



# The Eyes of the World On Japan

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## Should We Change Article 9?



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is now working on changing article 9 of the Japanese constitution. It has been 71 years since they made it. Article 9 is one of the most important clauses, as it shows Japan won't have military forces, never going to take part in war and also not going to attack another country. The only force allowed is for protecting Japan, called Self Defense Force (SDF). They have the minimum necessary equipment for protecting Japan so, they are not allowed to attack another country in a combat, there are some constitution scholars that say of the SDF has too much power and equipment recently, so it can be a military forces of Japan, and if that is so, it is illegal by the constitution.

So far, no Japanese prime minister has tried to change the constitution, so the Japanese government is having intense discussion about it right now. Japanese citizens

opinion is also divided about whether or not they agree with changing article 9. We thought, "What would foreigners think about changing article 9?" We took questionnaire to both foreigners and Japanese about changing article 9. According to our questionnaire, we had 9 out of 16 people that agree with changing the Japanese constitution article 9. Here are some opinions "The Japanese constitution is better to be changed, because if Japan got a larger military and supported allies, it will be a great defensive ally for those countries which have good relationship with Japan" or "It is unfriendly to neighboring countries. If Japan doesn't cooperate take part in a war that the neighbor country has, that could cause a problem between that country and Japan. We asked An American man that works in Japan teaching English to Japanese senior people, He said "well, I used to be in the US

military so my opinion is a little conservative, but I think Japan constitutions article 9 is not enough for now. It was a great paper at that time. But the world is changing bit by bit. So I think Japan should change too. I think to have a strong military can be the most effective defensive insurance for a country. So Japan should have military forces just in case of an emergency situation."

After we asked foreigners, we asked same question to Japanese people half of them said "we should change the way we interpret this article. "As a result of the opinions agreeing with this idea, it seems many Japan should have military forces to protect them self and neighbor countries and also to keep good relationship between them.

The rest of the people disagreed with changing article 9. They had reasons the like "It is safer for Japanese people to stick with article 9." There were also

opinions like "There is no other country like Japan. So I want Japan to be a good example as the most peaceful country in the world by continuing not to have military forces. Japanese also said the same thing after the foreigners.

In summary, from the result of our questionnaire we learned that the opinion is broken among foreigners same as Japan. We can say that war is a big mistakes we have made in human history, and we should not have war again. The constitution is essential in our life. So, we want to think about the constitution amendment well.

By Yosuke Sugai  
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# Japan's Good and Bad Points

In modern times, Japan has been described as a developed country, but Does Japan really have good points as a developed country? Maybe Japan has bad points more than good points. so the survey was conducted about Japans good points and bad points. That survey asked "What are good things in Japan?" and "What is missing in Japan?"

First of all, for the good points about Japan. It is many good opinions about Japanese ideas. Japanese people are also friendly to strangers. This is because of Japanese people human nature, and we saw many opinions that the town is very clean too. For example, Some Japanese were asked the way to somewhere by foreigners, they take them place which foreigners want to go.

Second of all, for the bad things about Japan. There are some bad opinions about Japanese people English skills.

Opinions are divided into two. There are many people who can't speak English and there are many people who can't speak English but they respond kindly. These tell us that Japanese covers by responding kindly to not speaking English. But this is not always bad point, because some foreigners said Japanese people are very kind. So a reliable answer was not able to be found.

Through this survey, current situation in Japan was understood. Japan has many things to be proud of. But also Japan has many things to improve, but Japanese people compensates for that with

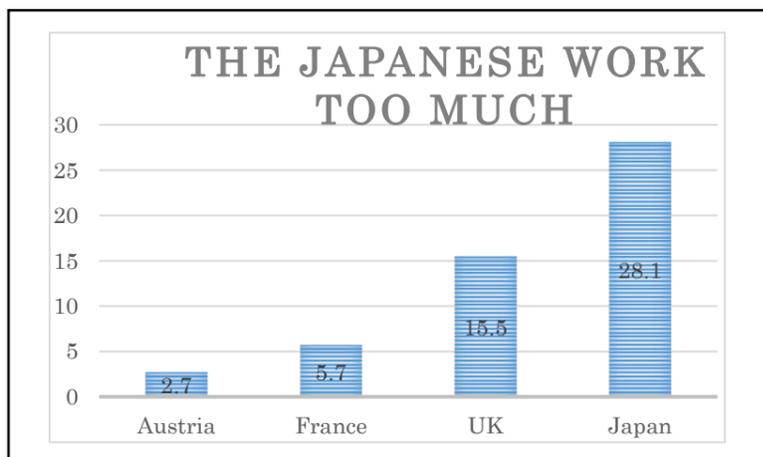
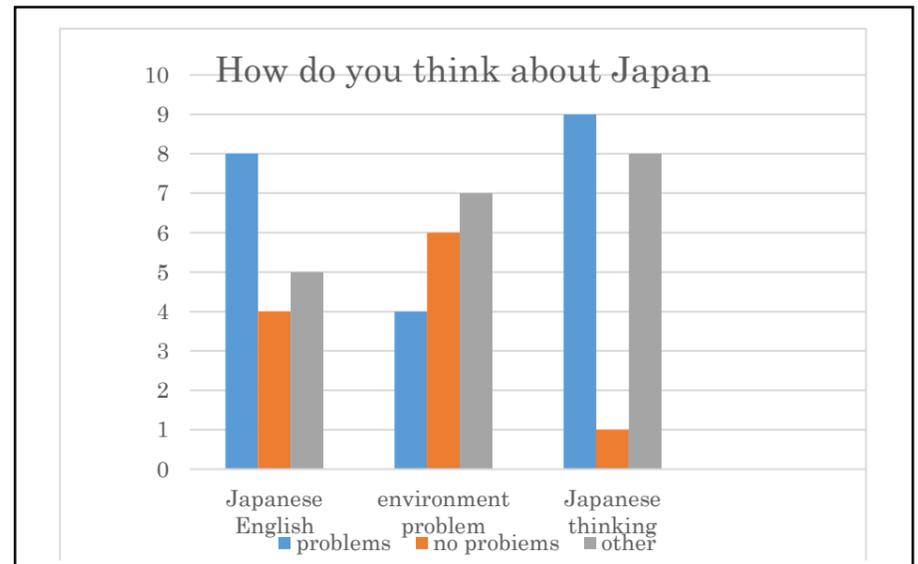
kindness. There was the opinion that Japan invite good technology. This is a pleasing opinion for developed countries. But there were lots of things Japan didn't do. it is necessary for Japan to rectify this.

By Haruki Kitagawa

Haruki Sakai

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(caption) How much work did you work in a month working hours than other countries and the labor efficiency is bad.

Japan has a law called the Labor Standards Act. This law

prescribes how many hours in a day people should work. According to the law, workers can work only 40 hours in a week. But some people do extreme amounts of overtime work. In short, the first reason is that people get exhausted by

## Japan's working time is too long

heavy working, so their work is less efficient. The second is that worker numbers are decreasing. Japan is facing a declining birth rate and aging population. The population is the central problem confronting Japan. A falling birth rate and an aging population mean that the country has far too few young, productive workers. The third reason is related to the first reason and depends on the character of the Japanese people. Japanese people generally want to do things perfectly and to offer good service to those around them, always trying to

have a harmonious relationship with them. This service-centered approach takes a lot of time, so the GDP consequently falls. Isn't it possible that Japan's obsession with politeness makes the working style less efficient, and make the GDP worse?

By Shiho Mizuno

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The eyes of the world to Japan

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## The future of Japanese culture

In recent years, snacks, video games, animation and manga unique to Japan are becoming popular in foreign countries. It is very common for foreigners to be interested in Japanese culture. Of course, there are differences in preference and feeling between Japanese and foreigners, so Japanese people may feel a different charm from foreigners experiencing something peculiar to Japan.

How will Japan's confection culture go forward in the future? The Japanese sweet receiving the most support from foreigners was "rice cakes". The sweetness of rice cake and its soft taste, makes it preferable. "Senbei" was also popular. Not only does senbei taste good, but also its ingredients are healthy. There are not many people who like "Sencha", but some people like "Matcha's sweets". But some

people dislike matcha. The people who like it, like the bitter taste, and also like similar and Japanese snacks. There seem to be some foreigners who do not like Matcha, and I think that the resistance of foreigners to bitter taste is low.

Foreigners have an interest in Japanese popular culture. So we have to continue creating unique Japanese things. Japanese snacks are becoming popular in other countries, therefore, in order to produce sweets suitable for foreigners, we think that it is important to make it easy for foreigners to taste them.

Also, we should recommend Japanese culture, such as anime, manga, video game and snacks to people abroad. Since Japanese electronic culture has become popular all over the world, if we want to make goods that are liked by a people from overseas, I think we should make digital goods. For example, televisions, smart phones and video games.

Also, if we can distinguish what foreigners like, we can commercialize it, and more Japanese popular culture will follow. By doing so, we think that popular culture of the past can also take the spotlight. Also, Japanese classical culture seems to be getting popular among foreigners. As a result, the culture of modern Japan is liked by foreigners, so many aspects of Japanese popular culture can be marketed to foreigners. It is necessary for us to make things that resonate with the hearts of foreigners and to have a unique atmosphere in Japan to show them. However, we must also firmly maintain the unique characteristics of Japan.

*By Takuma Hongo  
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## Traditions Japanese tend to forget



Photo by Digital Art Inc. CA

In recent years more and more people has been visiting japan from overseas. Most of these people come to Japan to experience the unique traditions of japan. But the traditions that Japanese think of and tourists are very different. Japanese think about days of traditions the most. On the other hand, people around

the world think about smiler traditions which are executed differently.

One example is Japanese style tea ceremony "Cha-Kai". The UKs afternoon tea may seem similar on the surface, such as each having manner to follow, and using unique tableware. But there is a distinct difference between the two. Which is the purpose of

having those events. Afternoon tea is for people getting together and having interactions. While Cha-Kai is for looking into oneself and calming their feelings. Shinto style wedding, Japanese style weddings are another tradition that people overseas have interests in, but actually this style of wedding is new and first performed by the Taisho

emperor. In Shinto style wedding the bride will wear the shiromuku, an all-white kimono to represent the willingness to be dyed with the groom's families color. Another big thing in Shinto weddings are Sankon no gi. This ceremony is carried out to bond the groom and the bride. The two shares a series of sake cups. One to appreciate their ancestors, second to vow to earth to care for each other for life and last to people and a prayer for fertility.

These unique traditions are not seen in any other country across the world, and attract foreign visitors. We should be grateful we can be close to these traditions and protect them to pass down these special Japanese traditions.

*By Koh Ozaki  
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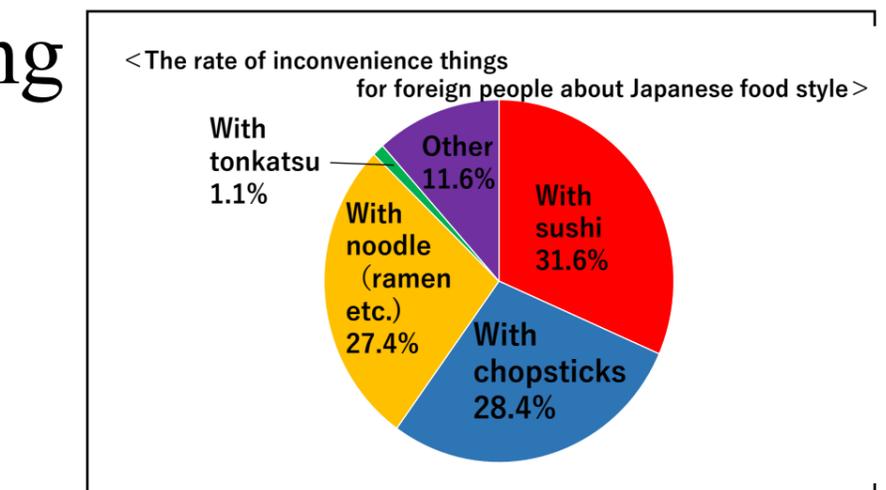
# “OMOTENASHI” and the Japanese way of dining

What is OMOTENASHI? It refers to Japan's unique style of hospitality, in which even the smallest detail of a guest's needs are to be met as much as possible. The aim is to make them feel comfortable and looked after, so as to be able to relax and enjoy their time, without even the smallest annoyance of being misunderstood. Seen everywhere in Japan are many foreigners. What is their impression of Japan? For example, Japan is clean, or Japanese food is very tasty. Many foreign tourists answered with such opinions, which make Japanese people very proud! Eating Japanese food involves many manners, or having to use chopsticks. What Japanese people can do is present “Japanese best hospitality”. Let's work on that.

A selection of foreigners were given a questionnaire asking their opinion about Japanese food. "Have you ever seen a situation where a foreigner had trouble

eating Japanese food?" The most common thing was "With sushi", 30% of the total. Specifically, there were answers such as "Some foreigners ate the upper sashimi and the lower rice separately". The second most common was "With Chopsticks", 27% of the total. The most common answer was an answer such as "Some foreigners did not understand how to use it, They had trouble." From these results, it seems that some foreigners are struggling with things that are unique to Japan.

Maybe, foreign people only feel beautiful when they see there. Here some ideas as to why they suits Japan so well. First, there are the four seasonal changes. Some people say it is to utilize the beauty of nature, as that is one of the Japanese traditions. Another reason is that the foods are related to annual events. From the international point of view, you can also see that you are interested not only in eating the



foods themselves but also in experiencing the emotions of a culture peculiar to Japan.

The Japanese-style meal has become part of the world's intangible cultural heritage. People around the world's attention has been focused on the goodness of Japanese food and its food culture. Now, a Japanese food boom is happening more than ever before in the world. It's partly because of this that recently, tourists from other countries have been increasing.

What can Japanese people do to

make the most of this? For example, as part of Japanese hospitality, Japanese people could print pictures of how to use the chopsticks on the chopstick envelope. And upload some videos about how to eat foods such as sushi to a SMS or video site. Then people may be able to enjoy eating Japanese food more than ever before.

By *Sanako Takahashi*  
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## The Best Pen

Have you ever used a Japanese pen? A survey was carried out about sixty Japanese high school students, to find the best Japanese mechanical pencil and pen. The most popular mechanical pencil is "KURUTOGA". It has a function which keeps the lead of mechanical pencil sharp and it has a good writability. Because of this, we can write letter to clean. 2nd is "DERUGARD". It is able to prevent the lead of the mechanical pencil is broken. So we don't have to worry about the lead of the mechanical pencil being broken. 3rd "ORENZ". It is a special pen that writes without putting out a core. It can continue writing without breaking at all. For that reason it is popular in various age groups.

The best mechanical pencil	The best pen
1 KURUTOGA	1 JETSTREAM
2 DERUGARD	2 SARASA
3 ORENZ	3 PENTERU

On the other hand, the most popular pen is "JETSTREAM". It has the best writability and It keeps good condition of the ink. 2nd is "SARASA". The ink of the pen dries immediately. There are many kinds of colors, and there are times when you want to buy as many as you like. 3th is "PENTERU". This pen's ink dries quickly and the writing taste is smooth. So even a left-handed person is easy to write. Other characteristics Japanese pens have soft handles, other pen's ink can be erased. If you came to Japan, please try to use.

By *Takuto Yamaguchi*  
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