

2024 Listening Test

第 1 部(Dai ichi bu)

(Listening dialog between two international exchange students.)

- Jennifer: Michael! Hold up!
- Michael: Oh, hi Jennifer. How's it going?
- Jennifer: Can't complain. How're things with you?
- Michael: All right. I just finished my class. I am so happy the weekend is here.
- Jennifer: I am exhausted. I've been so busy this week.
- Michael: Me, too! I had a lot of homework I had to finish. What are you doing tonight?
- Jennifer: Tonight? Tammy and I are going to go to Sapporo Factory Mall for dinner and a movie.
- Michael: Dinner and a movie? Sounds fun. What's playing?
- Jennifer: We want to see the new live-action Little Mermaid movie.
- Michael: Really? Haven't you seen the Disney animated one already?
- Jennifer: Yes, but I really love the story and the music. The actress is supposed to have a great voice, too. Would you like to come?
- Michael: To the Little Mermaid? No, thank you.
- Jennifer: Suit yourself. How about dinner?
- Michael: Sure! I'd love to. Are you going directly to Sapporo Factory Mall from the university?
- Jennifer: No, we are going to our dormitory first to get ready. Why don't we meet in front of Sapporo Factory at 5:30 pm.? We can decide on the restaurant then.
- Michael: That should work. I think I'll do some shopping while you guys go to the movie. I want to buy a new tent and sleeping bag. What do you think about going to *karaoke* after the movie?
- Jennifer: That's a great idea! Ok, see you at 5:30 in front of Sapporo Factory.
- Michael: Ok. Say hello to Tammy for me.

(260 words)

(3 seconds later)

- Question No. 1 Where are Jennifer and Michael? (10 seconds later)
- Question No. 2 How was Michael's week? (10 seconds later)
- Question No. 3 What movie are Jennifer and Tammy going to see? (10 seconds later)
- Question No. 4 What will Michael do while his friends are watching the movie? (10 seconds later)
- Question No. 5 What are they going to do at 5:30?

第2部 (Dai ni bu)

Single-use plastic products, such as plastic bags, do not easily disappear once they are thrown away in the sea or rivers. This can cause serious pollution. To reduce this plastic waste, from 2020, the government made all shops charge customers a fee for plastic bags.

Now, three years later, we can see the results of this plan. According to the Japan Chain Stores Association, the percentage of shoppers who did not take a plastic bag at the checkout at supermarkets in Japan reached 80% in 2021, up from 57% in 2019. A survey conducted by the economic research center, JCER, found that plastic bags given out in Japan in 2019 totaled about 197 tons, and this was reduced by almost half to 100 tons in 2021.

However, Japan still produces the world's second-largest amount of plastic waste per person, just after the United States. The amount of plastic waste produced in the country came to 8.24 million tons in 2021. Plastic bags were only 1.2% of this total. One expert said that "The change to fees has been just the first step toward reducing plastic waste. Further efforts are needed."

An international organization has even said that unless effective measures are taken, the amount of plastic waste produced worldwide in 2060 will reach 1 billion tons, about three times more than in 2019.

One city that has taken stronger actions than the national government is Kameoka, in Kyoto Prefecture. In January 2021 Kameoka became the first town in the country to stop all the businesses in the city from providing shoppers with plastic bags.

The national government has also proposed some stronger actions for reducing plastic waste. In April 2022, the government made all businesses reduce waste from 12 single-use plastic products, including spoons, forks, and hotel goods such as combs, razors, and shampoo bottles. Second, the government wants businesses to use plastics that cause less damage to the environment.

Hiroyuki Ueda, a senior researcher at Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting Co., an expert in the plastic waste problem said, "These government actions in Japan still only go halfway. The public and private sectors must join hands to work toward further waste reduction and greater recycling."

(365 words)

Adapted from the Japan News: General News. 4th July 2023. より抜粋, 改変