

For better future

Did you make New Year's resolutions? I have decided to challenge to do something new as my new year's resolution. So I participate in English speech contest for the first time in 45 years.

This is a famous story probably you might know. Viewing half a bottle of whisky, some says it is already half empty. Regarding the same bottle, the other says it is still half full. This is a good example of showing that there are two aspects in everything. Or it depends on how you look at it.

For instance, I'm 65 years old and can describe my age two ways: one is to call my age already 65, implying it might be too late for me to start something from the scratch. The other is to regard my age as still 65, meaning there is some more room for expansion. If you see the dark side, you will be pessimistic, but if you look at the bright side, you can be optimistic.

Japan is now facing the problem of declining birth rate and rapidly aging society. It is said that the population of Japan will be less than 100 million in 30 years while it stands at 127 million now. Someone said that we might suffer from serious shortage of manpower, and that the power of the country would be dwindling in the future. However, I wonder if this really happens to Japan. There is no use crying over the possibility of this happening.

If we change the point of view, it is not necessary for us to be pessimistic. If we could create the society where elderly people can work until 70 or even older, we wouldn't be badly affected by the decrease in population and could avoid the decline of Japan.

As is often stressed by Abe administration, we should make the most of the power of women to make up for the shortage of manpower. If women could work more comfortably even after they gave birth to children, I believe most of women would like to continue to work for themselves and for the society. If the government succeeds in cutting the number of a child on the waiting list for a day nursery to zero, lots more women can both work and raise children.

So elderly people and women are the key to the success for Japan. Let me put it this way. If elderly people and women shine, Japan will shine more and more.

All in all, it is important for us to take a rosy view on everything. 2018 is the year of the dog, and the dog is said full of energy. So let's be energetic this year. Thank you for listening.

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