

Eiken P1 Speaking Exercise 2010-1

1. Is the use of surveillance cameras in public places a good thing?

I believe that the video cameras used for public surveillance is a good thing. The primary reason is that they help protect people from criminals. Surveillance cameras are widely used in public places in Europe, especially in Britain. They have been shown to be effective in reducing crime, for potential criminals know they are being watched. Moreover, they are helpful for catching and prosecuting people who have committed crimes, reducing the number of criminals on the streets. Secondly, surveillance cameras enable police to be more effective. Police officers cannot patrol all public places all the time, but surveillance technology enables them to visually patrol wider areas. Some critics of surveillance cameras say that they invade people's privacy. However, cameras are already heavily used in banks and stores, and people accept them in these places. They should only be used in public places, not in people's homes or other private places without the owners' consent. With adequate laws to ensure that people's privacy is not invaded, I believe that the use of surveillance cameras in public places benefits the public.

2. Do labor unions perform a useful role in today's society?

Labor unions in Japan are quite different from those in other countries. I believe labor unions in Japan continue to perform a useful role. Labor unions became active here after World War II, when workers at low-paying steel factories went on strike for higher wages. Unions were more like those in the West at the time. However, they changed over time, partly because Japan has been moving away from heavy industries. Now, most unions are basically company unions rather than national or industry-wide unions. For example, Toyota has its own union, while in the US, Ford, GM and Chrysler have one industry-wide union. The relationship between unions and company management is usually close in Japan. Union members do not want to hurt their company through long strikes. In a company I know, for instance, they went on strike by refusing to work overtime on Friday evening. That was all. Unions here give workers a voice, and companies generally listen, so employees don't want to harm their company. That's why I feel that unions play a useful role in Japan.

3. Will Japan's lack of natural resources become a serious problem in the future?

Japan has always had limited natural resources, and will continue to have limited resources in the future. This has been both good and bad. Japan has had to import many resources, such as oil, and we are dependent on other countries because of this. The Japanese economy was seriously damaged during the oil shock of 1973. Important resources are becoming more limited as China, India and other developing nations compete for them, so the problem is likely to become more serious for Japan in the future. However, many countries with plentiful resources often suffer because they rely on their resource exports and do not develop their human resources. By having to compete with resource-rich countries, Japan has focused on education and training to make a highly skilled workforce. This has been very good for our

country. We must now make partnerships with resource-rich countries, offering our training and development assistance in exchange for their resources. This would be a win-win for both sides. To conclude, I believe that our lack of resources will continue to be a serious problem in the future but through our efforts, we can continue to effectively compete in the world market.

4. Are the arts a good ways to promote international understanding?

The arts can be a good way to promote international understanding. In modern times, pop culture, such as music, movies, art and TV programs, is particularly influential and can change the impression of a country and its culture in a positive way. For example, the image of Korea in Japan took a positive turn with the introduction of Korean TV dramas. Many more Japanese traveled to Korea in the following years. The introduction of new Korean dramas only intensified Japanese interest in Korea. There are cases where the arts have been specifically used to promote international understanding. This can be very effective. Photo exhibitions may show the life and culture of a country. A rock concert may help raise money and awareness of another country in need. However, the arts, especially pop culture, can sometimes give a misleading or even negative image of foreigners and foreign culture. And many parents around the world resent the influence of American music and MTV on their children. Despite this, the arts can be a good way to promote international understanding and bring the people of the world closer together.

5. Do professional athletes have a duty to serve as positive role models?

I feel ta professional athletes do have a duty to serve as a professional role models. There are three reasons why I believe this. First, professional athletes are often looked up to by children and teenagers. Whether they like it or not, athletes do serve as role models. If they are negative model, this could have a negative effect on young people. Second, professional athletes often make a great deal of money by advertising for products. The companies that make these products want to use the positive image of athletes. If an athlete does something bad or is involved in a scandal, this can have a bad effect on the companies that sponsor him or her. Third, an athlete gets energy from their fans, both good and bad energy. If athletes lead an honest and good life, fans will respect them and wish them the best. They will be cheered during the games and supported when they are performing well. If they have a bad reputation, fans will not support them. Their bad reputation could negatively affect their performance. For these reason, I believe that professional athletes should try to become positive role models.