

予習課題 次の英文を読み、内容を理解しなさい。

The marathon is both an established elite track-and-field event and a mass phenomenon. For years, long-distance runners who aspired to run a marathon were considered somewhat wacky. The event has a mystique around it. As Czech runner Emil Zatopek observed: “If you want to win something, run the 100 meters. If you want to experience something, run the marathon.”

At 26 miles 385 yards, the marathon is the only elite track event not now contested in metric measures. The extra yardage—almost a lap of the stadium track—was added at the London 1908 Olympic to bring the finishing line in front of Queen Alexandra’s royal box. That race was won by the USA’s John Hayes, a Bloomingdale’s employee in New York. Italian Dorando Pietri, in a state of collapse, had finished first but was helped over the finishing line by the British race organizer and so disqualified. The resulting furore popularized the event and both Hayes and Pietri turns professional and earned big money around the world. Subsequent Olympic champions, men and women, have come from every continent, but Ethiopian and Kenyan men and women have dominated the professional circuit in the 21st century

New York stages the world’s largest marathon, which began in 1970 with just 127 runners. For the 2010 event, there were 100,000 applicants, and applications for 2011 opened the day after the race. English Olympian and businessman Chris Brasher was inspired by the New York Marathon as “a vision of the human race happy and united, willing their fellow human beings to a pointless but wonderful victory over mental doubts and bodily frailty”. He went on to establish the London Marathon in 1981, and saw the event as a “suburban Everest”.

Five marathons now dominate the competitive calendar: New York, London, Boston, Berlin and Chicago. Thousands run these races for a cause, or in memory of a close relative. London participants raised £47 million for charity in 2009; New York, \$24 million. Millions of people turn out on the streets of these cities, to cheer on people like themselves who are aspiring to do what for so long was seen as undoable.

(注) wacky : 風変わりな、mystique : 神秘的雰囲気、26 miles 385 yards = 42.195 km、extra yardage : 余分なヤード数、Queen Alexandra : アレクサンドラ王妃 (1844–1925) 英国王 Edward 7 世の妃、Bloomingdale’s : 米国有数の百貨店、race organizer : 競技役員、furore : 騒動、mental doubts : 精神的困難、