

**The Honobono family asks,
“What are Constitutional
Revisions?”**

制作

自由民主党憲法改正推進本部

作画

柴田工房

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Produced by:

The Liberal Democratic Party's Constitutional
Reform Promotion Headquarters

Illustrated by: Shibata Studios

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Notes on reading this translation:

- Please note that the comic panels should be read from top right, proceeding left and down across the page, in accordance with Japanese publishing conventions. I've paired my translations on the right of each page with the page from the original at left, mimicking the panel layout with boxes containing the English translations.
- This text makes frequent use of visual and language conventions typical of the manga genre, including the use of ideophones and onomatopoeia terms denoting both aural sound effects (boom!), movements (trembling, shaking), and even emotional states (anger, confusion). I've attempted to include these in the translation wherever feasible, and they are denoted by their enclosure in double colons e.g. ::BOOM::

Completed for the Program for Teaching East Asia, June 2016.

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Shirō



Ichirō



Yūko



Shōta



Senzō

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1) Why should we revise the Constitution?



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May 3rd is
“Constitution
Day”

And as usual, it
was a peaceful
day for the
Honobono family.

Translator’s note: The word “peace” (平和) is written broadly across this scene for emphasis.

Start here

Read from right to left, top to bottom



Shirō Honobono (64) &
Shōta Honobono (2)
Shirō: You're so bright, little Shōta!



Ichirō Honobono (35)



Yūko Honobono (29)



Senzō Honobono (92)

::SLAM!::

Ichirō: Whaaa?!
Shirō: What the heck?!
Senzō: ::shaking::

← Read from right to left, top to bottom



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<p>::ROAR::</p> <p>Ichirō: What's the matter all of a sudden?</p>	<p>Yūko: Keep it real, you guys!</p> <p>::KABOOM::</p> <p>Ichirō and Shirō: Huh?!</p>	
<p>Ichirō: Dad, she said she just wanted to spend the day at home with Shōta and the family and not see anyone else....</p>	<p>::whispering::</p>	<p>Shirō: Is Yūko angry because even though it's the Golden Week holidays you didn't take her anywhere?</p>
<p>Yūko: ::BAM::</p> <p>Shirō & Ichirō ::more whispering::</p> <p>Ichirō: What is it?</p>	<p>Yūko: ::BAM::</p> <p>Shirō & Ichirō</p> <p> :: whispering::</p>	

Read from right to left, top to bottom

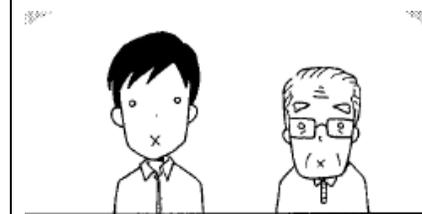


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Yūko:

Don't ask me 'what,' – I'm talking about the Constitution!
People are talking about constitutional revision while you guys are just sitting here daydreaming!



.... [silence]

Yūko (crying): I'm so uneasy about it all and there's nothing to be done about it, this constitutional revision issue....

Shirō & Ichirō: [exclamations of surprise]



Yūko: Itt-chan! [a nickname for her husband Ichirō]
 Ichirō: Yes!

Shirō: Now the cat's out of the bag, it's Yūko's typical worrywart tendencies. This looks bad...
 Ichirō: Right....

Yūko: Right. Next, Dad, what about you?
 Shirō: Well, um, I'm rather busy playing with Shōta at the moment, ha ha ha....

Yūko: [silence]

Yūko: What do you think about all of this?
 Ichirō: Er, um ...Let's just say I'm rather busy with work....
 [Ichirō feigns looking at his email]

::MENTAL SNAP::



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Shirō: Well, so far under this current Constitution we've all done fine for a long time, isn't that so?

Yūko: Is this how you intend to protect our family?!?

::RAGE::

Yūko: If that's so, why is everyone talking about revising the Constitution?!

Ichirō (bottom right): Ah, forgive me!

Shirō: Ah, *Yū-chan...

Ichirō: Well, isn't it the case that this current Constitution was written quite some time ago?

*Affectionate term for Yūko

Shirō: And what about Article 9 ... if that changed, Japan would become a country that could go to war. Haven't I heard that talk somewhere? Hmmm...

Ichirō: I see.

Yūko: But when they say that we should revise the Constitution – something so important to the country ... and hasn't Japan changed a great deal in that time?



Shōta: I've decided that as a family, we Honobono should investigate the Constitution issue in order to set mom's mind at rest!

Yūko: No, that's not it, we have to check it out. Don't you feel uneasy about not understanding the details?

::shake shake::



Shirō: Well, that was 1946, so it was before even I was born. About 70 years ago now.

Yūko: On that note, from when does our current Constitution date?

Ichirō: Well, it was right after WWII...



Yūko: DAD. We're trying to have a serious conversation here.

Yūko: Wow, that's quite a ways back...

Ichirō: What sort of a time was it back then? I can't even imagine it.

Shirō: It's back when Grandpa was as little as you are now, Shōta! (Though I wasn't your Grandpa back then!)



Yūko: Really?!

Ichirō: Like the *Edo period?

*Edo period (1600-1868)

Shirō: Well, to be sure there was no Internet. Only one telephone per village ... I think everyone was still writing letters.

Yūko: With an Constitution that predates mobile phones and the Internet, I wonder how it applies to our contemporary society?

Shirō: Civilization has advanced considerably since that time, hasn't it?

Ichirō: We're still using a Constitution written that long ago?

[Shirō's imagination]

Man with hat: Everyone has their own phone and walks around with it? Sorta like this?

Dog: Boy, that's weird.

Shirō: To be sure, we never could have imagined a time when everyone walking around with their very own personal telephone...



Shirō: And it's not just your smartphone, back then we didn't have the concepts of privacy, stalkers, or environmental problems – these terms didn't even exist!

Yūko: (crying) How awful. It was like the Edo period....

Yūko: If I didn't have a smartphone, I wouldn't be able to talk with my friends, or check out the places we're planning to go for lunch!

Yūko: Ecology and a *sustainable lifestyle are necessary concerns for women. ...And the environment, and treating your body gently, and your skin...

Guys: Uhhh....

Yūko: If no one was writing about environmental problems back then, that means the Constitution isn't eco-friendly, doesn't it?!

Shirō: That's because no one was thinking about things like ecology back then.

Shōta: Papa!

Ichirō: Well, we have to think about Shōta's future too, and after all, environmental problems are important, right?

*Translator's note: The word used here by Yūko is the acronym LOHAS (ロハス), which stands for "Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability."



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<p>Narrator: But Ichirō's boss is a totally different case...</p>	<p>Ichirō: What can I say, just like with my boss at work.</p> <p>Everyone: Hmm.</p>	<p>Yūko: Even though social customs have changed, these rules are still unaltered, isn't that so?</p>
<p>Harumph.</p> 		<p>Narrator: ...no matter how you look at it, there's a rift between the current Constitution and contemporary society, and the Honobono family has taken notice of it. It seems that they have all suddenly become rather uneasy about this state of affairs.</p>
<p>Ichirō: WHAT? Japan's Constitution has bits of the American Constitution inserted into it?</p>		<p>Yūko: Yeah, yeah, and isn't this Constitution full of strange Japanese phrases? Especially the preface.</p> <p>Shirō: That's because the preface to our current Constitution is comprised of translated versions of the opening to the American Constitution and the speeches of (Abraham) Lincoln.</p>



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<p>Ichirō: What did he say?</p> <p>Yōko: Grandpa?</p> <p>Shirō: He's like a changed man...</p>	<p>Senzō: All of you, shut up! You don't have any idea of the history behind all this!</p> <p>Ichirō: Hey, he finally tuned in.</p> <p>Shirō: Ha ha ha</p> <p>Yūko: Good!</p>
<p>::Emphatic sound effect::</p> <p>Senzō: It's all because those who drafted Japan's Constitution were Americans.</p>	
<p>Narrator:</p> <p>So the newly awakened great-grandpa Senzō stepped "on stage" to relate the old story (of Japan's Constitution)....</p>	<p>Yūko (surprised): What?!</p>

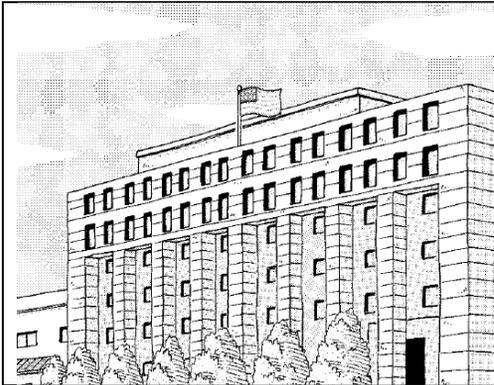
※ P.14 ~ 20 は、史実を踏まえ、再構成しています。



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*Editor's note (from original):

Pages 14-20 are reconstructions based upon historical evidence.



February 1, 1946: General Headquarters for the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers (SCAP), Tokyo

Courtney Whitney was the Chief of Staff at GHQ

(Gen. Douglas) MacArthur's office:

Whitney: I don't think the folks at the **Far East Command Office will be satisfied with this draft.

MacArthur: So, essentially, the Constitutional draft submitted by Minister Matsumoto has not sufficiently changed.

Courtney Whitney: Yes, Matsumoto's draft has basically only altered the outward appearance of Japan's *Meiji-era Constitution.

Translator's notes:

*The Meiji Constitution was promulgated in 1889 while Japan was a constitutional monarchy. It remained in force from November 1890 until May 2, 1947.

**The Far East Command (FEC) was the headquarters for United States military actions in the western Pacific following the end of World War II.



Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers Douglas MacArthur.

MacArthur: Hmmm...



At a February 4, 1946 meeting:

::Astonishment::



Whitney: We've assembled you all today at this meeting in order to draft a new Constitution!

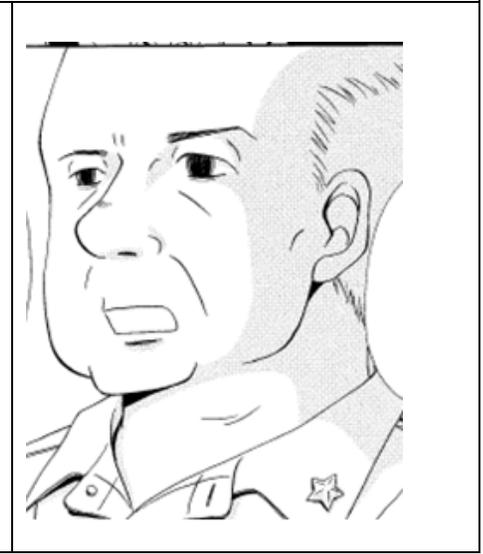


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<p>(Document title)</p> <p>MacArthur's Three Principles</p>	<p>Whitney: This is directly from General MacArthur: We are to draft a national Constitution based upon the following principles.</p>
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GHQ Staffer: According to the Hague Convention, occupying forces must respect the extant laws of an occupied territory. So, isn't taking the writing of a Constitution into our hands doing just that?!

Whitney:
Our objective is the disarmament of Japan. We must ensure that Japan cannot provoke the world to war a second time.





::whisper whisper::	
Staffer 2: There's no reason to write such a Constitution, then.	Staffer 1: But are you saying that it won't be a Constitution for the Japanese people but rather one crafted for our own purposes?
Staffer 3: And we aren't experts knowledgeable about the history or culture of Japan....	
Whitney: You have until Tuesday of next week, the 12 th of February.	Staffer 1: This is... Staffer 2: It'll take time, no?
Staffer 1: The 12 th ?!	
Staffer 2: In just eight days!?	
Staffer 1 (thinking): Eight days.....	
Narrator: In this way the drafting of Japan's Constitution fell into the hands of Americans, an English draft of which was put together in a mere eight days' time.	



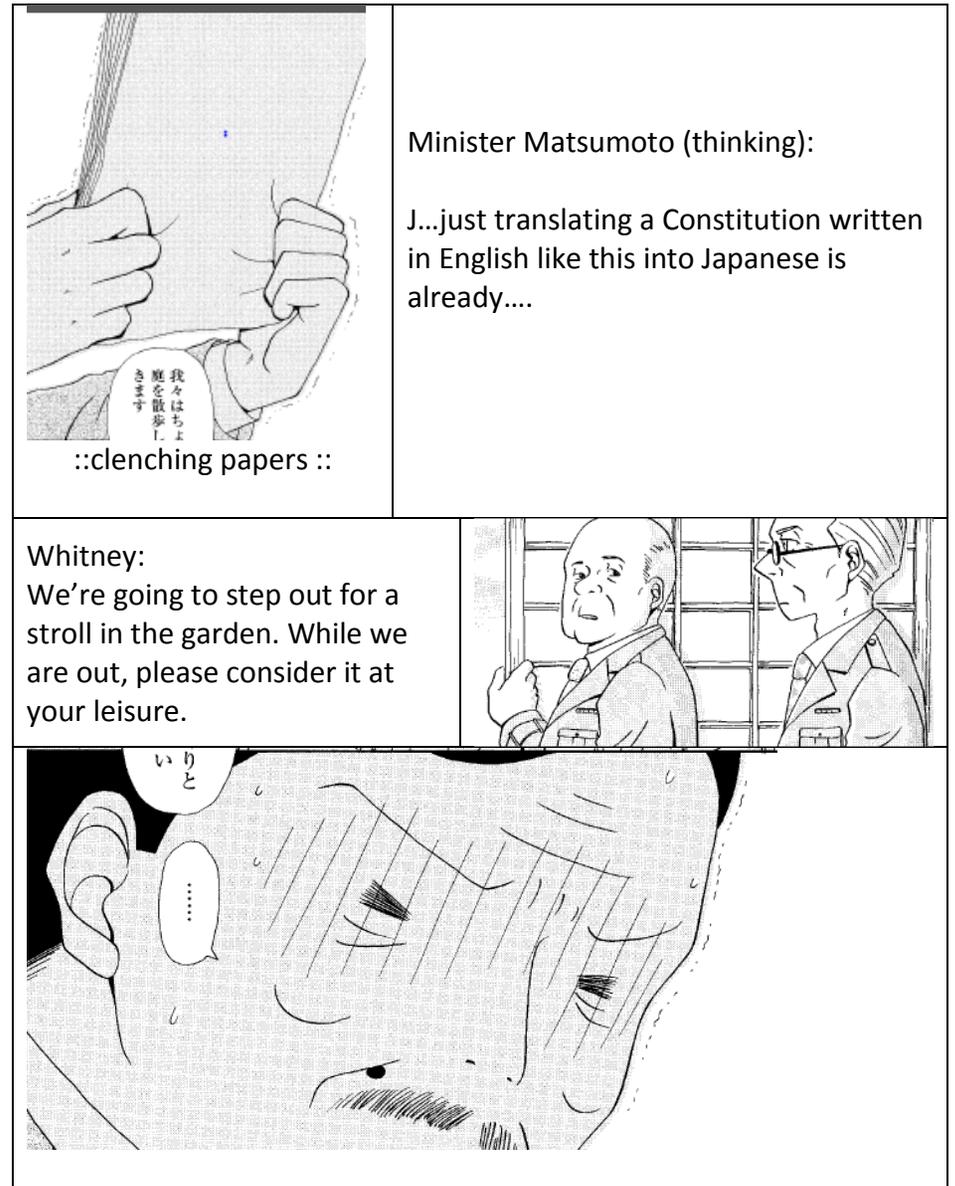
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<p>The Japanese Minister of State, Matsumoto Jyōji</p>	<p>February 13th</p>
<p>Matsumoto: !!</p>	<p>Whitney: It's a pity, but SCAP is unable to accept the constitutional revisions forwarded by the Japanese government. Instead, I've brought with me a draft revision prepared by the Occupation staff.</p>
	<p>Whitney: Please submit a revision in accordance with this draft as quickly as possible.</p>
<p>Minister of State Matsumoto: ::stunned::</p>	

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Minister Matsumoto (thinking):

J...just translating a Constitution written in English like this into Japanese is already....

::clenching papers ::

Whitney:
We're going to step out for a stroll in the garden. While we are out, please consider it at your leisure.



March 4th:

Minister of State Matsumoto brought the Japanese revision draft, translated into English, to GHQ headquarters, but upon his arrival, some mistranslated items occasioned a harried conversation, and angered, he left the premises.



[Mr. Satō Tatsuji of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau]

Mr. Satō has come to assist us with ensuring the accuracy of the final passages. By working all night, by March 6th, the general outline of the Constitutional Revision had come together.



The Japanese *Diet subjected the draft to some untold number of additional revisions. When the Imperial Diet had completed their examinations, the new Japanese Constitution was officially promulgated on November 3, 1946.



*The Diet is Japan's bicameral legislature.



Yūko:
So our Constitution hasn't changed at all
in about seventy years, right?



Yūko: We don't impose the rules
of our household on the people
next door, do we?

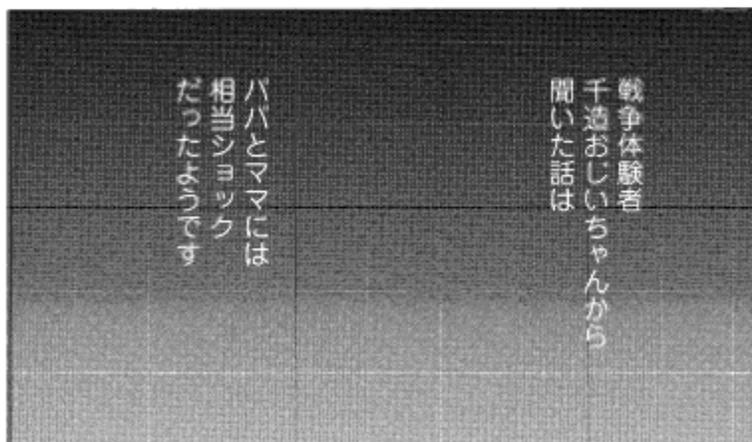
Shirō: Yes, that's so....

Ichirō: Riiight. Even though I have
not really ever considered it
before, that's how we became
"the Japan that has renounced
war"...

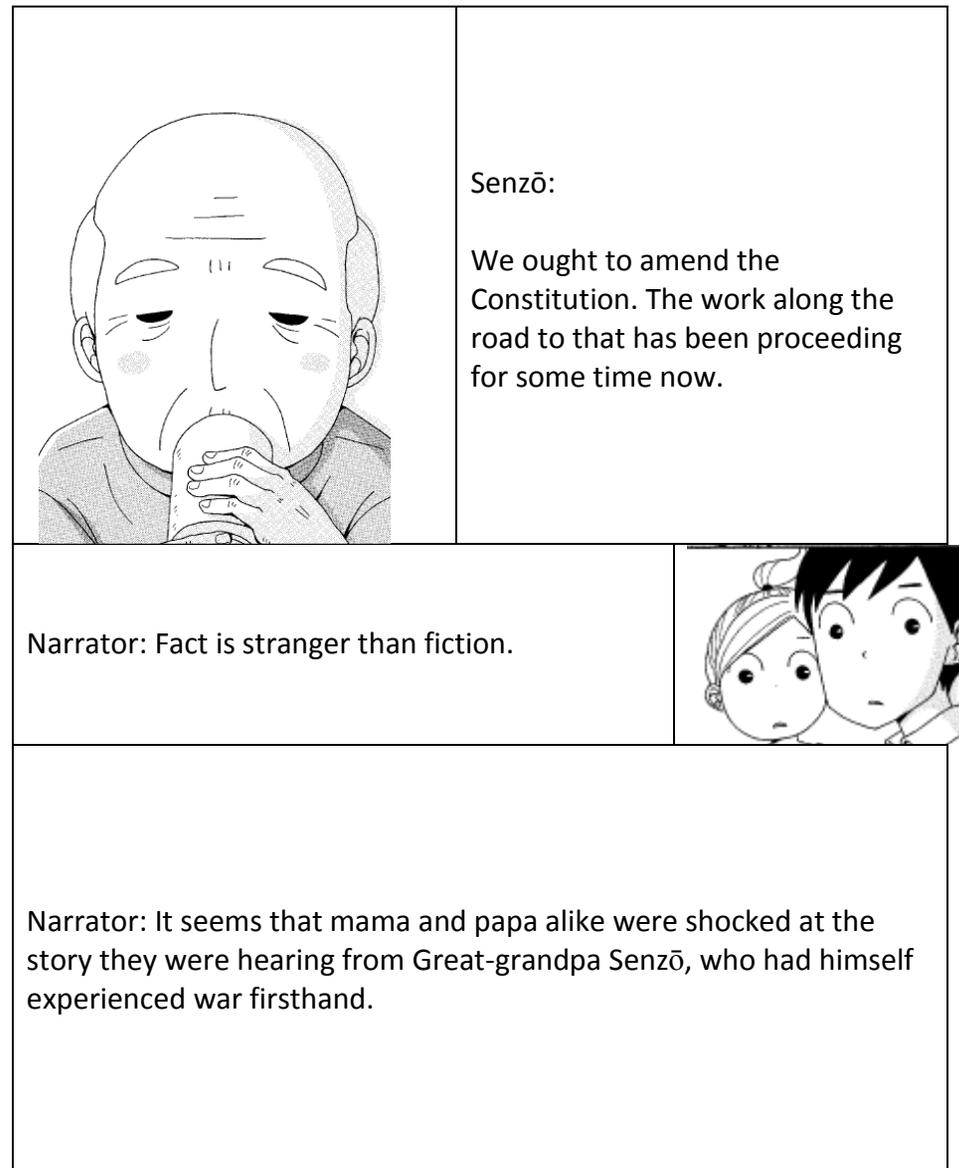
Yūko: This is unacceptable!

::Bangs fist on table::





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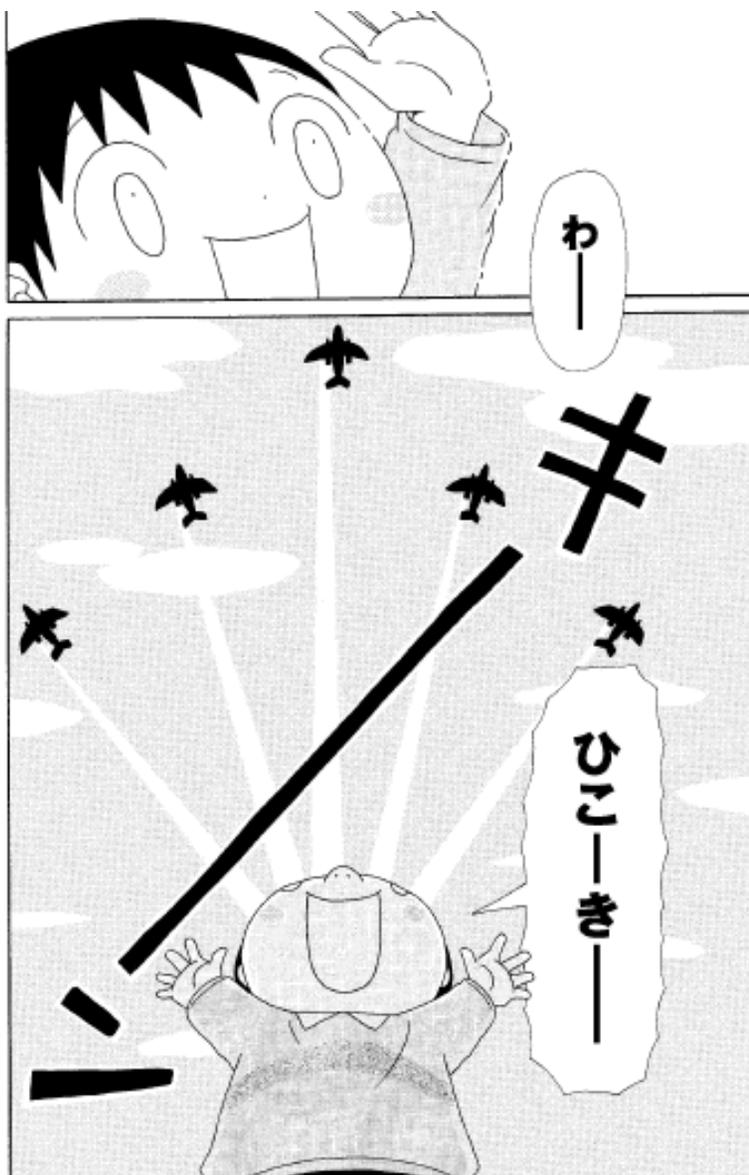


その2

憲法改正でどうなるの？



② If we revise the Constitution,
how will it change?



Wow, airplanes!



← Read from right to left, top to bottom

<p>Narrator: We've all come to see an airshow put on by Japan's Self-Defense Forces. It was completely Grandpa Shirō's idea, since this is a hobby of his.</p>	<p>Shirō: The planes are going "vroom vroom," aren't they? Awesome, huh, Shōta?!</p> <p>Shōta: VROOOM!</p>
<p>Ichirō: Hey....I have a question.</p>	<p>Shōta: Wow! Shirō: How cute.....</p>
<p>Yūko: That's why I'm against it! No way!</p> <p>Ichirō: But, after all, wouldn't that mean they'd change the sections that no longer fit the times?</p>	<p>Ichirō: If it comes to pass that the Constitution is amended, what will it look like afterward?</p> <p>Yūko: Yeah, how will it impact our lifestyle, I wonder?</p>



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<p>Shirō: To wit, the basic rights of citizens are protected, and we are responsible for upholding that state of affairs. But, if there are developments that endanger the public good, the public must take action to prevent that!</p>	<p>Yūko: I'm not sure how to put this, but the wording is a little difficult to follow.</p>
<p>Shirō: That's, er...well... hmm.</p> <p>Ichirō: The public good?</p>	<p>Yūko: It would be good if it just said that at the very beginning.</p>
<p>Yūko: But that (checks on smartphone)</p>	<p>Senzō: The public good. In a word, it's everyone's benefit.</p> <p>Shirō: There's also the right to the pursuit of happiness.</p>



Senzō: The basic principle is along those lines, yes. As long as it doesn't infringe upon the rights of others, one is free to do whatever one wishes.

Yūko: Does that mean as long as it doesn't contravene the public good, people can do whatever they want to pursue personal happiness?

Shirō: But if you look at the International Covenant on Human Rights, it reads "any action that contravenes the national security or public order, or public health, or otherwise undermines the preservation of national ethics is forbidden." That's written very strictly in the Japanese Constitution.

Ichirō: That's complicated.

Shirō: The fact is, that since there are basic human rights, it's not the case that one can just do anything one likes!

::BOOM (makes point)::

Ichirō: That makes sense. If everyone selfishly insisted on their own way, society would collapse.

Senzō: Can you say the current Japanese Constitution is individualistic?

Yūko: Nat ... national security...

Guys: Huh?



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Ichirō: If that was so, I feel as if we'd be in big trouble...



Yūko: This is Japan! Are you saying it's okay for someone to selfishly oppose our national security?!

Shirō: Eeek!

Ichirō: That's because there are frightening individuals among the members of various associations and religious groups sometimes. Right.

Senzō: To be sure, the German law on which that clause was based says that "It is prohibited for anyone to oppose the Constitutional system, whether among groups or in cooperative efforts by national citizens." (Calm down, Yūko!)

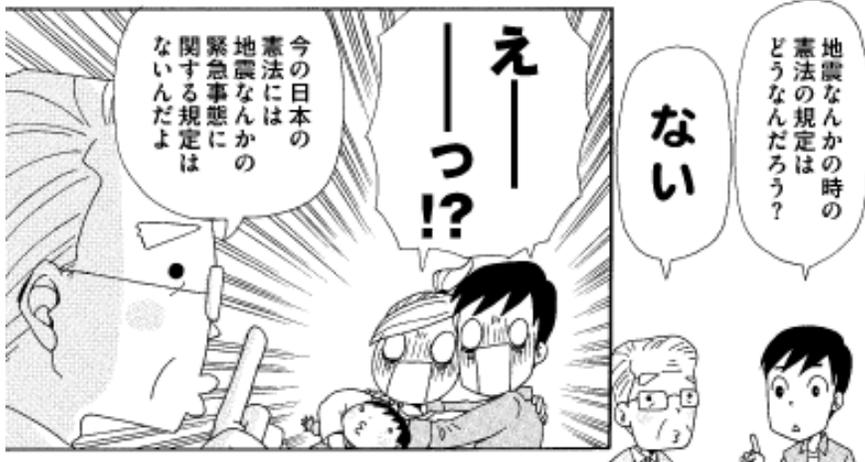
Yūko: What about that?!

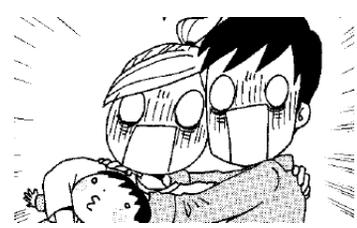
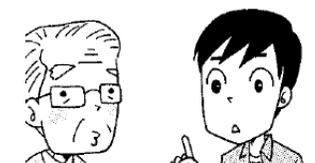
Shirō: ::head wobbling::

Planes: ::Zoooooom::

Shirō: And aren't there such groups and people gathering in Japan even now? Criminal activities are covered under criminal law, but there's no specific stipulations concerning them in the Constitution. On that point, that's why even protected human rights are sometimes violated. For that reason, no matter how dangerous the organization or religious group may potentially be, it's no easy matter to simply break them up.

Shōta: Grandpa, calm down!



<p>Ichirō and Yūko: What!?</p> <p>Shirō: Our current Constitution has no provisions for things like earthquakes and other emergency situations.</p> 	<p>Ichirō: There are probably provisions in the Constitution for earthquakes and other such incidents, right?</p> <p>Shirō: No, there are not.</p> 
<p>Yūko: And speaking of that, even at the time of the 3/11 earthquake, I never heard anything about this...</p>	<p>Ichirō: But we're a nation prone to earthquakes...</p>
<p>Yūko: Why?</p> 	<p>Senzō: In times of emergency, the presidents or top officials in many countries are granted strong authority to respond to them.</p> <p>Shirō: Overseas, top government officials can declare an official "state of emergency" and without waiting for the legislature to approve a funding measure, they can use money to aid the affected area. That's because legislators can delay a vote, etc.</p>



	<p>Planes: ::Vrooom::</p> <p>Shirō: Well, it's a matter of speed, isn't it?</p>
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<p>Shirō: If the procedural formalities are too complicated, it takes time for responders to assist, as there are a lot of things that can't be decided without meetings, etc. Then when time is of the essence, they can't react in a timely fashion.</p>	<p>Ichirō: If that's so, then that's why they are able to assist with public evacuation and lifestyle support efforts!?</p>
--	---

<p>Ichirō: But, wait a minute. What did you say before about legislators delaying votes?</p>	<p>Ichirō: So it's all just big business – that's so like Japan..</p> <p>Yūko: Emergencies don't take place in conference rooms!</p>
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Yūko: Aaaaaah! Surely they wouldn't have to do that?!



Senzō: Under our current Constitution, things would have to be approved by a vote in the Diet. Even on the day after a big earthquake!

Ichirō: There's no flexibility!

Senzō: There is flexibility in our Constitution, you idiot!

Yūko: ...but, when it comes to Article 9, Japan's Constitution is more progressive, isn't it?
 Ichirō: That's the renunciation of war clause, right?



Shirō: The terms of our elected officials are laid out in the Constitution. That's because the Constitution is considered the ultimate statement of the law.

Senzō: It's not really a question of flexibility. Your one-in-ten-thousand hypotheticals are naïve. In foreign Constitutions like those we've been discussing, there are of course rules governing what top officials can and cannot do, even under states of emergency.

Yūko: It seems foreign Constitutions are somehow more advanced...



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<p>Senzō: Look, you lot...</p>	<p>Ichirō: That's right ... that's the reason we've had almost 70 years of peace. There's no need to change it!</p> <p>Shirō: If it came to pass that Shōta had to go to war, I'd ... well, I'd.....</p> <p>Shōta: Ouch!</p>
<p>All: Huh? Is there a difference?</p>	
<p>Yūko (at door): Let me talk to my family about this....</p> <p>Solider (outside): Oh, I see. I will adjust the date...</p> <p>Ichirō: (That doesn't mean the solider would really say that...)</p>	<p>Senzō: What would you do if Japan was attacked by another nation tomorrow?</p> <p>Yūko: Well, if you ask with no warning like that...</p>



Ichirō: Ah, calm down, Yūko...

Shirō: It's just that there has never been the necessity for such action until the present...

Yūko: What, could that really happen? They could just decide that unilaterally? About Shōta? Is everyone safe?

Senzō: Because the Constitution has been interpreted as recognizing the right to actions taken in self-defense, in the event of an invasion, we would be able to fight. However, in the second part of Article 9, it is stipulated that "land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, shall not be maintained."



Ichirō: That's just the kind of hair-splitting my boss uses...

Shirō (thinking): I wonder if things are okay at Ichirō's company?

Yūko: But insofar as the Japanese Self-Defense Forces possesses "war power," is it in opposition to the Constitution?

Senzō: The government has interpreted that to mean the minimum capacity necessary for self-defense and makes a distinction between that and "war potential." It's a rather forced interpretation.



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<p>Yūko & Ichirō: Rules?</p>	<p>Yūko: If you really think about it, most nations have their own militaries, right?</p> <p>Ichirō: But it's probably the case that because they have militaries, they get embroiled in conflicts.</p> <p>Shirō: There are surely various rules, though.</p>
<p>Senzō: Ahem! While there's nothing of the kind in Japan's Constitution, the Constitutions of other countries around the world have sections included which address control of the military.</p>	<p>Shirō: Erm, well, they are those, um ... adult reasons, shall we say? Or tacit understandings? Um...</p>
<p>Senzō: Are you three seriously listening? "Civilian control" is what we call <i>bunmin tōsei</i> in Japanese. That is, the military is controlled by a civilian government.</p>	<p>Senzō: That's what's called a "civilian control" provision.</p> <p>Yūko: The dog?</p> <p>Ichirō: No, you're thinking of "Siberian Huskies," Yūko.</p> <p>Shirō: I like Chihuahuas, myself...</p>



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Ichirō: So that's just a powergrab by government officials, isn't it?

Shirō: But isn't it the people who choose those government officials? That is to say, that's control taken by citizens.

Ichirō: Oh! Is that so?

<p>Yūko: So does that mean Article 9 is at the core of Constitutional revision, after all?</p>	<p>Yūko: Hmm. That's why elections are such a important responsibility, right?</p> <p>Shirō: Yes, just as Yūko just now said...</p> <p>Senzō (interrupting): That's why it's better for the provisions which control the actions of the Self-Defense Forces which protect the nation should be clearly articulated in our Constitution!</p>
--	---

Senzō:
Yes, but because changing the Constitution requires the agreement of more than two-thirds of the members of the Diet, revising Article 9 will not be simple. It will be necessary for the legislature to spend quite a bit of time debating it.



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Shirō: If they decide to change it, and even if they decide not to change it, it will be a complicated matter, to be sure.

Senzō: We must all consider how to prevent it from becoming a troublesome matter.

Yūko: Yes, let's think about that....

Ichirō: What, are you thinking about this too, Yūko?

Senzō: Yes, let's all put our heads together on this.

Shōta: Papa....

Ichirō: Right, but....



<p>Yūko: Perhaps if Shōta was drafted into the military</p> <div data-bbox="1102 337 1606 565" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Yūko (imagining): Shōta! Go in the service of the country!</p> <p>Shirō (imagining): I ... I want to go in your place, Shōta!</p> </div>	<p>Ichirō: ...but what happens in the one-in-a-thousand case that someone attacks us?</p> <p>Yūko: What!?</p>
<p>Ichirō: But, look, in Article 18 the Constitution says, "No person shall be held in bondage of any kind. Involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime, is prohibited."</p> <p>Yūko: So what does that mean?</p>	<p>Yūko: No! Absolutely not!</p> <p>Shirō: Shoooooota!</p>
<p>Senzō: Forcing someone into military service is only considered if it is punishment for a crime. So, as long as Article 18 is not changed, we need not worry that Shōta will be drafted.</p> <p>Yūko and Shirō: Whew!</p>	



Senzō: He may not be drafted, but that won't change the fact that *someone* will have serve in the military.

Shirō: So, if it comes to that, even those people who resolve to serve....

Ichirō: Ah! So you're saying we don't know how it will play out. That's awful.

Ichirō: So, no matter what -- whether we change Article 9 or if we don't -- we'd better consider things carefully beforehand and make sure everyone's in agreement.

その3

国民投票ってどんなこと？



③ What is a national referendum?



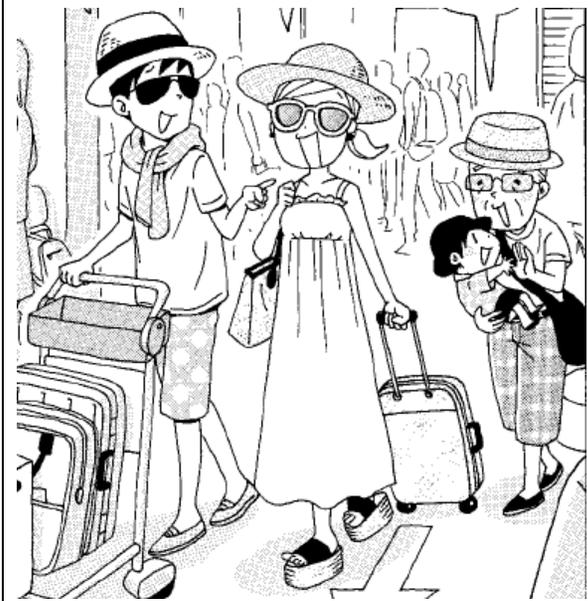
Shirō: Shōta-chan, you got to swim in the ocean for the first time, even!

Yūko: I've come to feel that the revision of the Constitution will turn out just fine!

Ichirō: Hey, that's another topic altogether, isn't it?

[Blue Skies Airport]

Aah, that was fun!



Narrator: My family had become a lot more forward-looking on the issue of Constitutional revision, so it's not just that we were rarely in "vacation mode".

All: Ha ha ha. (Still in vacation mode)





Narrator: From that point onward, on occasion our family would sometimes discuss the government and our Constitution together. As a result, as the feeling of leaving our vacation resort sunk in, this happened:

Yūko: But, how will the Constitution change? It's not like they just erase some of it and rewrite it...

Ichirō: To be certain, if it does change, how will they go about deciding on how to do it?

Ichirō: Are other countries revising their Constitutions?

Yūko: The Constitution is important. Surely it can't be easily altered?

Yūko: But I had such a solemn image of Germans...

Ichirō: Is that unusual?

::creeping up::

Shirō: It seems they're doing it more than you think! America has changed their Constitution six times, South Korea nine times, France has done it 27 times and Germany ... sixty times!

Ichirō & Yūko: Sixty times?!



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::bronzed::

Senzō: Germany, like Japan, is a defeated nation, but they are diligently undertaking the revision of their Constitution.

I think great-grandpa might have gotten too much sun....

::bronzed::

Senzō: It's precisely because the Constitution is so important that other nations are debating the issues properly and undertaking changes.

Yūko: Contrary to expectation, Constitutions are changing all over the place, aren't they?



Yūko: ::annoyed:: (snatches Shōta)

Shirō: Hey, my little Shōta...

Senzō: Japan hasn't gone that far even a single time.

Yūko: Even though other countries are changing their Constitutions, isn't there something slippery about that?

Shirō: What exactly do you mean. "slippery"?

Shirō: The House of Representatives has 475 members, so that would be 317 seats, and the House of Councillors has 242 members, so that is 162 seats...

Senzō: If there was a motion to revise the Constitution in the Japanese Diet, first the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors would have to reach consensus amounting to two-thirds or higher of the number of members in both houses.

Yūko: That's a pretty severe number, isn't it?

Yūko: So doesn't that mean it's just not possible?

Senzō: I wouldn't say it's impossible, but it's very difficult door to open.

Senzō: There has not been a single time in the postwar period in which a ruling party has achieved a vote of two-thirds of the members of the House of Councillors. So even if you are the dominant party, a single political party has never dominated both houses of the legislature at the same time.



Senzō: If they managed to do it, it would become a motion from the Diet, and then, eventually.... [::flourish::] a citizen's referendum!

Yūko: Aha! So that means we get to participate, too!

Ichirō: We've probably never arrived at that "aha" moment. Come on and let us participate!



Shirō: It's all because referendum laws have been recently revised. Up until now you had to be over 20 years old, but from 2018 forward, you will be able to participate as long as you are over 18 years old!



Yukō: Wow, the day when Shōta will be able to participate in a citizen's referendum is close!

Ichirō: Hey, he's still only 2 years old.

Shirō: Grandpa will be sure to vote on your behalf until then, Shōchan! Will you vote for it, or against it?

Senzō: Vote on your own behalf! Honestly!....



Shirō: Realistically, that is just too difficult. Japan has never revised its Constitution, not even once.

Ichirō: I see – so is just thinking about it is the limit of our contribution?

Yūko: That's no good, you!

Senzō: In the event that the affirmative vote in an referendum exceeds half of the votes cast, it will be the first time the current Constitution will have been revised.



Senzō: Human rights are human rights. Regional self-government is regional self government. Divide them up

and debate the issues one at a time.

Senzō: Well, there are other ways to contribute to a reform measure.

Yūko: What?!

Ichirō: Right! There are many ways to piece it together, without deciding if one is for or against it.

Shirō: [::prickling::]
Just like you, Ichirō, many Japanese people are apathetic and that's why things are a mess!

Yūko: Please excuse my husband who apologizes as a Japanese person!

Ichirō: ::ouch!::

Yūko: It's good to be cautious about this, but...

Ichirō: And so, it's all the more crucial that the process go smoothly, and so that's why I don't want to bother with it.



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Yūko: Since foreign nations have revised their Constitutions repeatedly, does that mean the process is easier in other countries?

Shirō: It seems that globally, Japan is a place where revising the Constitution is considerably difficult to do.

Ichirō: To what specific extent is that true?

::Menacing atmosphere::

Senzō: Hahaha ... that may be the case, so it would be good for you to acquire this technique....

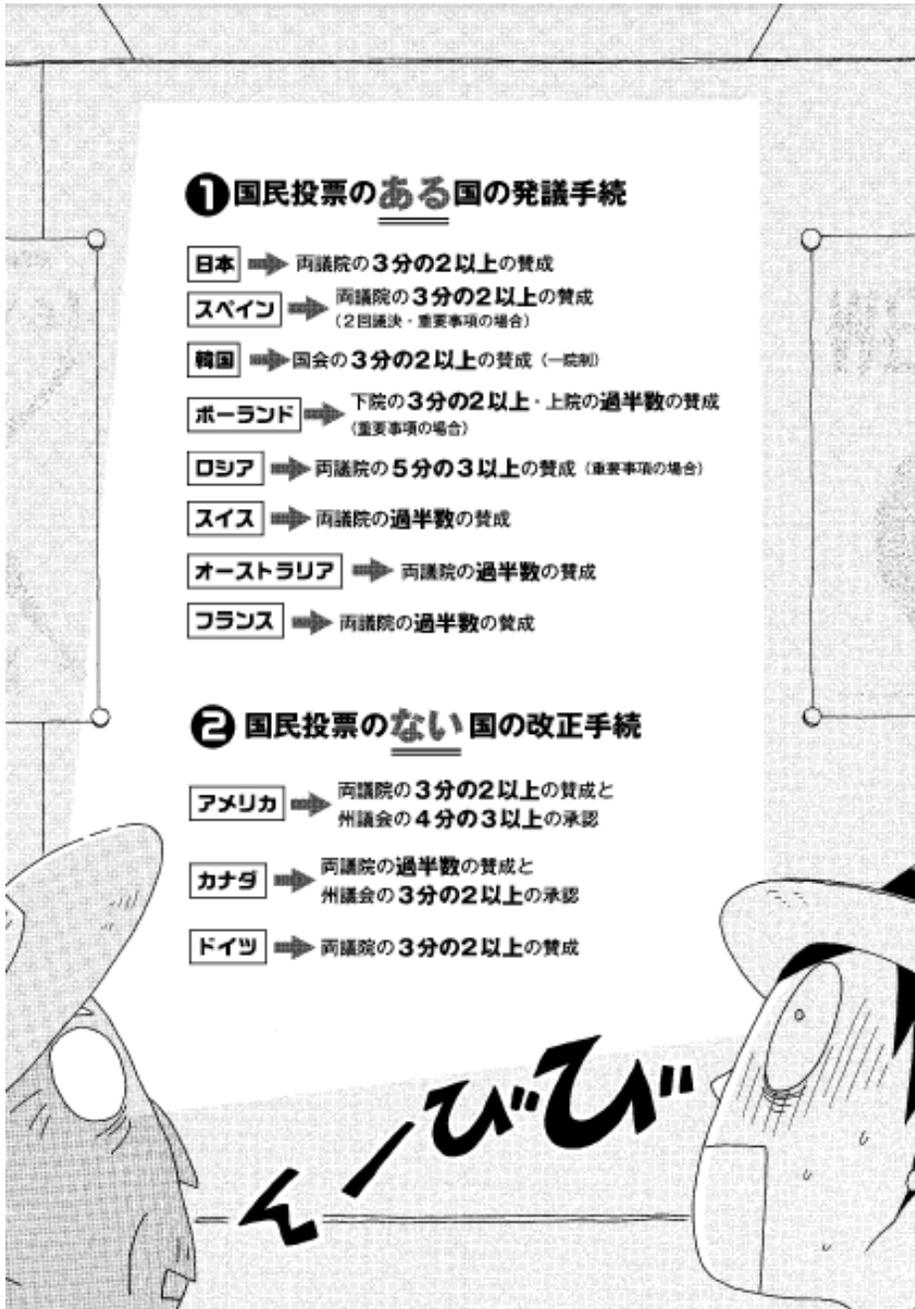
Ichirō: Wh...what? Great-grandpa?!



Senzō: HA! [Beams of light shoot from his eyes]

Yūko and Shirō: Light rays?! Whoooooaaaa.....

Narrator: And what was at the terminus of those light rays?....



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① The Process for Introducing a Referendum in Countries Which Provide for It

JAPAN: An assenting vote of greater than 2/3 of members in both houses of the Diet.

SPAIN: An assenting vote of greater than 2/3 of members both legislative houses (a two-time resolution of principal matters).

SOUTH KOREA: An assenting vote of greater than 2/3 of members in the National Assembly.

POLAND: An assenting vote of greater than 2/3 of members in the lower house and the assent of more than half of the upper house.

RUSSIA: An assenting vote of greater than 3/5 of members in both houses of the Legislature (State Duma and the Federation Council).

SWITZERLAND: An assenting vote by more than half of the members in both houses of the Federal Assembly.

AUSTRALIA: An assenting vote by more than half of the members in both houses of Parliament.

FRANCE: An assenting vote by more than half of the members in both houses of Parliament

② The Process in Countries With NO Citizen's Referendum

AMERICA: A 2/3 or greater vote of assent in both houses of Congress and a three-fourths majority vote in state legislatures.

CANADA: A 1/2 or greater vote of assent in both houses of Parliament and a 2/3 vote of assent in provincial legislatures.

GERMANY: A 2/3 or greater vote of assent in both houses of the Bundestag (Parliament).

Shirō & Ichirō: ::GULP!::



<p>Narrator: The technique Great-Grandpa Senzō referenced is presented in this comic – light beams did not really emit from his eyes – but the data on the previous page is correct.</p>	<p>Shirō, Yūko & Ichirō: What the heck is that? Aaaaaaah! (amazed by great-grandpa’s eye-beams)</p> <p>Bystanders: Japan! Amazing!</p>
<p>Ichirō: Since our voices can be heard by means of a citizen’s referendum, isn’t it a good thing that until now the progress toward a referendum hasn’t been halted?</p> <p>::Foreboding sound effect::</p>	<p>Yūko: Surely out of the countries which provide for a people’s referendum, Japan is the most severe, requiring a majority of more than 2/3 of the members in both houses of the Diet!</p>
<p>Senzō: (rubbing his eyes) And on top of that, moving a people’s referendum for Constitutional revision through the process would take two to six months, and during that period, statements both in support and against it could be freely made.</p>	<p>Yūko: So that means that if a third of the members in either house of the Diet opposed Constitutional reform, it would fail.</p> <p>Shirō: That’s why under the current system, we have not been able to revise our Constitution even a single time.</p>



Senzō: (posing for photos)

Ichirō: Isn't that even longer than the election cycle?

Tourists: Oh my god...

Yūko: But it's only through considering revision and hearing everyone's opinions about it over that long period that a proper process of revision will succeed.

::camera shutters::



Senzō: First of all, it's necessary to discuss whether or not we should change it at all.

Ichirō: We should all probably discuss reform together at least once...

Yūko: I know, right? We can't escape the necessity of considering what to change and what to leave as it is





Yūko: Are you saying you want to discuss it over some drinks?!

Ichirō: What?!

Yūko: I'll probably discuss this with my mom-friends.

Ichirō: Although I feel somehow that topic of conversation will have some kind of difficult feel to it. But I'll probably see about debating it with my colleagues at work.

Yūko: Ha ha ha, there's no revising the rules of our household, Ichirō.

Ichirō: In our house, we drink sake in moderation!



④ Let's all consider this together!

New Year's Day
6:40 a.m.



We have come to a place in the neighborhood to see the first sunrise of the New Year.



Senzō: Not up yet.

Yūko: Just a little longer.



Senzō: Hey, Shōta....





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Senzō: This thing we call a Constitution reflects the state of affairs in any given nation.

Yūko: Grandpa, stop. Shōta is not going to understand that sort of talk.

Senzō: When he gets older, some memory of this talk will probably remain with him.

Shōta: ha ha ha...



Ichirō: It's an important thing to talk about, though.

Yūko: Something like our family motto, perhaps.

Senzō: The elements of gender equality in our current Constitution are widely praised, and in reality, in these seventy years the status of women has advanced.

Shirō: But since personal freedoms are overemphasized, family ties and regional solidarity have both weakened over that seventy years, too, most likely.

Shirō: Fundamentally, it does, but that doesn't mean it's expressed clearly. Regionalization of power also seems to be at a standstill.

Senzō: Back in the *Meiji era, our former Constitution stressed the centralization of power, totally unlike the current trend for the regionalization of power.

Yūko: Does the current Constitution promote regionalization?



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Senzō:

A Constitution orders the shape of a nation; it is something that will alter the nation itself.

Under the Constitution we have, one given to a defeated Japan by GHQ, Japan will continue to be a defeated nation.



Ichirō: There's no excuse to pull the postwar era into Shōta's generation.

Senzō: It will be necessary for the Japanese people to diligently consider their own future, going forward. For that purpose, we should straightforwardly address the Constitution which is the basis of our nation.

Yūko: That's right.



Yūko: For the sake of Shōta's future too, we adults must consider this!



Ichirō: Absolutely!

Shirō: Oh....



Shirō: The sun is rising!



Yūko: Japan is a great nation, isn't it?



Narrator: Mom, Dad, Grandpa, and Great-Grandpa: please think it over carefully for *our sake!

**Translator's note: The use of the plural term "bokutachi" clearly implies that the "our" in this final line is Shōta's generation of young Japanese.*



Liberal Democratic Party