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**THE JAPAN SCIENTISTS' ASSOCIATION (JSA)**

Chasu Bldg. 9F, 1-9-15, Yushima, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-0034, JAPAN

FAX: +81-3-3813-2363, URL: <http://www.jsa.gr.jp/intl>

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<HEADQUARTERS >

**WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE JAPANESE CONSTITUTION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY?**

The ad hoc research committee of constitutional problems, which the JSA established in 2007 to discuss the today's meaning of the Constitution from the aspects of peace, human rights, democracy, and environment, on 16 March 2008 held a symposium "Investigation on the meaning of the Japanese Constitution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – Peace (the first theme)". The symposium covered three themes: "The genealogy of thoughts of peace" by Prof. Kitamura (Emeritus Prof., Waseda Univ.), "The Governmental interpretation of the Constitution with the central focus on the right of collective defense" by Prof. Urata (Meiji Univ.), and "Worldwide peace movements and resistance movement taking advantage of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution" by Mr. Ymaguchi (doctoral student, Hitotsu-bashi Univ.). The participants discussed the Government's intension to amend the Constitution along with the US's line to wage wars and concept of peace and disarmament proposed by German philosopher Kant.

**THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF ARTICLE 9 ASSOCIATION HELD**

Three years passed since the establishment of the association in March 2005 called for by 196 persons. The association has continued to urge scientists to approve of the association's appeal to protect and enhance the peace spirit of the Constitution. On March 9, it held the third anniversary conference in Tokyo, where Dr. Sawada (physicist and A-bomb survivor, Emeritus Prof. of Nagoya Univ.) gave a memorial lecture. Participants from many areas of Japan reported their activities and discussed coming actions.

**THE 29<sup>TH</sup> SETO-UCHI SYMPOSIUM HELD IN OKAYAMA**

The Seto-uchi (Seto Naikai or Seto Inland Sea, 22,000 km<sup>2</sup>, consisting of about 840 islands) committee, established in 1972, organized a symposium entitled "To revitalize the region, society, and environments of the Seto-uchi" on 22-23 March. Mr. Kasamatsu (town mayor, Kamikatu Town) made a speech "Approach by green business to the global environment", and two sessions on the subjects concerning the environments in the Seto-uchi and sustainable recovery of the Seto-uchi area were held. Participants were pleased discussion with citizens, especially on recovery of industry, medical services, the aging problem, and restructuring of financial administration, and excursion in the South area of Okayama Prefecture.

<LOCAL ACTIVITIES IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH >

**1. TOKYO BRANCH**

1) The 8<sup>th</sup> Chofu Science Colloquium was held at the University of Electro-Communication on March 22, where Prof. Oku (union leader, University of Electro-Communication) gave a talk about the present significance of labor union. He investigated the present situation around labor union thinking of his study theme A. Oz (Israeli writer, advocating coexistence with Palestinians), H. Takeshita (writer, Hiroshima A-bomb survivor), N. Ibaraki (Japanese poet), and A. Binard (American poet, living in Japan).

2) The 2008 spring fieldwork was held on March 23, which was to visit the historical site of *Komminto* (indigents' party) in the western part of the Kanto region and listen to a specialist's talk. The party *Komminto* was formed by peasants who rebelled from 1883 to 1885 to demand lower interest rates and cancellation of debts, whose movements are regarded as those of freedom and people's rights.

3) The 54<sup>th</sup> Peace Colloquium was organized on March 28, where Prof. Kaneko (Rissho Univ.) gave a lecture on the fundamentals of the Constitution of Japan – rights and duties of the people in Chapter 3".

**2. KANAGAWA BRANCH**

On March 1 the 7<sup>th</sup> Scientists' Article 9 Forum in Kanagawa was held in Yokohama, inviting Dr. Akima (Emeritus Prof. of Tokyo Metropolitan University) as a speaker on the title "The placement of Article 9 in the history of ideas". His assertion was that researchers should search for the background thought of Article 9 with struggles, because it has not been clearly stated. After investigation on classical theories of peace, for instance as seen in Greek comedies and four Evangelists, he concluded their peace idea is nothing other than tranquility of mind and pointed out that Locke's theory of liberty widely influenced many philosophers and surely reflected on article 9. One of participants commented that Hiroshima and Nagasaki should be considered as one of backgrounds of the establishment of the Article 9.

### **3. FUKUI BRANCH**

On February 12 a symposium entitled "Actual status and problems of reformed national universities – focusing on Fukui University", where following three lectures they discussed reduced research funds, undemocratic administration, and evaluation system of universities.

### **4. SHIGA BRANCH**

On March 1 a lecture gathering was held in Yasu City, Shiga Prefecture, where Prof. Hata (Osaka City Univ., representative of Conference for Protecting Water and Environments of the Lake Biwa) gave a lecture entitled "The contamination of underground water in Shiga Prefecture". Owing to the basic plan (enacted in 2007, based on the Promotion Law of Industrial Orientation) Yasu City made an announcement to invite IT and its related companies to the area near JR Yasu Station. The project exploits abundant underground water, which has a possibility to contaminate water of the Lake Biwa, he explains.

### **5. OSAKA BRANCH**

1) The study group Hegel's '*the Great Logic*' held a meeting on March 1 at St. Andrews University's Osaka City satellite office in Osaka City, where they discussed the text book "The Logical Lecture(1831)" and Prof. Tsunoda presented a research report "Difference between methods of Marx and Weber".

2) The Kansai-area's colloquium for scientific workers in private enterprises was organized on March 2, where they discussed an assertion that Japanese people were born by sixteen mothers, which was aired by NHK (Japanese Broadcasting Corporation). The assertion based on the recent investigation on mitochondria DNA.

### **6. KYOTO BRANCH**

On March 16 in Kyoto the branch held the 27<sup>th</sup> Kyoto CSSC (Comprehensive Scientific Study Convention) under the title "Militarization of science and scientists' responsibility for it", where three lectures entitled "Missile defense and military use of space", "Postwar military strategies and development of missile defense system of the USA", and "Today's military strategies of the USA and the role of the Self-defense Forces of Japan". Three speakers together discussed as panelists for the convention's theme.

### **7. HYOGO BRANCH**

The Hyogo, Osaka, and Kyoto branches and a friendly organization opened three civic lecture meetings to discuss poverty problems together with Ms. Amamiya (novelist). The Hyogo branch was in the charge of the first meeting on February 16, where three young panelists including Ms. Amamiya pointed out that poverty of the young is derived from neoliberalism, which Japan now adopts as fundamental economic policies to restructure the present regime.

### **8. TOTTORI BRANCH**

On March at Tottori University the lecture meeting on childcare was held, where Prof. Shionoya (Tottori Univ.) gave a lecture entitled "The world of picture books – rich time with child". Considering a recent boom of picture books in Japan, the meeting was organized to recognize the usefulness of picture books as a tool to build up ties between children and grownups.

### **9. OKINAWA BRANCH**

On March 19 at Ryukyu University the spring study conference "Administration, education, and study in university" was held as one of conference series *Investigation of University Question*. The conference was to discuss the problem of training of young researchers in circumstances that the university reform as a structural reorganization of Japanese system had a great impact on training of graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and research assistants.