

Disappearing People



● Warm-up Questions

1. If you had to disappear, where would you go?

2. Why do people want to disappear?

3. How does the family feel when someone in the family disappears?

4. What gives people the most stress in society?

VOCABULARY

● WRITE THE CORRECT WORD IN THE SENTENCES BELOW

disappear, without a trace, evaporated, estimated, vanish, violent, run a business, burst, dumpling, market crashed, ashamed, whispered, forbidden, left behind

1. I like boiled _____s more than fried _____s.
2. I can't find my pen anywhere. It _____.
3. When the _____, many people felt lost and that they had no future.
4. Don't blow up the balloon too much, or else it will _____.
5. Once, I splashed water onto an old lady, and I still feel _____ about it.

Disappeared People

All over the world, some people decide to disappear from their own lives without a trace. They are called "*jouhatsu*" which means "evaporated people". Since the mid-1990s, it's estimated that about 100,000 Japanese men and women vanish every year.

"I didn't want to see or meet people anymore. So, I took a small suitcase and disappeared," says Kishima (42). "I just wanted to escape from my life."

He says that back in his small hometown, everybody knew him because his family ran a successful business. Kishima's father expected him to continue running the business. This gave him much stress, so he left the town forever and told no one where he was going.

The word *jouhatsu* started being used in the 1960s. At that time, it was used by people in unhappy or violent marriages. During the 1990s, when the Bubble economy burst, there was an increase in *jouhatsu*.

In the 1980s, Shizuma and Kotoe lived in Saitama, surrounded by *sakura* trees. They were young, married, owned their home, and had their first child. They got a loan and started a dumpling restaurant. Life was looking good.

Then the market crashed, and the couple had a lot of debt. They couldn't pay back the

loan, so they sold their home, packed their bags, and disappeared.

Takuma (50) disappeared himself 10 years ago. He'd been cheating on his wife, but he felt most embarrassed about losing his job.

He felt too ashamed to tell his family. So he got up early every morning, put on a suit, and left for work. Then he'd drive to his old office building and sit in his car all day. "Sometimes I waited 19 hours," he said.

Takuma did this for one week, and then disappeared. 'I want my old life back. But I don't want my family to see me like this. Look at me. I look like nothing. I am nothing.'

The city of Sanya isn't on any map. It's a part of Tokyo, a city that is whispered about by people like Takuma. The yakuza controls this area. The disappeared live in small, dirty hotel rooms, usually without internet or private toilets. Like a jail, talking in most hotels is forbidden after 6 p.m.

Life is hard in Sanya. It's also hard for family members left behind. One mother lost her son one day. "He got fired from his job. The next day, he was gone. I drove to his home, and waited for 2 days, but he never came back." The police won't help her because the son did not do a crime. He vanished 17 years ago.

PREPOSITION PRACTICE

Fill in the blanks using: with, about, up, to, from, in, for, on, of, without, by

Write a proper preposition for each sentence. Sometimes, there is more than one answer.

1. It must be lonely _____ some people to live _____ their families.
2. Running away _____ problems is a bad way to deal _____ problems.
3. I get stress _____ being _____ debt.
4. The mom looked everywhere _____ her son. _____ the end, she gave _____.
5. The son disappeared _____ a trace.
6. His family hasn't spoken _____ him _____ years.
7. People pay money _____ movers, and they leave their homes _____ secret.
8. I wonder if some of these disappeared people are addicted _____ drugs.
9. It's not good to depend _____ others _____ help all _____ the time.
10. If I was abandoned _____ my parents, I'd feel sad _____ that forever.

WRITING SENTENCES

1. anymore: _____

2. packed: _____

3. nothing: _____

4. control: _____

5. expect: _____

6. crime: _____
