

Saving the Ocean's Most Intelligent Creatures: Arguments against Whaling

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In the seventh century, Emperor Tenmu imposed (課す) a ban (禁止) on eating and killing wild (野生の) animals and birds because of his Buddhist beliefs. However, fish and whales were excluded (除外される) from the ban, and this spread the custom of eating whale meat. This tradition is kept alive today in Japan, as well as in countries, such as Iceland and Norway. These countries say that whaling (捕鯨) provides food and keeps fish stocks (魚種) high. However, many non-whaling countries remain strongly opposed (反対する) to the hunting (狩り) of whales because they believe it is cruel (ひどい) and unnecessary. Indeed, whale hunting causes pain to highly intelligent (頭が良い) animals and is less profitable (儲ける) than whale watching (ホエールウォッチング). For these reasons, saving whales is more important than saving the tradition of whaling.

First of all, whaling is unacceptable (受け入れられない) because it involves the killing of highly intelligent animals by cruel means (方法). The method of catching and killing whales has changed greatly over the years, but still remains brutal (残酷な) and ineffective (効果的でない). Whales today are killed by explosive harpoons (爆発性の鉋), which enter the whale near the head and explode (爆発する) inside its body. However, this method is not very effective because only 40% of whales caught by Japanese whalers (鯨を捕る人) die immediately (“Whaling Controversy,” 2009, para. 5). The majority of whales (ほとんどの鯨) die a slow and painful death. Moreover, scientists have been studying how whales think and act, and they have discovered that

these animals are extremely (非常に) intelligent. They have complex (複雑) social systems and use language to communicate with each other (“Whaling Controversy,” 2009, para. 5). It is therefore unethical (倫理的でない) to hunt such highly intelligent animals with cruel and ineffective methods.

In addition, whale watching is more effective way to sustain (持続する) local economies. In recent years, ecotourism has become a growing industry, which has provided income (収入) to many communities (地域). For example, the number of people going whale watching has grown an average of 15% annually over the last five years in Australia. This has contributed (に貢献する) almost \$300 million to its national economy (“Whale Watching,” 2009, para. 3). In fact, many countries such as Australia and New Zealand are against whaling because it deprives (奪い取る) them of this income. Moreover, Walton (2003, para. 5) points out (指摘する) that “countries risk losing visitors due to bad publicity (注目) over the issue. This would have a negative impact on its tourist industry, especially Iceland since 13% of its national revenue (歳入) is from tourism.” Although whaling provides money for some fisherman, whale watching provides more economic opportunities for communities.

Whaling countries like Iceland and Japan claim (主張する) that whale hunting is part of their tradition and eating whale meat is part of their culture. The Japan Whaling Association (JWA) claims that whaling started in the 10th century (Summers, 2011, para. 3). However, the history of whaling is actually not very long in these countries. For example, whale meat only became a popular food source after World War 2 in Japan because it was cheap and easily available. Moreover, many people are no longer attracted to whale meat because there are so many other food items available. The younger generation is especially not interested in even trying whale meat. For example, there was 4800 tons of unsold whale meat in 1995 (Takahara, 2011, para. 7). This new reality shows that traditional culture is not a valid (正当な) reason for continuing whale hunts.

In conclusion, it is more important to save whales than to protect the tradition of whaling. The methods used for killing whales are extremely cruel and causes them to suffer (苦しむ) a great deal. Furthermore, whale watching attracts tourists to local communities and brings in (もたらす) more money than whaling. Although whaling countries claim that whaling is part of their tradition, it is actually a fairly recent dating back to the late 1940s. Furthermore, few people eat whale meat these days and as a result most of it remains unsold. Whaling countries can no longer use “culture” as a reason to commit inhumane (非人間的な) acts against whales. Indeed, our humanity (人間性) is not measured (はかる) by how we treat (扱う) others, but how we treat animals. Now is the time to treat whales more humanly.

670 words

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