Plastic Bags

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English 2A

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July 20, 2019

When we buy some food or goods at shops, we usually receive plastic bags. We don’t need to bring an eco-bag and some people use plastic bags as trash bags. These days, the Ministry of the Environment is taxing the use of the plastic bags. The number of countries which charge for or ban plastic bags has been increasing; Indonesia, for example, is charging for plastic bags and France is prohibiting giving plastic bags to customers (“Plastic bags”, n.d.). However, why has this movement spread all over the world?

First, plastic bags have had a bad influence on animals in the ocean. Some people don’t follow the rules of plastic garbage disposal and throw them away anywhere they like, such as on roads (Sendai City, n.d.). When there is a rainstorm coming, plastic garbage will be washed away and finally reach the ocean. Plastic does not easily decompose, so it drifts in the sea. Sea animals like fish and birds sometimes die because they choke on plastic garbage.

Second is the wasting of natural resources. Plastic bags are made from petroleum and about 30 billion bags were used in Japan for a year. It is equivalent to about 300 plastic bags used per citizen per year. To make this number of plastic bags, 600 thousand kiloliters of petroleum are required (Tsai, n.d.). If we reduce or stop using plastic bags, we can save much petroleum.

Third, it is costly for the company side. The cost of a plastic bag is about 0.5 to 1 yen. It looks cheap but the cost will be high if many customers shop. Once the shop introduces charges for plastic bags, consumers will have to bear the full cost of it. As a result, it helps to keep the companies’ operating costs down (“Payment”, 2018).

As you can see, there are some disadvantages of shops providing free plastic bags: pollution of the environment, wasteful use of natural resources and the entire cost of plastic bags falling on companies. On the other hand, some people disagree with charging for the plastic bags. It may cause an increase in number of shoplifters due to shop assistants unable to judge the goods that the customers were holding already paid or not (Yamatani & Shinazawa, 2009). Furthermore, plastic bags made from petroleum have an effect on reduction of fuel at waste disposal facility and it will also cause serious damage to companies which make plastic bags. I think companies should induce charging for the plastic bags because the merits of charging for plastic bags outweigh its demerits (“Time”, 2018). I hope most people will use reusable shopping bag instead of plastic bags in the near future.

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