

Final Statement
of the 5th Global Inter-religious Conference on Article 9
of the Japanese Peace Constitution

Letting Crisis Lead Us Toward Peace

June 9, 2016
Osaka, Japan

Article 9 of Japan's Peace Constitution

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 a 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.

Article 9 of the Japanese Peace Constitution reflects the painful experience of history, but it is also an apology and a promise for peace. The Abe administration of the Liberal Democratic Party intends to revise and amend Article 9 of Japan's Constitution, which pledges peace and non-aggression towards all nations, and has overstepped constitutional constraints to affirm Japan's right to collective self-defense. Revising the Constitution will bring about serious instability in the region and, furthermore, military exercises and other preparations for war are themselves a form of war. The Japan-Korea-US joint exercises are raising tensions in the region. We must turn this into an opportunity for peace.

We are the 5th Global Inter-religious Conference on Article 9 of the Japanese Peace Constitution, which has gathered 120 participants from Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong/PRC, Ireland, Thailand, India, Germany, Canada and the USA. This Conference follows upon the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Asia Inter-religious Conferences on Article 9, which were held in 2007 (Tokyo), 2009 (Seoul), 2011 (Okinawa), and 2014(Tokyo) when the name was changed to the Global Inter-religious Conference on Article 9, to reflect the

broadened base of participation from abroad. Many of the same participants also attended the 2012 conference in Fukushima, which focused on nuclear power generation and its dangers to humanity. This 5th conference was held at the Shinshu Otani-ha, Namba-Betsuin (Minami-Mido Buddhist Temple), Osaka.

Over the past few days we have learned of the painful experiences and history of discrimination against Koreans in Japan through field study and dramatic presentation; we have heard the confessions of religious figures; heard ambitious dreams for a peaceful and just world, and their plans to achieve those dreams, from representatives of the younger generation; and we have all reexamined our own complicity in the structures of violence. Through this process, we have come to feel more strongly our common aspiration and responsibility, as people of faith, to publically repent our own failures to create a peaceful, just world.

(1) Japan should never become a threat, or a destabilizing factor, in the international community. The Abe administration's interpretation of the Constitution is a threat to constitutional guarantees and democratic governance. We strongly condemn any action which opens the door for Japanese militarism. We also call on the government of Japan to repeal the 2015 national security legislation. National security laws do not lead to peace.

(2) The Abe administration should look honestly at Japan's history of invasion, colonization and militarism in the modern era, and make a clear apology to the world. It should strengthen the commitment of the people of Japan to not engage in war, as expressed in Article 9, and honor previous government statements of remorse. A sincere expression of remorse from Japan remains a critical dimension for the foundation of peace.

(3) No government official should worship publically at the Yasukuni Shrine, as such open manifestation glorifies war and undermines the spirit of Article 9. As people of faith we oppose any misuse of religion for the advancement of militaristic nationalism. Having criticized the role of Yasukuni Shrine, we reaffirm that as people of faith we will strive to uphold the spirit of Article 9.

(4) We urge all countries to strive to resolve territorial disputes in accordance with the spirit of Article 9, through dialogue and diplomatic negotiations. We urge

all countries to reject the use, or threat, of armed force as a means of settling disputes. The use of force violates the Charter of the United Nations, the Japan-China Joint Communique of 1972 and the Japan-China Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1978. There should be no unilateral development of resources prior to negotiated resolution.

(5) We recognize that the danger to the people of Okinawa from existing military bases, and the danger to the environment of proposed bases, are a great injustice. The governments of Japan and the U.S. should act without delay to lift the crushing burden of U.S. military bases put upon the people of Okinawa, such as recurring crimes against citizens and the ceaseless noise of planes. We demand the U.S. bases, troops and weapons return to the U.S. mainland.

(6) The competition and proliferation of arms and increase of military spending threaten the peace and stability of East Asia. Especially, nuclear competition poses a fundamental threat to life and peace. Therefore the two Koreas shall reaffirm the “Joint declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula” (1992), and the participants of the six-party talks shall reaffirm the “Joint Statement of the Realization of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula” (2005) and shall stop nuclear development. At the same time the current armistice must be replaced by a Peace Treaty for the actual and permanent guarantee of peace on the Korean Peninsula.

(7) Even “peaceful” use of nuclear technology is not peaceful. Japan, as a nation which has endured both nuclear bombings and the ongoing tragedy of Fukushima, should move out from under the US nuclear umbrella and work with its neighbors to create a Northeast Asia nuclear-free zone.

(8) Article 9 of the Peace Constitution was enacted on the basis of the painful experiences of Asian history, including military sexual slavery by Japan, the Nanjing Massacre and the conscription of laborers. In order to safeguard the legacy, all who seek peace and justice understand it important to remember and respect the truth of history. We will cooperate toward reconciliation, justice, and mutual respect, and carefully and continually listen to the voices of the victims. We will hand over our struggling experiences to young generations through education, and we renew our resolve as people of faith to nurture the love of peace

among all people.

We commend this statement to all religious communities and wider civil society for their considered prayerful reflection, commitment and deliberate actions as individuals and as communities. We confirm our commitment to continue to pursue the actions recommended, but not yet accomplished, in the final statement of the 4th conference, Dec.5, 2014, in Tokyo. (See following page.)

*God shall judge between the nations,
And shall arbitrate for many peoples;
They shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war any more.* (Isaiah 2:4)

Soldiers and weapons become useless (Bussetsu Muryo Jukyo Sutra)

Participants of the 5th Global Inter-religious Conference on Article 9
June 9, 2016

From the Final Statement of the 4th Global Inter-religious Conference on Article 9, December 5, 2014 (pages 4-5):

Recommendations for Action

Religious Communities

- We call upon faith communities in Japan, Korea and other Asian nations to form country working groups in East Asia, to implement Article 9 activities.
- We call upon faith communities to engage youth in the promotion of the cause of Article 9, by use of creative media and by the creation of education materials.
- We call upon faith communities to include a prayer for the spread of the spirit of Article 9 on September 21st, the International Day for Peace.
- We call upon faith communities and advocates of peace in other lands to remember Japan and Article 9 on May 3, Constitution Day, when the people of Japan commemorate the promulgation of the Constitution.
- We call upon the World Council of Churches to consider the possibility of hosting an international interfaith Article 9 conference, as part of its Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.
- We call upon our Muslim friends in peace across Asia to consider the possibility of hosting an interfaith Article 9 conference in a majority Muslim country in Asia.
- We call upon the Christian Conference of Asia to help organize a solidarity visit by article 9 leaders to North and South Korea, to promote peace, reunification and Article 9.
- We call upon the Asia Pacific Forum of North America to organize an Article 9 solidarity visit to the United States.

Civil Society

- In order to actualize the spirit of peace in article 9, we will make efforts to strengthen our solidarity with those who advocate for peace in civil society.
- We will work with those who advocate for peace in civil society to make Article 9 and the commitments arising from it a subject of instruction in school.
- We will support the ongoing efforts of peace advocates to seek nomination and award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Japanese people who conserve Article 9.