Death, assisted suicide, and euthanasia (Dead or Alive)

Vocabulary

near-death experience
out-of-body experience
“go into the light”
flatline
afterlife
reincarnation
soul
“beyond the grave”
euthanasia / euthanize
assisted suicide
organ donation
organ harvesting

Discussion questions

• When is a person “dead”? 
• What happens when we die? Do you believe in “life after death”?
• What do you think is happening when a person has a “near-death experience”?
• What are your thoughts about being an organ donor or an organ recipient?
• You have been given the responsibility of deciding when to assist a close relative to end his or her life (assume parent or spouse, painful and terminal illness, zero chance of recovery). How will you make that decision?
• If you and your family and lawyer were preparing YOUR advance directive, what would your wishes be? Be specific.
• If patients are unable to make their own decisions, who should decide on when they should be taken off life support?
• What do you know about the differences in the doctor-patient relationship in Japan and in other countries? (There are big differences.)
• If you could, would you choose to know when you would die? What about the timing: now, several years before, one week before, one day before, several hours before?
• If you contracted a terminal illness, would you opt to be frozen so that you could be brought back to life when a cure was discovered?
• If you were offered eternal life and/or eternal youth, would you accept the options?
• Under what conditions would you want to clone yourself? A loved one? A pet?
• In your next life, what life form (plant, fish, animal, human) would you prefer / not prefer? Why?
• Would you prefer to be male or female in your next life? Why?
• Why is suicide illegal? Should it be?
• What are some ideas that could help reduce the number of suicides?
• Fewer and fewer countries allow capital punishment. Japan and the U.S. are almost alone among developed countries to do so. What is your position on capital punishment?
• Ghost stories?

Your research, summary, analysis, opinions and thoughts

Additional resources:
• Frankenstein myth http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/フランケンシュタイン
• Collection of articles/essays the on the right to die: https://medium.com/browse/888942968f58
• NYT: Beyond “do no harm”: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/05/opinion/on-assisted-suicide-going-beyond-do-no-harm.html?emc=edit_th_20161105&nl=todaysheadlines&nlid=67183385&_r=0
• Suicide tourism: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suicide_tourism