

THE POWER OF AN IDEAL

Japan's Article 9 and the Imagination

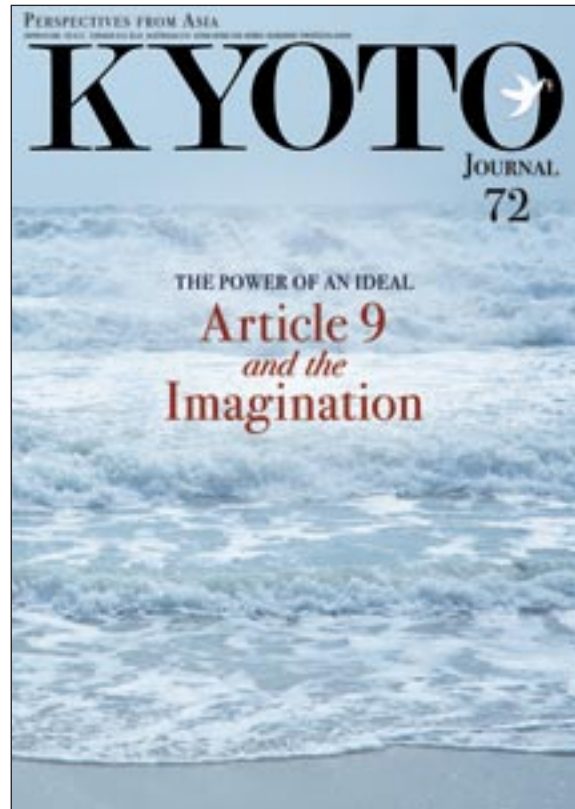
In two short paragraphs, Article 9 of the post-WWII Japanese Constitution articulates the highest ideal in support of world peace — by actually outlawing war.

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

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.”

Widely believed to have been imposed unilaterally on Japan by MacArthur's occupying Allied GHQ, Article 9 was in fact proposed and drafted by Japanese lawmakers representing a country that understood all too well the folly of aggressive empire-building and the bitter futility and tragedy of war.

Since 1947, and in sharp contrast to its past as a fascist Axis empire-builder, Japan has not committed a single atrocity against the people of another nation, has not re-militarized, has not produced nuclear weapons, nor entered the lucrative arms industry. In part because of Article 9, Japan was able to transform its economy into the world's second largest. Moreover, its subsequent ODA expenditures, amounting to 10 to 15 billion dollars (U.S.) each year over the past 18 years — along with the growth of several hundred NGOs active in development, the environment, human rights, and peace — would never have been possible if Japan had remained a militarized nation.



Imagine then the worldwide benefits of taking Article 9 to the global level. The immense financial and human resources unleashed by disarmament could immediately be applied to developing practical solutions to the world's most pressing problems, focusing on green technologies and green energy, education, solving poverty and health issues, implementing strategies against global warming and desertification, cleaning up toxic waste, converting weapons factories, and disposing of nuclear weapons.

The seeds for this special issue of *Kyoto Journal* were planted by the Global Article Nine

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Conference for Abolishing War, which was held for three days in Chiba in spring 2008, drawing an unprecedented 30,000 participants, including many from overseas. Widely diverse groups recognized common ground, and the positive repercussions that a Global Article 9 would have on their concerns, including nonproliferation and disarmament, expanding nuclear free zones, joint Asian security, reducing poverty, regional conflict resolution, gender equality, peace education, peace-building, human rights and environmental protection.

KJ's "Article 9 and the Imagination" illuminates both the ideal that Article 9 embodies, and how other nations might adopt their own versions.

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Peacewalkers from Hiroshima arriving at
The Global Article 9 to Abolish War Conference