

Eiken P1 Speaking Exercise 2010-2

1. Should more be done to discourage young people from migrating to urban centers?

I believe that discouraging young people from migrating to urban centers is impractical. There are three reasons why I think such an effort would be a waste of time. First, young people are naturally attracted to city life. There are a greater variety of opportunities in major urban centers and the best-paying jobs are often there, as well. Moreover, cities are often much more exciting than smaller towns and villages. There are more entertainment options and, of course, many more like-minded young people. Second, discouraging young people from moving to cities would either require expensive advertising campaigns or outright coercion that would limit the personal freedom of movement of young people. Advertising campaigns would be expensive and likely not be effective. Limiting our personal freedom of movement would damage the basic principles of our democracy. Finally, if leaders of local areas hope to reduce the migration of young people to urban centers, they must do more to encourage young people to stay, not discourage them from migrating. They should offer employment options and lifestyle choices that are competitive with cities. In summary, discouraging young people from migrating young people from migrating to urban centers would be fruitless and perhaps even harmful to our personal freedoms.

2. Do arranged marriages have a place in modern society?

Arranged marriage plays an important role in modern Japanese society. Arranged marriage is generally not coercive in Japan. People are free to choose who to meet from pictures, personal resumes and reports of family background. After meeting other singles, they are then free to choose whether to meet again. Finally, they are free to choose whether or not to marry. In this sense, a Japanese-style arranged marriage is not really arranged at all. It is more like an arranged meeting and is similar in nature to serious Internet dating clubs. The go-between making the introduction often uses his or her knowledge of the two persons to make a suitable match based on personality and other important information. Arranged marriage is very helpful to singles who have busy work lives. It is also useful for people who don't like to search for other singles at such common meeting places as bars or clubs. I've heard that about 30 percent of Japanese marriages today are arranged marriages, so it is still a popular option. Moreover, arranged marriages are often more stable than romance marriages, so they result in fewer divorces. For these reasons, arranged marriage is a useful alternative for many Japanese looking for a suitable partner.

3. Can the use of animals for medical research be justified?

I believe medical research using animals can be justified. Using animals for medical experiments is often viewed negatively for ethical reasons. Many who are against testing talk about the suffering and killing of animals. Sometimes pictures of suffering dogs and monkeys are shown to highlight the horrors of animals testing. But I think much of this is exaggerated. My university uses animals for medical testing.

Rats and mice are used for the majority of experiments. Some experiments on genetic testing use fruit flies. I think most people are less concerned about the well-being of rats and fruit flies than monkeys or dogs. However, even for rats, there are regulations about how experiments should be carried out. In most experiments, animals experience only momentary pain or are given drugs to relieve their pain. Sometimes computer modeling can take the place of animal testing, but testing is often necessary to understand the full medical effects of medicine. That's why medicine is also tested on humans, as well. However, I believe it's important to weight the benefits of animal testing against the cost to the animals themselves. I also believe that animals testing should be strictly regulated. Despite this, medical research on animals is necessary for the the advancement of medical research.

4. Is enough being done to fight illegal drug trafficking?

Even though illegal drugs are a serious problem, I believe enough is already being done to fight drug trafficking in Japan. There are three reasons why I believe this. First, legal drugs are often just as dangerous and other addictive substances. When people think of drugs, they often have an image of such things a heroin, cocaine and marijuana. However, such legal drugs as alcohol and nicotine cause many more deaths each year. A recent report shows that alcohol is more dangerous than illegal drugs. And I think more people die from the effects of smoking than from any other drug. Second, illegal drugs will always be made and sold if there is a market. Fighting the makers and sellers of illegal drugs is important, but it's not the key to winning the war against drugs. It's better to educate people not to take harmful drugs, whether they are legal or illegal. Finally, the fight against illegal drugs in Japan seems to be fairly successful already. Only a small percent of Japanese take illegal drugs. It would be wasteful to spend more precious tax money to fight illegal drug trafficking. Instead, it might be better to use that money to fight the most harmful drugs in Japan, which are tobacco and alcohol.

5. Should large companies in Japan make English their official language?

I do not believe that English should become the official language in large companies in Japan. There are several reasons why I think such a requirement would be harmful. First, the primary aim of any business is to make a profit. Requiring all employees of a large company to use English would slow business and damage company profitability. Second, English would need to become a second language of Japan before companies are required to make English an official language. Schools and other institutions would have to assure that most employees entering the workforce speak well enough to use it as a main language in the workplace. Companies cannot be expected to spend large amounts of time and money to make their employees fluent in English. Such a requirement would be impractical. Third, the language of Japan is Japanese. Our language is tied to our culture and identity. Many young Japanese today cannot speak or write Japanese well. It would be a mistake to weaken our own language further. While English is the international language and is important for businesspeople, it should not be made the official language in large companies. That would hurt the companies and also harm Japanese society as a whole.