

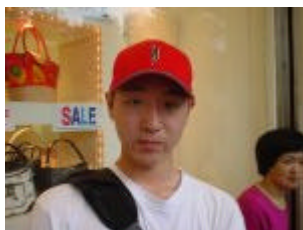
# japantoday

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Japan Today's Takanori Kobayashi dropped into Shibuya to ask:

## Do you think that alcoholic drinks and cigarettes are too easily obtainable in Japan?

Twenty is the legal age in Japan for smoking and drinking alcohol, but in reality, teenagers can easily get them almost everywhere. Vending machines for alcoholic drinks and cigarettes are found on every street corner. Furthermore, you can buy alcohol and cigarettes at convenience stores without showing any kind of identification cards.



"I don't think underage drinking is a problem. However, I don't think we should smoke until we're over 20 since smoking is harmful for younger people."  
- Toshio Koizumi, 16



"The government should more strictly control the sale of alcohol and tobacco because I can't see any good effect of underage drinking and smoking on young people's morals. Severely punishing teen offenders may discourage others from buying alcohol."  
- Osamu Miyata, 45



"I don't know if underage drinking and smoking is really a serious issue in urban areas. In my neighborhood, which is a bit far from the center of Tokyo, there is no trouble over it. However, I think in the future there will have to be stricter discipline over teenage drinking and smoking."  
- Yasunao Hashimoto, 45



"I don't want to see any regulations because I have been smoking and drinking since I was a teenager. My friends actually got me started on drink and tobacco. I had no trouble at all buying them from vending machines and even convenience stores. Shop assistants never asked me once if I was under age. I can see the point of view of those who wish to check the age of the person buying alcohol or cigarettes but it will definitely bother adults as well."  
- Asuka Okamoto, 20



"Removing all alcohol and cigarette vending machines may cost a lot and make them more expensive. Penalties for teenagers violating the law should be stricter."  
- Nobuaki Sakuda, 22

"In most Japanese universities, especially welcome parties at sporting clubs, senior students tend to force their juniors to drink alcohol even though most of these junior students are still teenagers. These seniors even make the juniors



go to liquor shops to buy alcohol. Perhaps the law should be stricter but then people over 20 years old should show a bit more sense."  
- Kohji Tamura, 25



"It should be mandatory to show an ID card before you buy alcohol and tobacco. Though some of my friends enjoy drinking and smoking, I think teens are too young to do so."  
- Nobuto Kanamaru, 18



"I know that both drinking and smoking by teenagers is frowned upon as being harmful. You can implement tougher measures to stop underage drinking and smoking but I don't think teens will stop buying them whatever laws are introduced. Rather than that, local communities consisting of parents, friends, neighbors and so on should encourage their young people not to smoke or drink."  
- Mina Ichimaru, 17

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