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Can we create a waste-free society? It would seem like an ideal goal to realize, since mass production has forced a shift in our way of living. Clothes have become 'fast fashion,' worn once and then thrown away like a finished bag of potato chips. Sure, most people will recycle their cans and bottles, but that doesn't alter the fact that we are still throwing away pounds of waste every day.

That will never change in a world where convenience is appreciated over all else. Or will it? Kamikatsu, a small town in Tokushima Prefecture, had been working for years to reduce waste. However, when they learned about zero-waste philosophy, an idea popped into the residents' minds: to become the first zero-waste town in Japan. The town doesn't collect domestic waste; instead the residents bring their waste to the waste collection site. There, they sort it into 45 very specific and detailed categories. Although some common stuff cannot be recycled, Kamikatsu has been able to recycle more than 80% of its waste. Kamikatsu is also encouraging residents to reuse goods. An area of its waste collection site offers used stuff for free.

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Recycling and reusing, however, are not enough to keep our world from becoming swallowed up in waste. Kamikatsu also makes an effort to get people to brush up their understanding of the environment and make society as a whole think 'why?' Why are you buying or selling the product? Is it good for the environment? Will it become a favorite possession or will it be thrown away after one use? Whereas before some believed they had a sacred right to buy or produce whatever they desired, now they realize that their actions affect the world around them.

In recent years, Kamikatsu built a complex facility called the Zero Waste Center. A hotel located in the grounds of this facility is run on the understanding that creating a waste-free society applies not only to individuals, but also to businesses. For example, instead of offering an individual soap bar to each guest, it encourages them to cut off the amount of soap they need at the front desk. Fitting into a new strategy is not easy, but through its actions, Kamikatsu is leading the nation in finding ways to gain the prize of a truly waste-free society.

解答欄

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