

Eiken P1 Speaking Exercise 2018-1

1. **Is the privatization of public services good for the general public?**

Most public services should not be privatized, and these services are what I'd like to talk about. I'll give three reasons why privatization is detrimental to society. First, managers of privatized companies do not always have the public interest in mind; they are more focused on profit than other factors such as service or the safety of the general public. For instance, the privatization of Japanese railroads has made some of their lines unusable. In 2013, a freight train in Hokkaido had a derailment accident. It turned out that the railroad lines were not adequately maintained, which was presumably caused by a lack of funding. Second, while we often say that privatization leads to good competition, it often doesn't happen. Many public services are monopolized, so even after privatization, it can be difficult for new private companies to enter that field. As a result, the monopolized continue and the prices are raised unreasonably. Finally, privatization of public services can negatively affect certain segments of society that need protection. When healthcare is privatized, for instance, medical-care providers may find it unprofitable to provide care for the aging and the poor. As a result, these segments may find themselves shut out from quality care. For the reasons I've given, I feel that public services should rarely be privatized.

2. **Are these values of young people today different from those of previous generations?**

In that values always change, but the values of young people today have changed significantly from those of previous generations. I'd like to explain how values have changed. First, technology has had a huge impact on the values of young people. We've seen how young people have become dependent on, and sometimes even addicted to, social networking sites, games, and applications on their smartphones. This is all relatively new. Second, social relationships have greatly changed, and not just because of social networking sites and the like. Many young people now choose to marry later in life or choose not to marry at all. Also, couples are choosing to have smaller families or deciding to have no children. This is due to not only the high costs of raising children but also the desires of people to have more freedom. Moreover, because people are more mobile today, friendships are sometimes more temporary and families have become less nuclear with family members spending less time together. Finally, young people have a different idea about work from previous generations. They are sometimes less loyal and often prioritize their family life or social life over their work responsibilities. The values of young people are not only different from previous generations, but the pace of change in values is becoming faster and faster.

3. **Should democratic nations make greater efforts to spread democracy to other nations?**

Many people believe that democratic nations have an obligation to spread democracy to other nations, but I think this is wrong. Let me explain by providing three reasons. Firstly, some nations are not ready for democracy because of such things as high level of poverty, a lack of education, or the lack of a political infrastructure to support a democracy. Some movements towards democracy have ended in disasters, since the overthrow of a dictator often creates a vacuum. Other nations cannot suddenly come and impose a different political system when the nation is not prepared for the change. Secondly, the social structure and history of a country often show that certain countries would suffer under democracy. There may be large groups of people that hold deep hatred for other groups. These deep hatreds could easily erupt into war or genocide without the strong hands of a dictator to provide stability. Thirdly, no nation has the right to interfere in political systems of other nations. It may be OK for the United Nations, but no single nation should have that kind of power. These are the reasons why I believe democratic nations should resist forcing their style of democracy on other nations.

4. Is enough being done to deal with the problem of antibiotic drug resistance?

I do not believe that enough is being done to fight antibiotic drug resistance. This is a very serious problem that needs more attention from both governments and drug manufacturers. Let me give you the reasons why more needs to be done. First, antibiotics are being widely misused around the world. Many people take antibiotics for cold or flues, even though antibiotics are not effective for these illnesses. Doctors, especially in Japan, prescribe antibiotics too often. In addition, many people do not take a full dose, which helps create new types of bacteria that are resistant. Second, antibiotics are often being abused when given to animals. I've read that antibiotics are fed to animals in large doses to keep them from getting sick. Antibiotics also make farm animals, such as cattle, fatter, increasing their value to farmers. Due to the overuse of antibiotics on farm animals, humans run the risk of getting infected with drug-resistant bacteria from these animals. Finally, the consequences of newly developed drug-resistant bacteria can be disastrous. Powerful new types of bacteria could cause major epidemics, which could easily spread around the world in this age of easy world travel. For these reasons, more needs to be done in the war against antibiotic drug resistance.

5. Should Japan play a bigger role in international affairs?

I feel Japan must play a bigger role in international affairs. Let me explain why. First, the security situation of the world has greatly changed over the last few decades. Some of the countries that neighbor Japan have expanded their influence and military power. Japan needs to stand up to certain growing crises, especially in the defense of its territorial rights. Also, Japan needs to join efforts made by other countries to fight international terrorism. Some Japanese say that we cannot get involved in international military issues due to our constitution, but stronger action is required on our security. Second, we need to provide more assistance to developing countries. Many people have criticized Japan's development assistance as being mostly limited to grants and loans. However, we have much more to offer, including providing new knowledge of cleaning up urban pollution. Finally, Japan is a peaceful country which can provide a bridge between different countries. Our Buddhist roots teach tolerance to others, including believers of all the world's religions, and we taught the importance of actions over beliefs. For these reasons, I feel that Japan must play a larger role in international affairs in the future.