, our delivery boys. We are the ones who have sent them out to get the goods for us, whether it is the remaining oil from the Middle East or the disappearing tuna from once bountiful oceans. These politicians and corporate leaders are merely doing the job they were chosen to do, the job we keep asking them to do. For we no longer have *ideals*. We only have an *idea*. An idea known as continual monetary profit no matter what the cost. This idea, acting as our only guide and weakly supported by diminishing ideals, can no longer sustain us.

In the developed countries, as our essential needs became exaggerated and our desire for things we do not need became a contagious addiction, we created economies that were no longer governable. And so the governments of these countries are disappearing, essentially self-destructing, because they can no longer bear the weight of our demands. Furthermore, due to a need to satisfy an insatiable electorate and the reality of already weakened economies, our leaders dare not ask for increased taxes. Therefore the current trend is mounting debt, both public and personal, as we have learned to live mindlessly off the future. We are increasingly asking only one thing from our governments – more security because we know our present course can never bring us sustainability, and that it is merely increasing our neuroses and fears. That kind of mental illness leads to further indulgence, leading to further corporate dominance, leading to further appetite enhancing appeals, leading to further consumptive waste, leading to further environmental damage and eventually leading to war. The present course we are now on has only that one possible outcome. We all know this. All other thoughts are purposely unconscious, blindly believing in some long lost dream.

The finger of blame must point inward to ourselves. Unless that difficult truth is fully acknowledged and dealt with, no leader will ever be able to lead us toward the light of planetary co-existence. Can humanity understand its sickness and find the cure before it becomes incurable? Can the people of economically advanced or advancing societies ever relearn that sharing is one of humanity's greatest gifts and greatest rewards? Do we have to wait until we tear bread from each other's hands to finally come to our senses? Or perhaps, long before that happens, we will turn to the blinding light of nuclear weapons to find an answer to our plight.

How do we escape from such a horrific scenario posed for our future?

Humanity must now find a way to unite under a common goal, not of a particular political agenda or partisan cause, but rather under a realistic goal that can be achieved by employing the spirit of the ideal.

Japan's endangered *Article Nine* is a silent light that may soon be extinguished, leaving our world much darker. It is still a barely visible flame that is of utmost importance for these highly dangerous times. Its retention, worldwide recognition, and emulation is a reality that is within humanity's reach. We can still recreate this world, the means are waiting for us to empower the spirit of the ideal, but that depends on three crucial factors.

If we are able to believe.

If we are able to remember our future generations.

If we are able to still care.

It may be true that only time will tell. But the time has arrived to begin. We can start by preserving and honoring the silent light expressed in Japan's *Article Nine*. We can then continue by listening carefully to the hopeful and creative ideas that our young are yearning to express. If these two steps can be effectively accomplished, we will surely be able to recover the ideals and the spirit to go on from there.

As a friend once wisely said, "We don't need more spirit, spirit needs more of us." The spirit of the ideal is waiting for us to employ its powers. Now we only must trust life and begin.

The outward freedom that we shall attain will only be in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we may have grown at a given moment.

If this is the correct view of freedom, our chief energy must be concentrated on achieving reform from within.

- Mohandas K. Gandhi