

Kazuo Aichi: [Will the Japanese Change Their Constitution?](#)

A long time leader of the Liberal Democratic Party's deliberations on constitutional revision.

Sovereignty resides in the people in any democracy, and I believe that the time has come for the Japanese people to realize that they are in charge of drafting a new constitution that will reflect today's changing Japanese society.

I would have to say that [Article Nine](#) ought ultimately to be revised. However, I would also argue that it might be wiser for us to shelve this effort, and maintain Article Nine as is for now.

Hajime Funada: [Will the Japanese Change Their Constitution?](#)

Source: [Asia Unbound](#),

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Hajime Funada has served eleven terms in the lower house starting in 1979, representing the first district constituency of Tochigi Prefecture. He served as chair of the LDP's Headquarters for the Promotion of Revision to the Constitution and played a central role in the lower house's commission on the constitution during deliberations on the Abe cabinet's new security laws.

With regards to what a revised constitution might say, the ruling coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and the Komeito agree that a new Article Nine must acknowledge our Self Defense Force.

However, I am cautious against proceeding with only those who are pro-revision. In order to present the Japanese people with a national referendum – and gain their approval, it is imperative that we build as large a basis of support across parties in the national Diet.

To be sure, momentum in Japan is growing for the first ever attempt at constitutional revision since the end of World War II. But it is extremely important that we do not rush. We must take our time and make steady progress by following the established procedures.

ARTICLE 9 MEDIA POLLING SINCE 2000

Since the Diet commissions began their work in the early 2000s, Japanese media has become more interested in public attitudes toward revision. On Constitution Day each year, media organizations across the political spectrum have consistently asked their readers about revision. Despite the growing public debate over the constitution, in the absence of a Diet proposal no groundswell of popular support has been forthcoming, making it difficult to predict the outcome of a national referendum.

Polls by the liberal *Asahi*, the conservative *Yomiuri*, and the business-oriented *Nikkei* reveal surprisingly similar long-term trends. There has been no upsurge in support for revision. While roughly half of the respondents are open to change, enthusiasm wanes when Japan's political leaders have other priorities. For example, when the DPJ took power in 2009, it did not make revision a priority, and polls revealed a drop in public interest. And even those who were disposed to support revision became less enthusiastic after Prime Minister Abe reinterpreted Article 9 in 2014 and the government sponsored new security legislation in 2015.

Thus while political leaders may see the benefit of amending the constitution, the Japanese public is far more skeptical. Even popular leaders, such as Prime Minister Abe, have been unable to move the needle on public opinion when it comes to constitutional revision.

***Asahi Shimbun* Polling**

Asahi Shimbun readers are typically cautious on constitutional revision, but their opposition has weakened over the past two years. In May 2020, the gap between those who opposed and those who favored revision shrank to 3 percent, with 46 percent opposed and 43 percent in favor.

***Yomiuri Shimbun* Polling**

The *Yomiuri Shimbun* itself favors revision of the constitution, having offered its own revision proposals in 1994, 2000, and 2004. People who agree make up slightly more of *Yomiuri's* readers than those who don't, according to a May 2020 poll, though the gap has narrowed in recent years.

***Nikkei Shimbun* Polling**

The polls by *Nikkei Shimbun*, Japan's business daily, show that its readers have wavered in their support for revision. Although over 60 percent supported revision in 2000, only 41 percent did in 2018.

Longer-term trends suggest that the Japanese people are in no hurry to revise their constitution.