



Waste is a problem all over the world! Take a look at these pictures of various kinds of waste. What do you think?

What does it mean to separate waste?



In the United States each year, some 113 billion beverage cups, 39 billion knives and forks and 29 billion tableware items (such as plates) are thrown away. More than half of these are made of plastic.



Electric appliances that are disposed of contain precious metals and potentially harmful substances.



Massive amounts of waste from the tearing down of buildings and construction sites are carted to waste disposal sites.



Around the world people are working hard to try to reduce waste.



In China, there are cities that have banned plastic packaging.

In India, one state even banned the use of plastic bags.



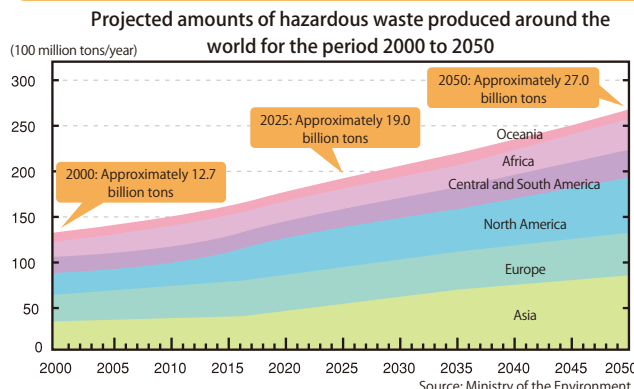
<China>

In China, there are many disposable goods that are used a few times and then thrown away. These are things such as plastic cups, containers, combs toothbrushes, ball pens and chopsticks. Each year billions of these are used and become waste. China is the world's biggest market for disposable products. But recently a number of efforts to try to get people to stop using disposable goods have started. One result has been to limit the use of plastic containers in many cities. Use of eco-bags and more environmental containers are also being encouraged.

<India>

India's state of Goa in 2000 launched a campaign banning the use of plastic bags. The effort was designed to make local people more aware that plastic bags do not breakdown easily and to reduce the amount of plastic waste generated by tourists. The initiative involved the tourist bureau calling on hotels, restaurants and tour companies to help, as well as setting up special waste bins. This campaign helped to change the level of awareness among people in Goa and recently the state has even passed a new law banning the use of thin plastic bags.

Harmful waste materials are on the rise in countries around Asia. Why do you suppose this is?



Today waste is increasing faster in Asia than anywhere else in the world. Growth in the amount of waste generated in populous countries like China, with nearly 1.3 billion people, and India, with around 1 billion people, is creating a surge in waste created and this is forecast to continue into the future. The reason for this is the incredible increase in industrial development. And because of the many harmful substances in industrial waste this poses problems moving into the future.



Waste can be broadly classified as the waste that stems from industry and pollutes the environment, and everything else, which can be called household or general waste. What is the situation with the household or general waste that we generate during our activities and lives each year?

So household waste produced in Japan has been decreasing a little each year since 2001. When did Japan start sorting and separating its waste?



How much waste is being produced in Japan every year?

Waste that comes from industry  
Approximately 422 million tons

Household waste  
Approximately 52.04 million tons



Data shows that of general waste, some 33.16 million tons, or 64%, came from households, while waste from factories and society at large is around 15.82 million tons.



In Japan measures like that described below are also taking place.



Corporations are also coming up with creative ways of cutting waste.

Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture

In February 1999, the city of Nagoya declared a "waste state of emergency." Through a variety of steps, the city has been able to reduce its waste by nearly 100,000 tons in one year. Also, the city began a system of separating and sorting waste in August of 2000 to further cut waste. The system divides waste into 16 different types--such as into paper, plastic and recyclables. In the three months following its introduction the city had nearly 20,000 inquiries about the new system, but today it has helped Nagoya continue being able to reduce waste levels.

Ecological packaging

Transport companies are also devising ways to reduce waste. Nippon Express, a logistics and transport service, has developed and uses reusable containers for moving and transport. These boxes can be used again and again instead of the numerous cardboard boxes typically used in moving which are then thrown away. Reusable containers save the trees that would be used to make cardboard boxes. This makes for more environmental moving.



Let's think about what we can do every day to reduce waste.

For more about issues related to water, please see p. 9. For more about these issues as they relate to our way of life, please see p. 11.