

留学生の住まい ハンドブック

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS HOUSING HANDBOOK



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INTRODUCTION

Ton Pei, an international student, is starting his new life in Japan. Ton will be 20 years old this year. Because he has no acquaintances in Japan, everything is brand-new for him. Ton does not speak Japanese very well.

First, he has to find a place to live. After that, he will have to overcome a variety of problems in his adjustment to life in Japan.

In this guidebook, we will introduce some of the problems Ton faces as a foreign student in Japan and how he resolves them. First, we will discuss problems he has in finding a place to live, followed by problems he faces while living there, and finally problems that occur when moving out.

The guidebook is divided into three sections. In each section, whenever Ton faces a problem, he will be helped by his “knight in shining armor,” *Michinoku Kamen*, who will provide him with accurate and suitable advice.

In the following pages, we will see how Ton resolves the various problems he encounters in his search for a place to live, in his life in Sendai and when he moves out of his apartment.

CHARACTERS

● Ton Pei (20) male first-year student



The main character in this handbook, Ton Pei, is a student at a university in the Tohoku area. He is a very sociable person with many friends. However, he tends to be somewhat impulsive at times, which can get him into trouble. He is worried about living in Japan by himself for the first time.

● Michinoku Kamen



A native of Tohoku, this “white knight” rides in on the *Hayate* Bullet Train and leaves the same way. He advises Ton on living in Japan. No one has ever seen him without his mask.

— Ton's Friends —

● Sho Kei (20) Male

An international student, he is very neat and rooms with Gaku In.

● Gaku In (20) Male

Also an international student, he prefers to be around people.

● Hagee (20) Male

Very impulsive, he often causes problems for those around him but he is a likeable international student.

● Lily (20) Female

A kind and mature college student, she advises Ton on various matters.

She seems to have feelings for him.

● Fukushi Mari (22) Female

She is a very knowledgeable Japanese college student.

She is kind but a little bossy. She is a little jealous of Lily and Ton's relationship.



— Other Characters —

● Obachan (literally means “aunty” but is a term often used for middle-aged women who are neighbors or acquaintances)

A native of Osaka, she is a busybody who loves to talk. She is always concerned about Ton.

● Gas Company Employee

An employee of the M Gas Company

● Realtor

This realtor helps Ton find his apartment and gives him advice.

● Landlord

This person manages Ton's apartment





Part I

LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO LIVE

1. LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO LIVE

1. At the *fudosan-ya* (real-estate office)

Ton, who was looking for a place to live, dropped in at a real-estate office.

Ton: I'm looking for a place to live.

Realtor: Please come in. Are you a student?

Ton: That's right. This is the first time I've looked for an apartment.

Realtor: Is that so? What sort of place are you looking for?

Ton: Let me think, I'm...



Michinoku Kamen: When you go to a real estate office for the first time, have the realtor show you places that meet your requirements. Choose the best room among those shown to you. You can also search the Internet for an apartment without visiting the real estate office.



★Before you go to the real-estate office, be sure to check the following conditions regarding your room:

●Location

Check the commuting time to school, whether there are convenience stores or supermarkets nearby, and the distance to the nearest station

●Rent

Check the average rent for the area.¹

Look through free magazines with housing information that are available at convenience stores or visit real-estate offices and inquire.

Determine how much you will be able to spend on rent every month

In addition to rent, you must pay for utilities (e.g. water, electricity) as well.

●Size

The size of a room is expressed by the number of “tatami” (straw mats). One mat is expressed as *ichijo*.

The size of an average Japanese room is 6 mats.

**ichijo* (one mat) = approx.1.6528926 m²

●Room layout

The realtor will provide you with a room layout so you can see how the room is arranged. Terms such as “3 LDK” may be used.

| No. | No. of rooms | For example, 2DK would mean that there are two rooms and a dining room and kitchen. |
|-----|--------------|---|
| L | Living room | |
| D | Dining room | |
| K | Kitchen | |

¹ The cost of rent depends on supply and demand in the area at the time(market value)

The average size of rooms is as follows:

One room : between 16-20 m²

2DK : approx. 40 m²; two 6-mat rooms and 6-mat dining rm./kitchen

3DK : larger than 50 m² ; two 6-mat rooms, one 4.5-mat room and 6-mat dining rm./kitchen

3LDK : larger than 65 m²; † two 6-mat rooms, one 4.5 to 6-mat room, and 10-mat living/dining rm.

● **Types of residences**

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Apartment | Building made of wood ² 、light-gauge steel structure ³ , is not fireproof and is two stories or less. |
| Condominium | Building made of fireproof reinforced concrete ⁴ and three stories or higher |
| Boardinghouse | The landlord usually lives in and manages this house by renting out rooms; meals are sometimes included |

● **No. of persons living in apartment**

Decide on whether you want to live alone or share an apartment with someone.

***Check p. 28 for more information on “Sharing an Apartment”**

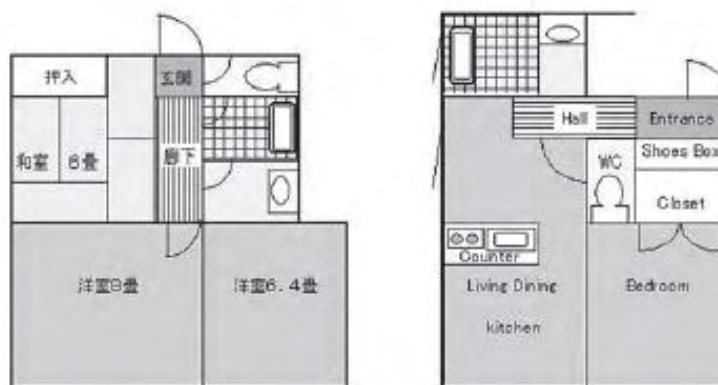
★ **When you visit the real-estate office**

Be sure that you have decided on your terms before you go.

Have the realtor show you rooms that meet your requirements.

The floor plan shows the layout of the apartment and size, giving you a good idea of what the room is like

<Example of room layout>



押入れ=closet; 和室 6 畳=6-mat Japanese-style room; 玄関=entranceway; 廊下=hallway;

洋室 8 畳=8-mat Western-style room; 洋室 6 . 4 畳=6.4-mat Western-style room;

2 面採光の南向き角住戸=good natural lighting, faces south, corner unit;

人気のカウンターキッチン=kitchen is installed with popular counter type furnishing

² Refers to a building whose pillars are made from wood

³ Refers to a building with a steel framework and has concrete panels attached.

The frame is made of reinforced steel and surrounded by concrete; it is durable and earthquake-proof.

⁴ Refers to a structure that will not collapse or burn for a long time in the event of a fire and where the main portion is able to withstand high temperatures

★Using the Internet to find a place to live

Recently, many people use the Internet to find a place to live rather than going to a real-estate office. Check out real-estate sites and look at rooms that meet your requirements. When you browse, insert the name of the area or city, housing information, apartments as key words.

For inquiries, you can telephone or email the real-estate offices.

★View the rooms directly

It is difficult to see what a room is like just from the layout so you should go directly to the room and see for yourself what it looks like. The realtor can show you the rooms you are interested in. Check for the following:

- Location of outlets
- Area and position for refrigerator and washing machine
- Direction in which room faces; amount of sunlight
- Distance to convenience stores and supermarkets
- Amount of storage space (furnishings, appliances)
- Neighborhood environment
- Confirm whether the diagram of the room matches the actual room.

★Realtor's fee

When you have decided on a room, you usually have to pay an amount equal to one month's rent as the realtor's fee. Please confirm the amount beforehand.

2.Social Network

Ton had a hard time finding a place to live so he decided to talk to his friend Lily.

Ton: I can't seem to find just the right room.

Lily: I'll introduce you to my *senpai* (upperclassman).

He's had experience looking for a place to live several times so he can probably give you good advice.



Michinoku Kamen: When looking for a room, it is important to obtain as much information as possible. Since there is a limit to how much you can do by yourself, it is a good idea to ask friends, *senpai* or acquaintances for advice. If you do not know anyone, ask the person-in-charge at your school's International Relations Section for assistance. It is helpful to use such social networks in looking for a place.



▼ Advice from an international student

- When looking for a room, the “information barrier” is more of a problem than the language barrier. Therefore, it is important to use social networks with friends and acquaintances to obtain information.

3. At the *Seikyo* (Student Cooperative)

Ton: I'm looking for a place to live...

***Seikyo* clerk:** Please have a seat. How much rent are you thinking of paying?

Ton: I was thinking of between 30,000 and 40,000 yen.

***Seikyo* clerk:** I see. Do you have any preferences for where to live?

Ton: I would like a place close to school.

***Seikyo* clerk:** All right. Please wait a moment...

Michinoku Kamen: You can look for a room through *Seikyo* (Student Cooperative [Co-op]). You can visit the *Seikyo* on campus or you can check out the *Seikyo* site for room accommodations on the Internet.



★ Visiting the University *Seikyo* to find a place to live

1. Explain to the *Seikyo* staff the kind of place you want.
2. The *Seikyo* staff will call the real-estate office.
3. The *Seikyo* staff or realtor will take you to places you are interested in and show you the rooms.
4. If you decide to take a room, contact the realtor and sign a contract.
5. The realtor's fee will be paid to either *Seikyo* or the realtor.

★ *Seikyo* website for finding room accommodations

You can access the *Seikyo* home page for each university.

e.g.) Miyagi Prefecture

● Tohoku University : <http://www.coop.org.tohoku.ac.jp/living/>

● Miyagi University of Education : <http://www.miyakyo.u-coop.or.jp/insurance/apart.html>

2. Lease Agreement and Translation Service

Ton was finally able to find a place that he liked and he is about to sign his apartment lease with the realtor.

Ton: I have decided to take this room.

Realtor: All right. I will be sending you the lease agreement so please sign it later.

—Several days later, Ton visits the real-estate office again—

Realtor: Have you carefully read the lease agreement?

Ton: I'm sorry but I wasn't able to understand the contents very well.

Realtor: It's true that there are a lot of details in the lease.

Shall we read it through together?



Michinoku Kamen: When you actually decide to take an apartment, the lease agreement is often written only in Japanese. Sometimes misunderstandings occur because of the language barrier. There are some realtors who refuse to rent rooms to international students when they cannot communicate well in Japanese. If your Japanese is poor, you should bring along a Japanese friend as translator. The following are what you need when renting a room.



★Lease agreement for room rental

When you rent a room, this agreement is between the lessor (owner) and lessee (tenant). Problems that occur while residing on the premises or when leaving the premises are often related to violations⁵ of the agreement so be sure you read and understand the contents thoroughly

However, because there are many specialized terms⁶ in the agreement, your Japanese ability must be very good to understand all of it. Here we explain what is written in your contract to help you understand it.

★What is written in the agreement

●Intended purpose of room

The lessee may not use the premises for a purpose other than as a place to reside.

No person other than the person who signed the contract is allowed to reside on the premises.

If you want to share a room with a friend, you must let the realtor know beforehand.

●Period of Lease and Extension

Most rooms have a two-year lease. If you want to stay longer, there may be an additional charge for the extended period. You must apply for an extension. However, in many cases, if you do nothing, your lease will automatically be extended.

⁵ Refers to breaking the terms of your agreement

⁶ Refers to legal or technical terms

● Cancellation of Lease

If you decide to move out before the lease is up, the method for settling your account is described.

If you do not let the realtor know beforehand, an extra charge may be added on.

*For further details, **check the section on “Advance Notice for Moving Out” on p. 32**

● *Shikikin* (Security Deposit)

This section explains the *shikikin*, or security deposit.

The *shikikin* is paid at the time you move into your apartment as security in case any damage is done to the room during your stay. Your security deposit will be refunded to you after you move out but repairs for any damages made during your stay will be deducted from your deposit, and in certain cases may not be returned to you. Therefore, when you first look for a place, check for any previous damages such as scratches or soiled spots⁷.

*For further details, **check the section on “*Shikikin* (Security Deposits)” on p. 11.**

● Prohibited Items

This section explains prohibited items. Generally you are not allowed to make changes to the room nor remove furniture that was originally in the room. You are also not allowed to have pets so please confirm such points with the realtor.

In addition, there may be sections on a guarantor or insurance in your lease agreement.

★ Explanation of important points in your lease agreement

The realtor must meet with you and explain the contents of the agreement with you. At this time, you should ask any questions you may have about the agreement.

Realtor: These are the most important items mentioned in the contract.

If you damage the room in any way, you are liable for the damages so please be careful.

Ton: I understand. Thank you very much.

● Miyagi Support Center for Foreign Nationals/tutor system

If you are uncertain of your ability to communicate in Japanese, each local government has an International Relations Office that provides counseling on various issues. (Ref. : Miyagi International Association (<http://www.h5.dion.ne.jp/~mia/index.html>) Also, universities provide a “tutor system” where Japanese students will help you at the time you sign your lease so please contact them for further information.

⁷ Refers to scratches, soiled areas or other types of damage that occurred before you moved into the apartment

★Landlords who do not rent apartments to foreign nationals

There are some landlords who refuse to rent apartments or condominiums to foreign nationals. There are various reasons for this such as problems with a foreign tenant in the past or because of the language barrier, and sometimes it is simple prejudice based on negative stories they have heard from someone. Although it may not be easy to resolve this problem, in order to improve the negative images held by such people, it is important to maintain good relations with the Japanese on a daily basis.

Some realtors will make a special effort to look for rooms that will accept foreign nationals as tenants since it would be very unpleasant to find a place that you like only to be turned down.

It might be a good idea to look for a realtor who is aware of such situations.

★Questions about your lease

●What documents are necessary when signing the lease ?

1. Lease agreement (from your realtor)
2. Insurance documents (designated by your realtor and landlord)
3. Documents on guarantor
4. Alien Registration Certificate
5. Student Identification

*Necessary documents differ from realtor to realtor so please check beforehand.

●Is sharing a room prohibited in Japan ?

Depending on the size of the rooms, it is possible to have a roommate. It becomes a problem when you do not inform the landlord. If you plan to share an apartment, all the tenants must sign a lease before moving in.

*For details, check the section on “Sharing an Apartment” on p. 28

●If you want to extend your stay, will there be a fee ?

It depends on the room but generally there is a fee. Please check with the realtor on the amount of the fee.

for your reference : Miyagi International Association <http://www.h5.dion.ne.jp/~mia/index.html>

■The following are some additional terms that are often used when signing a lease.

- *Kyoeiki hi* (common area charges) : charges made to tenants for operating and maintaining common areas such as hallways, outdoor lights for apartments and condominiums
- *Chitai/entai* (overdue payments) : rent and other payments that are not made by the due date
- *Shuzenhi* (repair expenses) : expenses to repair damaged items
- *Akewatashi* (vacating room) : returning room keys to the owner after you have vacated the premises
- *Kojo ryozoku* (public order and morality) : rules that need to be obeyed for people to live together harmoniously in society.

3. *Shikikin* (Security Deposit) and *Reikin* (Key Money)

Ton: What does this term *reikin* (key money) mean?

Realtor: This is a payment made to your landlord to express your appreciation and is an amount equal to about two months' rent.

Ton: Is that right? Two months' rent is a large amount of money! Moreover, I have to pay two months' rent as a security deposit, I can't accept this condition.

Realtor: In Japan, this is a customary practice.

Michinoku Kamen: In Ton's country, when a person wants to rent a room, all he has to pay is a small deposit and he can move in. In Japan, it is customary to pay an amount equal to one month's rent for the security deposit and one to two months' rent as key money. This custom of key money is difficult to understand so we will explain it here.



★Key money, security deposit and other customs

● *reikin* (key money)

Payment made to the landlord to express appreciation at the time you move in and is not refunded when you move out. Sometimes the *reikin* is paid together with the *shikikin*.

● *shikikin* (security deposit)

When you rent a room from a realtor, the security deposit acts as collateral in the event that your rent is overdue so that the realtor can pay the landlord. When you move out, charges for any damages to the room will be deducted from this deposit. If a lot of damage has been done to the room, you may not receive any refund at all but may be charged an additional fee to pay for repairs. Also, your security deposit may take a week or two to be returned to you. If you return to your country before that time, it may be difficult to give you your refund so be sure that you let your landlord and realtor know ahead of time when you are moving out so that you can discuss the method of payment for the refund.

● Guarantor (co-signer)

In Japan, it is common to have a co-signer when you rent an apartment.

The co-signer is responsible together with the tenant if there is an accident and damages must be paid. Therefore, it may be difficult to find someone to be a co-signer.

(If you cannot find such a person, you should ask the International Relations Office at your university for assistance.)

● Residential Insurance for International Students

This is a combination of the Residential Insurance system and Compensation Fund for Guarantors and is used in the event that an international student must pay compensation for damages or in the event that the student cannot pay his/her rent and the guarantor is requested to make payment.

■ How to apply

1. Obtain a payment ticket (*haraikomi toriatsukaihyo*) from the International Students Section at your university.
2. Pay the insurance premium at the post office using the payment ticket
3. Obtain a receipt (*moshikomi haraikomihyo ken juryosho*) from the post office for the payment.
4. Bring the receipt to the International Students Section.
5. Obtain the insurance certificate (*kanyushasho*) from the Section.

Ton: I see. It's a little expensive, but I will pay the fee.

Realtor: All right. That should be fine.

▼ Advice

- When you want to rent a room in Japan, you must be prepared to pay an amount equal to several months' rent as key money. Sometimes, there are apartments that do not require key money but the rent is often higher than at other places.
- It is strongly recommended that you enroll in the Residential Insurance for International Students so that you do not cause problems for your guarantor in case of an accident.
- Even if you are promised a refund for your security deposit, the amount you receive may be smaller than the amount you expected. In this case, you should ask the realtor to explain why the money was not refunded to you.



4. Utilities (gas, electricity, water) and other types of contracts

Ton was planning to pay for his gas bill for the month but realized he had received two bills. He saw that one of them listed his former address so he telephoned the gas company.

Ton: I received a gas bill for my previous address. Could you please check it out?

Gas company clerk: When you moved out of your former residence,
did you apply for suspension of gas service?

Ton: I was so busy that I forgot.

Gas company clerk: If you don't apply to suspend service, the gas line remains open.

Ton: I see. But I'm no longer living there. Do I still need to pay the bill?

Gas company clerk: Yes, you do. Regulations say that you have to contact us when you start or stop your gas service.

Michinoku Kamen: Ton forgot to contact the gas company when he moved out of his former apartment. Therefore, he continued to receive a bill for basic gas charges even after he moved out. This is why he has to pay for his present gas service as well as that of his former apartment. Therefore, it is very important to contact the gas company when you want to stop or start gas service.



For information on gas, electricity and water, we use the example for the city of Sendai. The method for applying for service differs from area to area so please contact the respective utilities in the area you live.

★Gas: Gas Bureau, City of Sendai

Ref.: Gas Bureau, City of Sendai home page: <http://www.gas.city.sendai.jp>

***For other cities or for propane gas in Sendai, contact the respective companies for information.**

◆How to apply for service: Telephone or the Internet Tell-free number: 0800-800-8978

◆Information you need to fill in: • Name • New Address
• Date for starting service
• Telephone number to contact on day you move in

◆Method of Payment:

• **Koza furikae (Account Transfer):** bring your passbook and *inkan* (seal) and fill in the transfer of payment form and submit your application to your bank or the gas company. Your gas payment will be automatically deducted from your account.

• **Nonyu tsuchisho (Notice by mail)**¹: bring notice and make your payment at the bank, convenience store or the gas company.

• **Credit card payment:** after your credit card company pays your bill, they will bill you for the payment



★Electricity: Tohoku Electric Power Company

Ref.: Tohoku Electric Power Company home page: <http://www.tohoku-epco.co.jp/>

◆ **Method of applying for service:** by telephone, the Internet or post card (application for start of electricity service *provided in apartments) Tell-free number:0120-175-266

◆ **Information you need to fill in**

- Name
- New address
- Date for starting service
- Requested ampere number¹

◆ **Method of Payment:**

- ***Koza furikae* (Account transfer)**: go to bank or electric company and bring your passbook, seal and application form filled in with the necessary information for account transfer.

- **Electric charge payment notice (by mail):** bring notice and make your payment at a designated bank or convenience store

- **Credit card payment:** after your credit card company pays your bill, they will bill you for the payment.

※Your payment is due within 50 days of the date after your meter reading. The 20th day is referred to as *soshukigenbi* (early payment date) and if you make your payment after this date, it is referred to as *chishuryokin* (late payment), and a 3% charge will be added on from the early payment amount.

★Water: Sendai City Waterworks Bureau

Ref.: Sendai City Waterworks Bureau home page: <http://www.suidou.city.sendai.jp/>

◆ **Method of applying for service:** by telephone, Internet or FAX (Application for start of water service)
Tell number:022-248-1111

◆ **Information you need to fill in:**

- Name
- New Address
- Date for starting service
(apply at least 5 days before service is to start)
- Telephone Number

◆ **Method of Payment:**

• ***Koza furikae* (Account transfer):** Bring your passbook, *inkan* (seal) and fill in the necessary information on the transfer of payment form and submit your application to your bank or the Waterworks Bureau. Processing will take a month to a month and a half.

- *Nonyu tsuchisho* (Notice by mail): bring notice and make payment at designated bank or the post office

※You can apply for *hikazei setai genmen* (Household Tax Exemption)¹ to receive a reduction in water charges. You can apply after receiving a *hikazei shomeisho* (Certificate of Tax Exemption) from your Ward Office and bringing it to the Waterworks Bureau.

※Some landlords charge a fixed amount for water. In this case, you will not need to contact the Waterworks Bureau. Confirm method of payment beforehand.

In the section on “Lifeline Sendai on the website for the Sendai International Relations Association, there is a lot a helpful information on living in Sendai (written in Japanese, English, Chinese and Korean)
<http://www.sira.or.jp>

★ **Cellular phone・Internet**

◆ **How to apply:** by telephone, going to the cell phone shops, Internet

◆ **What you will need** • *inkan* (seal)

• ID

• Utility bill or certificate of residence

(if your present address differs from the address on the bill)

◆ **Method of Payment:** It differs according to the company. Usually, payment is made by account transfer or a direct cash payment can be made at a bank or a convenience store.

Ton: *I see. When I pay my gas bill next month, I will pay the two bills together.*

Gas company clerk: *Thank you. Please do that.*

▼ **Advice from an international student**

• When you decide on an apartment, confirm whether it uses city gas or propane gas.

There are two types of gas, city gas or liquid propane(LP) gas. LP gas is more expensive than city gas.

Information from the Gas Bureau, City of Sendai

There are two types of gas: city gas and propane gas. Also, city gas differs from area to area.

Sendai's gas is referred to as type 13A. Please buy a gas stove that fits Sendai's city gas.

**Although he ran into a variety of problems,
Ton was finally able to find his own apartment.
His life in Japan is about to start.
Ton has decided to write about his life in Japan in a diary.**



Part II LIVING IN YOUR OWN PLACE

Let's take a peek at Ton's diary and see how he is adjusting to life in Japan

1. Japanese Customs for Moving In

March 30

**I' ve just completed moving in.
My new life in Japan starts today.
I' m filled with anticipation and anxiety.**



April 2

**Classes began today.
Classes in my major are difficult but I will do my best.
I have already made some friends.
I ate lunch with my friend Lily and we had fun.
While eating lunch, I learned a lot about Japanese customs from Lily.
She told me that we should introduce ourselves to our neighbors when we move in.
Lily told me that when she first moved into her apartment, she called on her neighbors and gave them a small towel as a gift.
I wonder if I should do this too.**



— **Advice from Michinoku Kamen** —

★ Customs regarding moving house

● Moving in

In Japan, it is customary to introduce yourselves to your neighbors when you move into a new home. This is referred to as *aisatsu mawari* (courtesy call). A small gift is usually given to your neighbor at this time.

● Who you should introduce yourself to

If you live in an apartment or condominium, you usually introduce yourself to the neighbors living on either side of you, the building superintendent, and sometimes the people living in the unit just above or below you.

If you are living in a building of single persons, you may not need to do this. Especially in the case of women, it might be safer not to introduce yourself as a single woman living alone.

● When to call on your neighbors

When you move into an apartment, you should visit your neighbors the same day or the day after but no longer than a week after you have moved in. When you are moving out, you should visit your neighbors two to three days before you leave. Small gifts include detergent, soap, cookies, and small towels. Your gift does not need to be expensive as the main purpose is to introduce yourself to your neighbors. For foreign students, a gift from your home country would be appreciated.

April 3

Today, I went to introduce myself to my landlord and neighbors.

Although the people on my floor were not at home, I wrote a short note and put it in their mailbox together with my gift. Although I was nervous at first, everyone was friendly so I was relieved. I realized that getting acquainted with your neighbors is very important to foster good relations.



2. Rules for Garbage Disposal

April 24

Yesterday was the day for garbage collection so I put out all the trash from my house. However, when I passed the collection site on my way to school, my trash bag had not been taken away. Why didn't the garbage collectors take my trash?

April 25

Today I ate lunch with my senpai at school.
I talked to her about my trash being left back at the garbage station.
My senpai told me that I needed to separate my trash into recyclable and non-recyclable items.
I didn't understand her explanation too well.
What should I do?



— Advice from Michinoku Kamen —

★Separate your trash correctly according to the rules of your community !

Each municipality has its own rules for separating trash. Please check the rules for your community.

【Plastic Trash】

Empty the contents of plastic containers and then rinse and wipe them with a cloth.

Items which should be put in the plastic-designated bags are marked with the symbol at left.



【Cans, glass containers, PET bottles, batteries】

Take covers off glass bottles, PET bottles and screw-on-type bottles. Rinse lightly and remove labels and flatten PET bottles. Used batteries should be put in a transparent plastic bag and placed in the designated containers. Used fluorescent lights should be put in their original containers and batteries and mercury thermometers should be placed in transparent bags and put out for collection in yellow recycling containers.

【Household Garbage】

Items other than recyclable items or bulk trash are considered “household garbage” and should be put in designated bags for collection.

※Sendai City Trash Reduction/ Recycling Information site: Wakeru Net: <http://www.gomi100.com/>

★Bring your trash to the garbage collection site on designated days and times for collection !

Garbage collection days differ according to the district and type of trash. Even if you correctly separate your garbage, if you put it out on the wrong day, it won't be collected. Please ask your landlord or neighbors for the correct collection days.

Also, be sure to put out your trash by the designated times or your bag will be left behind if the collectors have already taken away the garbage for that day. Although collection times differ from area to area, you should put out your trash by 8:00 a.m.

April 26

Today was plastic collection day so I put out my plastic garbage as Michinoku Kamen advised. On my way home from school, I checked the garbage collection site and saw that it had been collected.

I felt relieved. But I still don't understand all the minor details of putting out my garbage. If there were pamphlets in English, it would be easier to understand.



— Advice from Michinoku Kamen —

In areas where many foreigners live, pamphlets in foreign languages are available on how to dispose of garbage

★e.g. The City of Sendai distributes pamphlets in English, Chinese and Korean on how to separate your garbage.



~Please check your community's home page for information ! ~

May 1

Today I put out my household garbage and it was taken away by the garbage collectors. I think I finally understand how to dispose of my garbage. It's been almost a month since I arrived in Japan but I still have a lot to learn.

3. Pest Control

May 15

**Today I found a cockroach in my kitchen.
It moved very fast and looked disgusting.
I have to do something about getting rid of it.**



May 16

**Today I told my senpai about the cockroach.
She told me that if you find one cockroach, that means there are at least 10 more nearby.
My senpai recommended that I get an insecticide. I plan to use it right away.**



— **Advice from Michinoku Kamen** —

★ **Japan has high temperatures and high humidity so it is easy for insects to multiply.
You should clean your room often and keep it tidy. Please try to take the following actions.**

- **Don't leave food out; put any leftover food in a sealed plastic container.**
- **Air out your room often and keep humidity at an appropriate setting.**
- **Air out your drawers occasionally.**
- **Be sure to thoroughly clean areas where insects are likely to appear such as in the kitchen and other places where water is used.**

If these actions don't work, there are many pest-control products sold at stores so please use these.

May 17

**I went to buy the insecticide recommended by my senpai.
If I see a cockroach again, I will use it.
The best way to keep insects out of your room is to keep it clean.
Today, I will clean my whole apartment except for my kitchen.**

4. Humidity · Mildew Control

June 18

Recently, it has been raining a lot. It's raining today too.

In Japan, this season between spring and summer is called *tsuyu* (rainy season).

Since I go to school by bicycle every day, it's very inconvenient getting to school when it rains so frequently.

The inside of my room is humid too.



— **Advice from Michinoku Kamen** —

★ Be careful of high humidity

Japan is a country with high temperatures and humidity, making it an ideal environment for the growth of mildew. Because mildew is bad for your health, you should take the following steps to prevent it from occurring.

- Hang your clothes outdoors. If this is not possible, hang your clothes in the bathroom with the ventilator on so that the room does not become humid.
- When the weather is sunny, open your windows to let in fresh air. Air out your closets. Clean your room regularly and keep it tidy.
- The high humidity in the bathroom makes it an ideal place for mildew to form. After you take a bath, open the window and turn on the ventilator.
- Your drawers and shoe closet are also places where mildew easily forms.
Purchase moisture-removal products⁸ to prevent mildew.

June 19

Today I stopped by at the supermarket and bought *shikkezai* (moisture-removal products).

The weather was also fine today so I washed my clothes.

However, when I was about to use the moisture-removal product, I found black spots on one of the walls of my room.

It looks like some mildew has already started to form.

The rainy season is going to continue for awhile yet. I'm worried.

⁸ *Shikkezai* : this product is filled with an agent that prevents dampness

★When mildew forms・・・

Go to the supermarket or home improvement center and purchase mildew cleaner.

For mildew on towels, pour some of the cleaner on the towel and leave it on for awhile and then rinse. This is the most effective method for removal. You may use a toothbrush to scrub lightly but do not scrub too hard. After putting a piece of tissue on the material, pour some of the cleaner on so that the tissue is soaked and leave it for awhile.

The mildew cleaner is very strong so please be sure to wear gloves to prevent it from getting on your hands. You should turn on the ventilator for good air circulation.

Disinfecting walls and furniture with detergent or bleach is a good way of getting out mildew stains.

June 20

I bought mildew cleaner from the supermarket after school today.

It wasn't too hard to get rid of the mildew today but I will have to be more careful from now on as the rain season in Japan is very humid. It rained again today.

4. Breakdown in Equipment

July 19

**The weather has become very hot so it really feels like summer.
I tried to turn on the air conditioning but for some reason, it didn't work.
What should I do? I can't spend the whole summer without air conditioning.
I'm wondering if I should give up on the air conditioner and get a fan instead.**



— **Advice from Michinoku Kamen** —

★ **When a piece of equipment breaks down, contact your realtor first.**

If you contact a repair shop on your own, you will be held responsible for paying the cost of repair. In your contract, there is a section on who to contact in case something breaks down, so please read this section carefully and call the realtor or your landlord. For example, if your roof leaks, the landlord will probably have to pay for the repairs. If your air conditioner was installed by your landlord, then he will probably pay for the cost of repairs.

However, if the equipment is something that you have installed on your own, you are responsible for repairing it. Contact the store where you bought it or the manufacturer; if the warranty is still in effect, repairs will be free of charge.

July 30

As Michinoku Kamen advised, I called the real estate office first and they called the repair shop. I didn't have to pay for the repairs so I'm relieved. I'm glad I didn't buy an electric fan.

5. Noise Problems

August 5

It's 3 o'clock in the morning and I can hear loud laughter and stereo music from my neighbor's room. It sounds like they're having a party with a lot of people. Tomorrow morning I am going out with my friend Gaku In so I have to get to sleep early but it doesn't seem as though I will be able to. What should I do?



— **Advice from Michinoku Kamen** —

- In Japan, most wooden buildings or 2-story apartments have thin walls so sounds are easily heard in the hallways or next door or the floor below you so noise problems are common. If this happens, call your realtor and tell them “how often and what kind of noises you hear” so that they can contact the person making the noise and warn them to be careful. You should not talk directly to the person as this may cause problems. You might also try to use a *kairanban* (notice passed around to all the residents in a building) or put the information up on the bulletin board anonymously; this method will not have a negative effect on your relationship with the neighbor causing the problem.
- In case of noises made by pets, please check to see whether pets are allowed. If they are not allowed, contact the realtor and they will take the proper steps. Even if pets are allowed, discuss the situation with your realtor or landlord to resolve any problems.
- Generally, sounds such as from washing machines or musical instruments are acceptable until 10 p.m. Some apartments or condominiums have rules about this. Some actions you should avoid include opening your window and playing loud music, having friends over frequently and making loud noises, and opening and closing your door late at night.

August 10

**After I discussed the noise problem with my realtor, my neighbor has become quiet. I'm also going to try to be as quiet as possible.
Now that I can sleep soundly, I overslept today!**

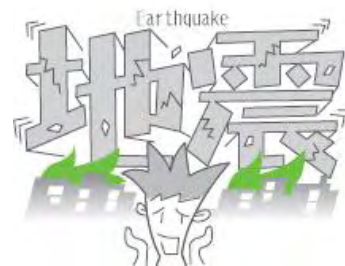
6. Earthquake Measures

Sept. 10

Last night, there was a large earthquake.

We rarely have earthquakes in my country so I was very surprised.

I had heard that Japan has a lot of earthquakes but when some books fell from my bookshelf, it frightened me.



Sept. 11

Today I had lunch with Lily and we talked about last night's earthquake.

According to her, yesterday's earthquake wasn't very strong.

A much larger earthquake than yesterday's is predicted for Miyagi Prefecture in the near future. It really shook a lot yesterday and I had never experienced such a strong earthquake. I'm very worried about future earthquakes.



— **Advice from Michinoku Kamen** —

★Preparing for Earthquakes

●Measures to take at home

◎Try not to leave furniture which may fall near where you sleep or spend much of your time.

* But if you have to do this because your apartment is small . . .

- Fix your furniture so that it can't move.
- Move it to an area that is not dangerous even if it falls. Arrange your things so that heavy items are on the bottom. Attach tip-resistant boards or newspapers under your furniture so that your furniture does not fall forward.

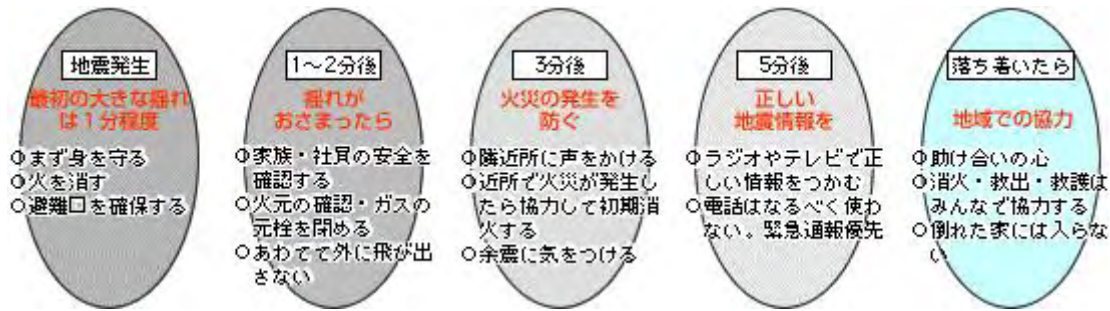
●What you should have with you in case of an earthquake

◎Something to protect your head (e.g. : helmet, *bosai zuki*n (fire-protection hood), cushion)

- ☐ sneakers
- ☐ thick cotton gloves
- ☐ flashlight
- ☐ portable radio
- ☐ extra batteries
- ☐ cash, valuables
- ☐ underwear, comfortable clothes
- ☐ medicine
- ☐ drinking water (3 liters per person per day is said to be essential)
- ☐ nonperishable food (food that will keep for a long time at room temperature, does not take up room and can be eaten as is)



● Action to take when an earthquake occurs



An earthquake occurs without any warning. Therefore, it is important to always be ready. Consider where you are when the earthquake occurs and what you should do; also plan what you should do after some time has passed.

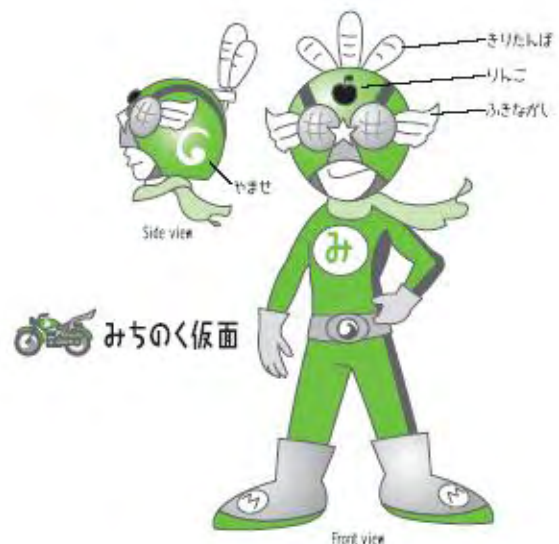
Sept. 15

Today is Saturday so there is no school. Therefore, I decided to take the earthquake preparation measures that I was taught.

In the event of an earthquake, I thought about what I needed to do and I feel a little less worried. When an earthquake occurs, if you have prepared for it beforehand, you can act more calmly without panicking.

Ref. : Sendai City Earthquake and Disaster Prevention Adviser Office

<http://www.city.sendai.jp/syoubou/bousai-ad/>



7. Sharing an Apartment

October 13

I went to my friend Gaku In' s apartment and met his friend Sho Kei there.

Gaku In got lonely living by himself so asked his friend to live with him.

It looks like it might be fun to live with someone but is it proper for two people to live together in a single room?

Because my rent would be reduced in half, I am interested in sharing my apartment with someone else.



— Advice from Michinoku Kamen —

● In Japan, sharing an apartment is not common, especially one-room apartments. The only exception would be in dormitories where rooms are sometimes shared. However, there is no strict rule prohibiting sharing a single room. If you are planning to share a room with someone, it is usually acceptable if you receive permission from the landlord beforehand.

● When you sign a contract to share a room with someone, it is permissible to have just one signature but you must clearly stipulate who else will be staying in the same room. If you do this, you will avoid future problems regarding this situation.

● If the person you are living with is not a family member, you will need an additional guarantor for any other person sharing your apartment.

In addition, other roommates will have to join the necessary insurance programs.

▼ To International Students

It is simple to have a friend live with you but if you don't tell your landlord beforehand, you might be evicted. To avoid such a situation, remember that "sharing an apartment is basically forbidden in Japan." If you still want to share a room, let your realtor know when you are first looking for a place to live.

▼ To the Landlord

Although having a roommate is rare in Japan, it is very common in many other countries. When you accept a foreigner as a tenant, please consider this point. If you do not allow apartment-sharing, please inform the prospective tenant as soon as possible.

8. Draining Water Pipes

Jan. 13

It continues to be cold. Today's temperature is below freezing. The surfaces are icy so it's dangerous to go outside. On such days, I want to stay home and soak in a hot bath.

Jan. 14

When I got up this morning to wash my face, the water wouldn't come out of the faucet. When I called my Japanese friend Fuku, he told me, "Maybe your water pipes are frozen. Didn't you drain your pipes?" I don't know what this means.



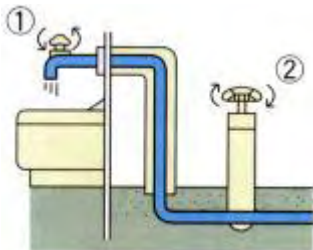
— Advice from **Michinoku Kamen** —

★ When the temperature drops below -4°C , water pipes freeze and sometimes burst. When such pipes burst, your apartment will be filled with water which may drip through to the floor below you. During winter, be sure to drain your water pipes so that they do not freeze.

● Draining Pipes Manually

Close all covers for the water pipes, water heater, bathtub, toilet and for the whole house.

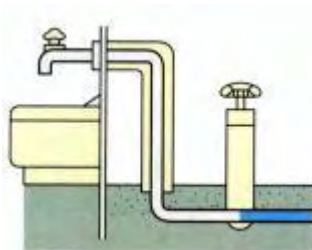
1 When you drain pipes



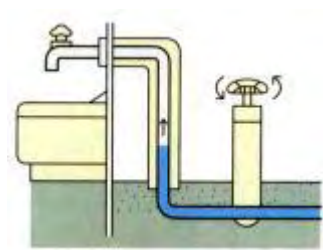
1. Turn the faucet until it is fully open
2. Firmly close the water drain valve

Leave the faucet open.

2 After you have drained pipes



3 When you want to use water



Completely open the water drain valve.

Generally, even after you have drained the toilet water, there will be enough water for one usage. Be sure not to leave it partially open because this might cause the water to freeze or leak.

● Draining Pipes Automatically

Instructions for draining pipes automatically are written on the wall of your kitchen or entranceway.

* Automatic Motorized Water Drainage

When the temperature in the pipes drops below 0.3°C , the temperature sensor will automatically drain the water from the pipes.

* Manual motorized water drainage

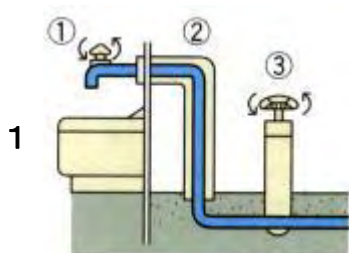
When you press the water drainage button, it will automatically start the operation. Check the water forecast frequently and when the temperature is likely to drop below freezing, press the button to drain the water.

• When you want to use the water again, press the button to start the water. The way to drain water may differ from apartment to apartment, so please ask your realtor for instructions.

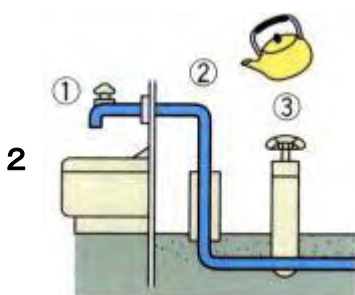
● Rules for when to drain water pipes

- When the temperature is expected to drop below -4°C
- When the day's highest temperature is expected to be below freezing and you are planning to go out
- When you are staying out overnight or returning home very late

What to do when the water pipes freeze



1. Open the faucet to the fullest.
2. Remove the thermal Styrofoam.
3. Open the water drain valve to the fullest.



Pour hot water a little at a time on the areas shown on the chart in the following order: 1•2•3 (however, do not use boiling water as the pipes may burst)

When you are thawing out your pipes, be sure to keep on doing it until the water comes out forcefully from the faucet. If you stop after only a little water comes out, the pipes might freeze again.

If this doesn't work, you should call a designated water heater repair company to do the job.

Ref. : WE B Morioka

<http://www.city.morioka.iwate.jp/12suido/soumu/suidou/kurasitosuidou/touketu.html>

March 5

I learned how to drain the water from pipes and am getting used to life in Tohoku. Next month I will enter my second year of university.

Since I will go to a different campus, I am thinking of moving to a new apartment.



Part III **Moving Out**

1. Advance Notice for Moving Out (Cancellation of Lease)

Ton: I am thinking of moving out of my apartment.

Fukushi: Did you let your landlord know?

Ton: I plan to tell him about a week before I move.

Fukushi: You can't do that! In your lease agreement, it explains how much advance notice you need to give before you move out.

Ton: Is advance notice that important?



Michinoku Kamen: Yes. The landlord needs time to find a new tenant.



So if you decide to move out, you should let your landlord know you are moving out by the deadline for advance notice⁹.

● Advance Notice (Cancellation of Lease Agreement)

The deadline for giving advance notice is written in your lease. Generally, it is one to two months before you are planning to move out. If you do not give sufficient advance notice, you may be required to pay rent for after you have moved out.

● Cancellation of lease before term is up

If you cancel your lease before the term of the agreement is up, you will be required to pay a penalty for breach of contract.¹⁰

▼ Experience of one international student

I had a two-year lease but moved out after 18 months to move into a dormitory. Because I had six months left in my agreement, I was required to pay 70,000 yen as a penalty charge.

Fukushi: Ton, by what date do you have to notify your landlord when you are moving out?

Ton : I don't know! I will check my lease immediately and speak to my landlord.

⁹Refers to the notice you give your landlord stating the day on which you plan to move out

¹⁰ A payment you must make when you have broken your contract.

2. When to Move Out

Hagee came over to Ton's apartment.

Ton: Hi, Hagee. What's wrong?

Hagee: The fact is, I have to move out of the foreign student dormitory that I am living in now. But I haven't found an apartment.
Could I stay with you for a few days?



Ton: I'm also moving out soon and my room is a mess but you are welcome to stay.

Hagee: I have no place to store my things so I am very worried.

Ton: Is that right? Let's look for someone who can hold your things for you.

Michinoku Kamen : Moving out takes time. It is important to think about the timing.
You should plan carefully when you plan to move to another place.

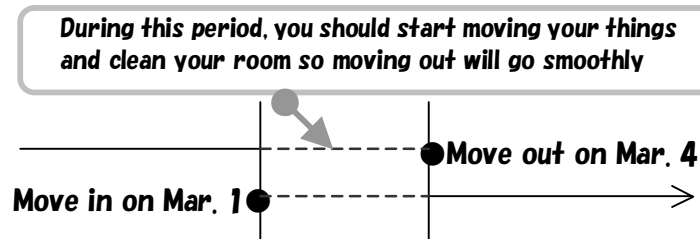


★Points to remember when moving out

◎You should set your date for moving into a new place a few days before your date to move out.

e.g....

- Present apartment
- New apartment



★Plan your move carefully

- Items to get ready when moving out : look at the list of items below which will be helpful when moving.
- Discuss plans for your move with friends who will help you and reserve a date for moving with the moving company.

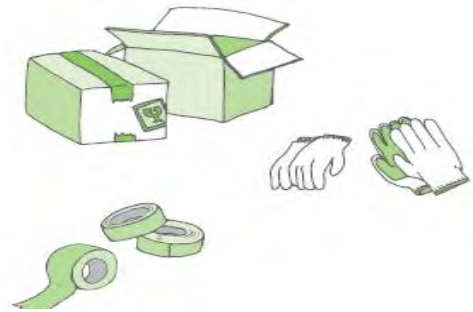
▼ Advice from a international student

•I could not find a place to live by the time I had to move out and so stayed at a friend's place.
There was no place to keep my things so it was a lot of trouble.

•When I was getting ready to return to my home country, I was planning to leave my things for a friend who was coming to Japan to study. However, before this friend could come to Japan, I had to return to my country so I had a lot of trouble finding a place to store my things for him.

★ **Helpful items for moving house**

- cardboard boxes : you can get them at supermarkets
- bubble wrap
- vinyl string
- cotton gloves
- masking tape
- newspaper



Ton : I should start getting ready to move too.

3. Moving Out

Ton: I' m planning to move out but I' m wondering how I should transport my things.

Lily: My senpai has a car. Shall I ask him if he can help? (calls her senpai...)

Lily: I' m sorry. My senpai has school that day so he can' t help you move.

Ton: Is that right? But if I don' t have a car, it will be very difficult to transport my things. What shall I do?

Lily: If you have a driver' s license, why don' t you rent a car?

Ton: What is that? Anyway, my license is not valid in Japan.

Michinoku Kamen :In Japan, there are shops which will rent a car to you for a fee. This system is called "rent-a-car." You need to have a Japanese driver's license to rent a car so you must go to the Driver's License center and apply for a *menKyo Kirikae shinsei* (driver's license replacement).¹¹



★Borrowing a rent-a-car

- **Reservation Method** : by Internet or telephone (search under "rent-a-car") or you can go directly to the rent-a-car office and rent a car.
- **Necessary items** : driver's license of all persons who will be driving the car.

Ton: Is that right? I see. But I' m too busy right now to go to the driver' s license center. What should I do?

Lily: You might also hire a mover to transport your belongings.

Ton: How does that work?

Michinoku Kamen :In Japan, there are companies who will help you move house and they are called *hikkoshi gyosha* (mover). It is easy and convenient to hire a mover to help you move but it will also cost money. The following are points to consider when selecting a mover.



¹¹ This application is to replace your own country's driver's license with a Japanese license.

★Hiring a mover

You can hire a mover in this way.

① Looking for a mover

- search the Internet
- you can find advertisements at the University Coop or at supermarkets.



② Estimate, contract

- The moving fee will be calculated according to the volume of your belongings. When you receive an estimate or sign a contract, it is best to have a Japanese friend to help you.



③ Moving

- The movers will come on the day you move to help you move.

Lily: *But if you hire a mover, it might be a little expensive.*

Ton: *Is there any other way to transport my things?*

Lily: *I heard there was a moving service for foreign students. Why don't you check that out?*

Michinoku Kamen : *Check to see if there is such a special service for foreign students. Ask friends, other foreign students or acquaintances who might be familiar with such moving services.*



4. Cleaning Your Room When Moving Out

Sho-Kei went to visit Ton at his apartment.

Sho: Ton, how are your preparations for moving out coming along?

Ton: I've packed almost all of my things.

Sho: Your kitchen looks a little dirty. I'll help you clean.

Ton : Do I have to clean my kitchen too?



Michinoku Kamen : Usually, when you move out of your apartment, you should clean it thoroughly before moving out. The objective of your cleaning should be to “restore the apartment to its original state”^{1 2}. If you do not clean the room thoroughly, a large amount may be deducted from your security deposit to pay for cleaning your room. It may also cause unpleasantness for the next tenant.



※See p. __ for information on your security deposit refund.

★Points to remember for moving out

◎Be careful of the following when cleaning your room:

◆Point 1 : Thoroughly clean areas where you use water

Areas where water is used such as the kitchen, toilet and bathroom should be cleaned extra carefully because soiled areas are easy to spot.

◆Point 2 : Repair damage to walls and floors

For small scars and scratches, you can go to a home improvement center to buy items to mend the damage.

◆Point 3 : Clean areas under furniture and appliances

After all your belongings are moved out of your apartment, carefully clean areas where you were usually unable to clean such as under the television, cupboard or refrigerator.

^{1 2} This means that you should make the apartment as clean as when you first moved in.

5. Trash Disposal

Landlord: Hello, Ton. How is your packing coming along?

Ton : I have a lot of trash and it's going to be hard getting rid of it.

Landlord: Some people leave appliances and furniture when they leave

and I end up having to pay to have them removed so this is a big problem for me.

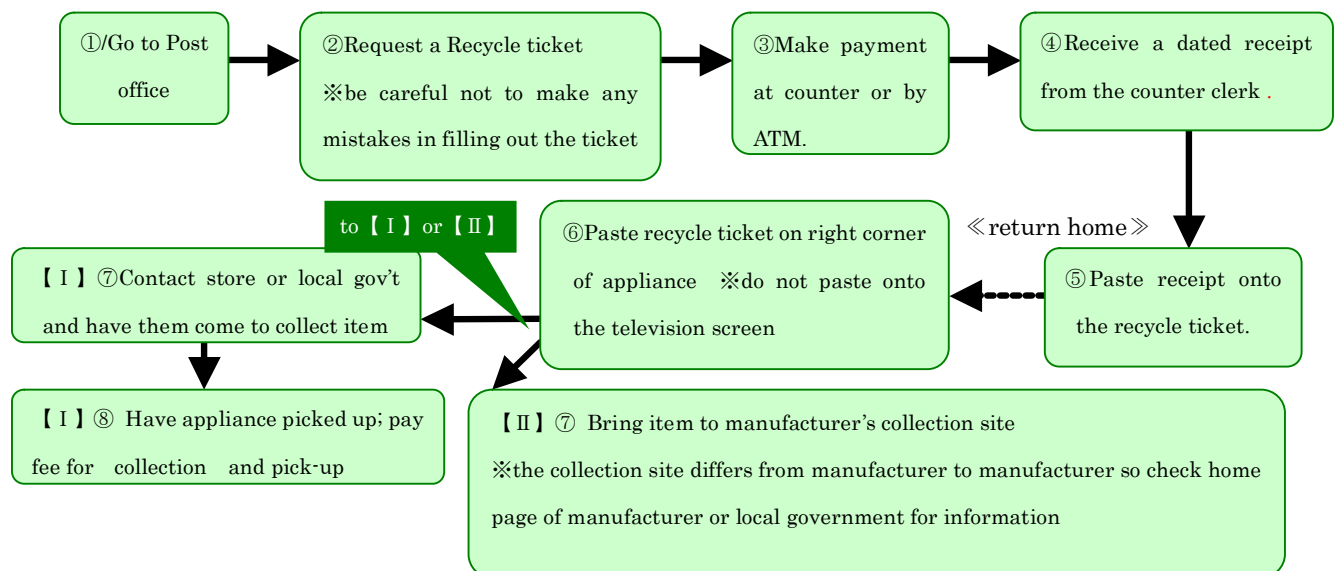
Ton : is that right ? Why does it cost money ? Who do I pay to have it removed ?



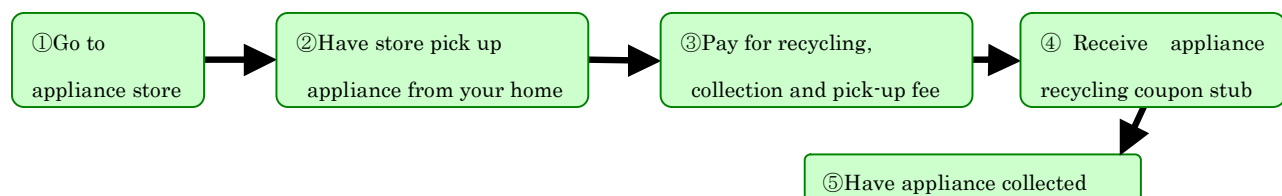
Michinoku Kamen: There is a fee for disposing of washing machines, refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners and televisions. This has been set by the “Electric Appliance Recycling Law.” You can pay for disposal at the post office through the *ryokin yubinkyoku furikomi hoshiki* (“Post Office Transfer Method”) or go to the appliance store where you bought your electric appliance and pay for it through the *ryokin hanbaiten kaishu hoshiki* (Electric Appliance Store Collection Payment Method).

1. Disposal of washing machines, refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners and televisions

■ Method 1. Post Office Transfer Method



■ Method 2. Electric Appliance Store Collection Payment Method



Michinoku Kamen : on the “Electric Appliance Recycling Coupon Center” (RKC) home page



(<http://www.rkc.aeha.or.jp/#>), you can view an animated explanation of the Electric Appliance Recycling Law. Please be sure to empty the contents in refrigerators, freezers, and washing machines. Keep the *haishutsusha hikae* (recycling coupon receipt) in a safe place.

2. Other Types of *sodai gomi* (Bulk Trash)

The next day, Ton decided to throw away things he didn't need. They included a broken chair, a radio-cassette player and a carpet. As he was taking it to the garbage collection site, he met a neighborhood *obachan* (housewife).

Obachan: Wait ! You can't throw out *sodai gomi* here.

Ton : This isn't *sodai gomi*.

It refers to large items like dressers only, doesn't it?



Obachan: No, Chairs and radio-cassette players are considered *sodai gomi*.

Ton : Is that right?

I don't know what items are considered *sodai gomi* or how to dispose of them.

Michinoku Kamen : On the home page for each local government, the types of *sodai gomi* (bulk trash) items and their prices are listed so please check it out.



* For Sendai:

You can call the Bulk Trash Reception Center one month to two days before collection.
(TEL 022-716-5301)

① Apply to the Center for collection and ask for fees on items and pickup date.

② Buy the *tesuryo nofuken* (fee payment ticket)^{1 3}.



◀ You can purchase this at shops, municipal and ward office shops and convenience stores that carry the label on the left.

③ Write your registration number and name on the ticket and paste it to your bulk trash item.

④ Put out your trash by 8:00 a.m. on the day of pickup at the designated site.

Sendai City HP: Trash Separation and Collection > bulk trash

http://www.city.sendai.jp/kankyoku/haikibutsu/garbage/gomi_sodai.html

^{1 3} This ticket certifies that you have paid for the bulk trash fee. You must attach it to the item which you are planning to dispose of.

Ton : I see.

I will call up the Center to request collection but what if I am busy on the pickup date?

***Michinoku Kamen* :If you are busy, you can apply for *rinji gomi* (special permission for trash disposal) and you can dispose of it on your own. For further details, view the home page of your local government.**



3. In Order to Reduce Waste

Ton :It's going to cost a lot of money to dispose of my trash. What shall I do?

***Michinoku Kamen*:It would be best if you could give your unneeded items to other students, especially foreign students who have just arrived in Japan.You can also put up the information on the University Coop information board or you can take your items to the recycle shop.**



Recycle Plaza HP : <http://www.gomi100.com/million/06>

(facility that accepts used furniture and appliances to be distributed free-of-charge to local residents)

Ton : It would be such a waste to throw away things that can still be used so I would be very happy if they could be recycled. It is a lot of trouble trying to get rid of things.

It would have been better not to buy things which I didn't really need.

6. Cancellation of Services

Ton is looking at the many papers he has received from the gas and electric companies.

Gaku : Hello, you look busy ! You have lots of papers. How is your packing coming along?

Ton : I'm a little worried. I am confused about what services I should cancel.

If I don't cancel them properly, I may be charged a fee later on.

Moreover, I don't know the method for cancellation so I'm a little worried.

Michinoku Kamen: The following is a checklist for cancellation of various types of services, so please use it as a reference.



1. Cancellation of Services Checklist

| | Type of service | Method of Cancellation |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Electricity | Contact sales office or branch of electric company In the case of Tohoku Electric, call: 0120-175-266 If you are returning to your home country, it is possible to pay in cash on the day you move out; please consult with Tohoku Electric if you wish to do this. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Water | Contact the water company Telephone No.: 022-248-1111 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Gas | For propane gas→contact the propane gas company City gas→contact the nearest sales office or branch of the gas company Telephone No.: 0800-800-8978 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Telephone | Contact the telephone company (for NTT* call 116) ★You may need to use the phone on the day you move so if you do not have a mobile phone, you should cancel service for the day after you move. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mobile phone ※when you are returning home | You can cancel service at the mobile phone shop. As soon as you cancel it, you will not be able to use your phone. You can also cancel service at Narita Airport. ★If you cannot cancel the contract yourself, you can ask a <i>dairinin</i> (someone acting as your agent) to do it for you. However, you need to write an <i>ininjo</i> (letter of proxy) before you return to your home country. You can pick up an <i>ininjo</i> from your mobile phone shop. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Internet | Call your Internet provider and decide on the date for suspension of service. ★Several providers allow you to use the Internet free of charge for several days after you have cancelled your service. 【Caution】 If you are renting a modem, you must return it through the post office by the designated return date. If you are late, you may be charged an additional fee. |

Ton : I see. The checklist is very helpful.

However, I don't need to just cancel services: I have to inform various places of my change in address as well. A similar checklist for this would be helpful.

Michinoku Kamen: The following is a checklist for items where you need to fill out a change-of-address form.



| | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alien Registration Card 【Ward Office】 <input type="checkbox"/> National Health Insurance 【Ward Office】 <input type="checkbox"/> Seal Registration Certificate 【Ward Office】 <input type="checkbox"/> Bank <input type="checkbox"/> Post Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Cards <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's license 【Driver's License Center】 <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> University 【Registrar Section】 ※you should contact the places marked by 【 】 |
|---|--|

3. Forwarding of Mail

Ton: I'm so glad there was a checklist for cancellation of services and address change.

But I have one more thing I'm worried about.

If someone sends a letter to my old address,

I won't be able to receive it.

Gaku: What shall we do? Shall we have the person moving into your old apartment forward your mail to you?



Ton: But I don't know when the next person will move in and it will cause extra trouble for him too.

Michinoku Kamen: If you fill out the "change-of-address" form, the post office will forward mail to your new address for one year.



★Forwarding of Mail

Fill out the *itentodoke hagaki* (“change-of-address” form) from the post office or you can fill out the five items below on a postcard and mail or bring it directly to the post office

1. Date of application for change-of address
2. Old address and new address
3. Name (head of household, family members)
4. Date on which forwarding of mail should begin
5. Seal

Ton : That is a very convenient service. Thank you for telling me about it.

7. Security Deposit Refund

Hagee: I found out when I moved house last time that you won't get a full refund on your security deposit.

Ton: Didn't they explain it to you when you signed your lease?

Hagee: At the time I signed my lease, I didn't know much Japanese. Even so, my refund was extremely small.

Ton: What should I do to get back as much of my deposit as possible?



Michinoku Kamen :Settlement of refunds on your security deposit differ from landlord or realtor. Although it may be complicated to calculate your refund, some of the points you should be aware of include the following:



★Points to Remember for Security Deposit

◎Cleaning and repair charges

Cleaning and repair charges will be deducted from your security deposit. If your room is dirty or has been damaged, the fees to clean and repair your room will be deducted. Be sure to clean your room thoroughly before you move out.

※for details on how to clean your room, refer to p. 37

◎Understand the terms of your contract thoroughly

The degree and type of cleaning or repairs will depend on your contract with your landlord. In order to avoid trouble when you move out, you should thoroughly discuss the terms for your security deposit refund. When it is difficult for you to understand the explanation, bring a friend who understands Japanese well to help you.

※Your security deposit will be refunded to you a week or two after you move out.

Ton: I realize now the importance of listening carefully to the explanations at the time the contract is signed. I will check the terms of my lease.

CONCLUSION

Ton was able to move safely to a new apartment with the help of *Michinoku Kamen*. After Ton got settled into his new apartment, he received the following letter.

Dear Ton,

How is your new room ?

I am very pleased that I was able to help you resolve some of the problems of living in Japan.

Problems with house-hunting, everyday life and moving out-you really have had a lot of interesting experiences here.

Now I have to go help another new foreign student. It is sad to have to say goodbye but you will be fine on your own.

Before I go, I have a little present for you. It is...

The Foreign Student Handbook. If you ever have any problems, please read it for help. Please lend it to your friends too.

Good luck to you!

Ton : Thank you, Michinoku Kamen !

The End



作 成

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