

## Title: The Constitution of Japan (1947)

### Summary:

The Constitution of Japan, promulgated on November 3, 1946, and effective May 3, 1947, is a post-World War II document that redefined Japan as a pacifist constitutional monarchy with popular sovereignty. Drafted under significant Allied influence, it replaced the Meiji Constitution and established a new foundation of democracy, human rights, and renunciation of war. The Preamble emphasizes that sovereignty rests with the people, and government power derives from their will. It affirms Japan's commitment to international peace and universal political morality.

Chapter I establishes the Emperor as a symbolic figurehead with no governing power, acting only on the advice and approval of the Cabinet. Chapter II famously contains Article 9, through which Japan renounces war and the maintenance of military forces for warfare, marking it as a unique constitutional pacifist state. Despite the rise of the Japan Self-Defense Forces in later years, this clause remains a powerful legal and symbolic foundation of Japanese foreign policy.

Chapters III through VIII outline civil liberties, democratic institutions, and the balance of powers. Fundamental human rights, such as freedom of expression, religion, due process, education, and equal treatment under the law, are deeply embedded. The Diet (Parliament) holds legislative power, composed of two elected houses: the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors. The Cabinet, led by a civilian Prime Minister, holds executive power and is collectively responsible to the Diet. The Judiciary, headed by the Supreme Court, is independent and empowered to conduct constitutional review.

The Finance and Local Government chapters establish fiscal accountability, tax legislation, and the autonomy of local public entities. The Constitution emphasizes public oversight of national finances, including independent audits and regular Cabinet reports. Local governments are granted powers of self-governance, property management, and rule-making within the bounds of national law.

In Chapter IX, the Constitution provides for amendments through a rigorous process requiring a two-thirds majority in both Houses and a national referendum. Chapter X establishes the Constitution as the supreme law, overriding any contrary acts of government or prior legal structures. Chapter XI, the supplementary provisions, outlines the transition from the Meiji Constitution and guarantees legal continuity.

This Constitution remains a foundational symbol of Japan's postwar identity, characterized by democracy, peace, and human rights, and continues to shape its national and international stance into the 21st century.