



MAKE YOUR MARK

ぞうとの約束

To
The retailing business dealing with ivory hanko

**Request : Please stop selling ivory hanko to help protect the future of elephants.
Annually more than 20,000 elephants are still being killed for their ivory**

Why we are concerned

Crisis of African elephants

There are annually 20-30,000 African Elephants which are killed for their ivory by poachers and as a result, the elephant population continues to see dangerous decline. According to a new census result for the African elephant population presented by IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) last September, the population in the African Continent declined by 111,000 elephants since 2006, and as of 2015, the population was found to be 415,000 elephants. As long as there is a worldwide demand for ivory, the decline of African elephants will accelerate so much so that there is a danger of the elephants becoming extinct in the near future.

The poaching crisis between 1970 – 1980 at its worst was subsided by the ivory international trade ban in 1989 mandated by the “Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), but in 2006 it was revived again.

Such a huge scale of elephant poaching and illegal transboundary trafficking of ivory will drive African elephants to the brink of extinction and cause serious damage to ecosystems which also sustain humans as well. It has been linked that such illegal activities would generate income for criminal terrorist groups so that international security would be jeopardized.

Responsibility of Japan

No one argues the fact that this current crisis was brought about primarily by China’s high demand for Ivory.

However, Japan was regarded as the leading consumer of ivory until in 2004 China had surpassed Japan. During the decade of 1980’s while Japan became the leading importing country mainly for producing hanko (names stamps), the number of elephants in the wild dropped by 50% just in one decade. Now, in this 1-2 year period, , Japan has resurrected as the country now holding the largest legal ivory market since China has now officially closed its domestic ivory market. Given the above reasons, Japan still has a special moral responsibility for how it should view its ivory market.

CITES resolution on closure of domestic ivory markets

Facing the crisis of elephants, the Conference of the Parties to CITES adopted a resolution recommending closure of domestic ivory markets which “contributes to poaching or illegal trade” (October 3, 2016). This is now called the “resolution on closure of domestic ivory markets”.

The government of Japan refuses to acknowledge any link between poaching of wild elephants and their legal domestic market which they believe is ‘strictly controlled.’

Tone of media after adoption of the resolution on closure of domestic ivory markets

Media in Japan have widely covered the story of ivory trade so that the public opinion has grown. The number of news articles regarding Japan’s ivory trade related to Japan amounts to 272 in 2016, 172 in 2017/ and 444 in total (researched by JTEF).

Most of the articles take a deep interest in and report about the international tide toward closure of the market without a critical tone.



News articles covered adoption of the resolution (Oct 3, 2016)

The adoption of the resolution and the possible future response by Japan has been discussed not only in news articles but also in 12 editorials during 2016 and 2017. All of them criticized the management of the ivory trade by Japan and emphasized the weight of the resolution.

The events in/outside Japan after adoption of the resolution and its impact to Japanese society

In a period of one and half years during October 2016 and February 2018, several important events have happened one after another.

- ① Continuous crackdowns of illegal ivory trades
- ② Acceleration of the closure of domestic ivory markets in major consuming countries
- ③ Ban of ivory sale by major retailing businesses in Japanese market

The media has linked these events to the policy of the Japanese government, and increased pressure noting a tone like “The Japanese ivory market may have to be closed regardless of the Government’s stance saying that its market is neither contributing to poaching nor illegal trade”.

① Continuous crackdowns of illegal ivory trading

In Japan, until 2000s law enforcement authorities had concentrated on illegal imports but they then began cracking down on domestic illegal trading, where illegal activities were openly rampant.. Particularly in 2016 5 cases and in 2017, 2 cases where brought in to stop illegal trading. Furthermore, a Chinese sailor who attempted to export ivory was arrested in 2017, a Chinese buyer, and a Japanese ivory manufacturer who is the member of “Tokyo Ivory Arts and Crafts Cooperative Association” were subsequently arrested for conspiracy of smuggling ivory.

Those crackdowns has left clear impression to Japanese society that illegal ivory trade is actually on-going although the government claims Japanese markets are not the target of closure because it is strictly controlled.

表 刑事事件となった象牙の違法取引事例 2000-2018

・このリストは、2018年2月22日時点でJIEPによって把握されている検察官送致事例をあげたものであり、警察による摘発事例のすべてを必ずしも網羅するものではない。
 ＊括弧内の数字は発覚年、同部連発票は摘発した警察の管轄地を示す。

事件	概要
事件1 (2000)	分割牙500 kgの神戸港への密輸入(埼玉)
事件2 (2005)	象牙印材 1,700本の那覇空港への密輸入(沖縄)
事件3 (2007)	2.4トンの分割牙および0.4トンの象牙印材の大阪港への密輸入(大阪)
事件4 (2007)	16個(計2.4kg)の分割牙(ベリヤード・キュー部品の製造用に加工したものの)の関西国際空港への密輸入(大阪)
事件5 (2007)	分割牙(ベリヤード・キュー部品の製造用に加工したもの)計2kgの成田国際空港への、および同分割牙計2.2kgの東京港への密輸入(群馬)
事件6 (2011)	58本の無登録全形象牙の譲受け・譲渡(東京)
事件7 (2011)	1本の無登録全形象牙の譲受け・譲渡(東京)
事件8 (2011)	2本の無登録全形象牙の譲受けおよび虚偽登録(香川)
事件9 (2013)	2本の無登録全形象牙の譲受け・譲渡(千葉)
事件10 (2014)	1本の無登録全形象牙の譲受け・譲渡(東京)
事件11 (2016)	2本の無登録全形象牙の広告(大阪)
事件12(2016)	1本の無登録全形象牙の譲受け・譲渡(東京)
事件13(2016)	1本の無登録全形象牙の譲受け・譲渡(神奈川)
事件14 (2016)	2本の無登録全形象牙の譲受け・譲渡(東京)
事件15 (2016)	5本の無登録全形象牙の譲受け・譲渡(静岡)
事件16 (2017)	18本の無登録全形象牙の譲受け・譲渡(東京)
事件17 (2017)	9本の無登録全形象牙の引取り・引渡し(東京)
事件18 (2017)	象牙の印材605本の密輸出(東京)
事件19 (2018)	1本の無登録全形象牙の譲受け・譲渡(京都)

② Acceleration of closure of domestic ivory markets in major consuming countries

In September of 2015, both the US and China agreed even before the adoption of the CITES resolution to close their domestic markets for Ivory. The US

implemented the Federal law and regulation for the closure in June 2016. China closed its market at the end of December 2017. HK adopted step by step regulations for closing its market by the end of 2021. The UK is expected to adopt the regulation for closure near future. The EU is developing the discussion toward closure. Now, Japan is the only country which is taking no meaningful action and turns its back to the resolution & closure of its domestic ivory market.

③ Ban of ivory sales by major retailing business in the Japanese market

In July 2017 Rakuten banned ivory sales on its online market place including Rakuten-ichiba with one month of suspension. Subsequently, shopping-mall giant, Aeon announced it will ban ivory sales by March 2020. It explained the reason as consideration of conservation of biodiversity and the concept of sustainability adopted by Tokyo Olympic/Paralympic.



Articles on Asahi (left) in Aug.3 and Tokyo on Sep. 1(right) in 2017

It is increasingly anticipated that other companies would follow those leading companies which made these decisions based on international trends and recognition of their social responsibility.

The writing is on the wall that the Japanese government would eventually take the course of closure of domestic ivory market in the near future, however many more African elephants will be killed while it will certainly still take time to develop necessary laws and regulations until then..

In fact, the regulatory failures within the Government of Japan’s ivory control system enable illegal ivory to be laundered into the market, make it impossible for the private sector to detect or prevent such illegal ivory from being sold online or in their shops. Thus, private sectors are seriously expected to go in advance of the government to make the decision of banning sale of ivory. Particularly the overwhelming major ivory products in Japan are hanko, even though ivory is not a traditional/cultural material for producing hanko. Due to there being a huge range of materials for producing hanko retailers can continue selling their products without selling Ivory.



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