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## Essay ▶ CD 01

Once I was working at a school where it was decided that the students would perform a small skit in English at a public hall which would be open to the public. I was asked to be in general charge of this day of performances. As I had no experience in teaching drama, I asked the school head if I could have an assistant. After much searching, an Israeli woman who had graduated in “drama” was employed as a part-time teacher. There were many advantages to hiring this woman. She was enthusiastic. She really wanted the students to put on a good performance. Most importantly, she was very knowledgeable about acting and the theater. Both the students and I learned much from her.

Unfortunately, not everything went well. Sometimes she was too serious about what was supposed to be a fun activity for students. I once came across her scolding a group of female Japanese students. They had decided to do a play of the well-known children’s story “The Three Little Pigs.” Typically, they wanted to be cute little pigs. However the Israeli teacher had other ideas. I heard her shouting at the crying students. “Are you pigs? I don’t see pigs! Get down on all fours and be pigs.” I couldn’t help thinking she was taking realism too far for an English skit. Nevertheless, the more serious students seemed to like their strict teacher, and I was glad for her help.

A further problem was, as we moved closer to the day of the play, the Israeli teacher demanded more and more hours of rehearsal. She seemed to feel the students should be rehearsing all day every day. On the other hand the headmaster thought

she was overdoing things, moreover, as she had been employed at an hourly rate, the school was in danger of going over budget. Finally the headmaster told me to call her and thank her for all her efforts, but to say we didn't need her to come to the school any more, apart from collecting her pay. 25

This was when the problems really started. When she received her payment, the woman rushed to my office to complain to me that she had been underpaid. When I spoke to the headmaster, he told me they had agreed over the phone that she was to be paid 6,000 yen per hour. When I spoke to the Israeli woman, she insisted that they had agreed that the pay was to be 9,000 yen per hour. She also 30 said that unless she was paid the full amount then she would contact the local newspapers and television companies. This infuriated the school authorities, who felt they were being threatened. As a "go between", I argued that as both sides were not native speakers of English, and that a genuine misunderstanding had occurred and it would be best to compromise on a sum half way between 6,000 and 35 9,000 yen. So I suggested 7,500 yen. However, the Israeli teacher was not willing to compromise. Finally, the school side bit the bullet and paid her the full sum she demanded, but told her she would never be welcomed at the school again.

This was an unsatisfactory end to the matter, but the real problem was a cultural one. Japanese are often not familiar with formal written contracts. But 40 most foreigners are used to clearly defined contracts, with pay and responsibilities clearly defined. This is usually also the case even with part-time jobs. So, at least when dealing with foreigners, it is probably a good idea to write out a full contract in clear terms. I know my old school never employed a foreigner without a contract after their unpleasant experience! 45

C.S.

#### NOTES

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- 1. 2 the public : 「一般大衆」定冠詞 the を伴う (= the general public)
  - 1. 7 put on : (劇を) 「上演する」
  - 1. 11 come across : 「たまたま〜と出会う」
  - 1. 15 on all fours : 「四つんばいになる」
  - 1. 23 go over ~ : 「〜を超過する」
  - 1. 33 go between : 「仲介役」
  - 1. 37 bite the bullet : 「しぶしぶ了承する」
  - 1. 44 in clear terms : 「はっきりと」
-



**Comprehension** ◆ Circle T if the sentence is true; circle F if it is false.

- (1) T / F The Israeli woman put her energy into teaching how to perform in the play.
- (2) T / F All of the students in the school hated the Israeli drama teacher.
- (3) T / F What we have learned from this essay is that we should not give in to the unfair demands of foreigners.
- (4) T / F When you stand up instead of getting down on all fours, you look more like a real pig.
- (5) T / F Japanese have a tendency to be vague in monetary matters when hiring someone.



**Vocabulary Building** ◆ Draw lines joining words similar in meaning.

- |               |   |   |               |
|---------------|---|---|---------------|
| knowledgeable | · | · | grave         |
| serious       | · | · | well-informed |
| cute          | · | · | rigorous      |
| strict        | · | · | repeated      |
| frequent      | · | · | adorable      |



**English Composition** ◆ Translate the following Japanese sentences into English.

- (1) アルバイトで面接をするときは、あまり時給の話はしないね。
- (2) 本当は、学生にとって、それが最大の関心事だけどね。



**Dialog** ◆ Please listen to the CD and fill in the brackets (①~④) below. ▶ CD 02

**A:** Should the headmaster pay the ①( ) to the Israeli woman?

**B:** Of course, he should. He didn't write a formal contract, so that was clearly his fault.

**A:** ②( ) is our tradition. "When in Rome, do as the Romans do."  
Foreigners should follow our rules.

**B:** I think that some Japanese traditions should not be ③( ) foreigners if those traditions cause confusion.

**A:** Also, to pay 9,000 yen per hour is incredibly high. I resent the Israeli woman.

**B:** Well, I don't have a favorable impression of her either, and I agree that 9,000 yen per hour seems too high. But don't ④( ). It's not you, but the local government, who pays that amount.

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**NOTES**

When in Rome, do as the Romans do. : 「郷に入りては郷に従え」  
not A but B : 「AではなくてBである」

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**Let's Discuss!**

- (1) What do you think, should the headmaster pay the full amount (¥9,000/hour) to the Israeli woman? Yes? No? Explain your opinion.
- (2) Written contracts with clearly defined duties and pay are used in some countries, but such contracts are not common in Japan. Do you think that such contracts will become more common in Japan in the future? Explain your opinion.