

## Introduction

**We want to support you in living and working in Japan with confidence, so you can build a long and successful career here.**

Japan has its own unique culture, unspoken social rules, and ways of thinking. If you come to Japan without knowing about these differences, you may experience confusion or unexpected troubles.

Understanding what is considered “normal” in Japan — not only at work but also in everyday life — will greatly help you adjust smoothly.

**This content is not meant to explain detailed government systems or legal requirements.**

From the perspective of a community support role — like a “**General Affairs department for the town**” — we aim to explain, in a very practical way, the important things you should know to avoid difficulties in daily life and the workplace. These explanations are based on real-life situations that foreign residents often encounter.

**This is not a program to force you to follow rules, and it is not training designed to evaluate you.**

Its purpose is to provide useful tips that help you live comfortably and continue working with peace of mind, while also building better relationships with people in your community and workplace.

Additional explanations will be provided for each topic in the following pages.

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### **How to Live a Comfortable Life in Japan (12 Episodes)**

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2. I paid my rent just a little late — why did it become a big problem?
3. I invited many friends over — why did the police come?
4. Why do people complain about phone calls or loud talking at night?
5. I just talked on the phone on the train why did people stare?
6. Why is smoking on the street punished with a fine?
7. Why can't I leave my things in a shared hallway?
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28. Why is it important to “read the air” in Japan?
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30. Why does a close distance not always mean close relationships?
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## **Chapter 1 | Daily Life**

### **How to Live a Comfortable Life in Japan (12 Episodes)**

#### **1. “I only put out my trash… why did I get a warning notice?”**

In Japan, the way you throw away trash is very important. There are rules for the day, time, and type of trash. Even if you didn’t know the rules, people may think you are ignoring them. This doesn’t mean anyone is angry. It is a shared promise to keep the community clean. If you are not sure, you

can ask your building manager or a neighbor.

**2. “I only paid my rent a little late... why is it such a big problem?”**

In Japan, late payments are strongly connected to trust. Even if you have a good reason, it is important to talk to your landlord in advance. Being late without saying anything is considered a serious issue.

**3. “I invited many friends... why did the police come?”**

In apartments, noise and many visitors can make other residents feel uncomfortable. Loud voices or music may be seen as scary or disturbing. Even if you are not doing anything bad, the police may be called. Quiet living is very important in Japan.

**4. “Why do people complain about phone calls or loud talking at night?”**

Japan values quietness at night. Even normal sounds can be received as noise. It is not about your intention — the sound itself can be a problem.

**5. “Why do people stare when I talk on the train?”**

On trains and buses, people are expected to consider others around them. There are many unwritten rules in Japan. These “silent manners” are often more important than official rules.

**6. “Why do I get a fine for smoking on the street?”**

Many places in Japan ban smoking outdoors because:

- \* It can be dangerous for children
- \* Some people strongly dislike cigarette smoke
- \* There is a risk of fire

It is safest and most polite to smoke only in designated areas.

**7. “Why can’t I leave my things in a shared hallway?”**

Shared spaces belong to everyone. Personal belongings may block escape routes in an emergency and are often prohibited for safety reasons.

**8. “I complained strongly at a store... why was that a problem?”**

In Japan, expressing strong emotions — especially anger — is seen as rude. A calm and polite attitude is important to communicate your problem effectively.

**9. “What if I am sick but don’t tell anyone?”**

Even though working hard is admired in Japan, not informing others about your condition can cause bigger problems because people around you cannot prepare or help.

**10. “How should I interact with my neighbors?”**

Deep relationships are not always necessary. A simple greeting is usually enough. Keeping a polite distance helps everyone feel comfortable.

**11. “Where can I ask for help when I’m in trouble?”**

Japan has government offices, support organizations, and consultation services, but you must find or ask for them yourself. Do not try to handle every problem alone.

**12. “What is the most important thing for living in Japan?”**

You do not need to be perfect. But these two things are very important:

- \* Ask when you do not understand
- \* Fix mistakes when they happen

You are not alone. Asking for help is not bad — it is the first step to a safe and comfortable life in Japan.

## Chapter 2: Working in Japan

### How to Maintain Trust in the Japanese Workplace (Episode 11)

#### 13. “The train was delayed... why did my evaluation go down?”

In Japan, you are expected to plan ahead assuming delays may happen. What is judged is not the delay itself, but whether you prepared or informed others in advance.

#### 14. “I said ‘yes’ ... why did my boss get angry?”

In Japanese workplaces, “yes” means “I understand.” If you say yes without understanding, problems may occur later. If you are not sure, you can say: “Can you please explain again?” This shows you want to do your work seriously — not that you are weak.

#### 15. “Why is it bad to work without fully understanding?”

A mistake made by guessing alone can be seen as a bigger issue than the result — because you did not ask for help.

#### 16. “Being told off doesn’t mean I’m disliked”

In Japan, guidance often comes from expectations and trust. It is not a personal attack.

#### 17. “Why was hiding my mistake even worse?”

Everyone makes mistakes. In Japan, not reporting the mistake is the real problem.

If you report early, it can stay small. If you hide it, trust is lost.

#### 18. “Why is it a problem if I didn’t report something?”

In Japan, reporting, communication, and consultation (called “Ho-Ren-So”) are extremely important.

#### 19. “I just took a photo... why is it a big issue?”

Japan has strong rules about information protection. Taking photos without permission can cause serious trouble.

#### 20. “It was just a small rule... why does it matter so much?”

Small actions are used to judge whether a person can be trusted. “A little rule-breaking” can have a big meaning.

#### 21. “Why is skipping work without notice so serious?”

If you do not come to work, others are affected. If you cannot come, tell someone as soon as possible.

The reason can be explained later — first, communicate.

#### 22. “Why did relationships change after I skipped a work party?”

You don’t have to join, but social events are often where people build workplace relationships.

Knowing this can help you avoid misunderstandings.

#### 23. “What do long-term workers value in Japan?”

More than skills, Japan values trust, consistency, and harmony with others.

## Chapter 3: Japanese Culture

### Understanding the “Why” Behind the Actions (Episode 12)

#### 24. “Why am I corrected for things that are normal in my country?”

Different cultures create different “normal.” It is not wrong — just different. Recognizing differences makes life easier.

**25. “Why does my evaluation go down even though no one said anything?”**

In Japan, dissatisfaction is often not expressed directly. People may communicate through atmosphere and behavior.

**26. “Why do Japanese people apologize so often?”**

In Japan, apologizing is not “losing.”

It means, “I want to keep a good relationship with you.” So people say it even for small things.

**27. “Is honne and tatemae (true feelings and polite behavior) lying?”**

It is often a way to avoid hurting others — not deception.

**28. “Why do Japanese people care so much about the atmosphere?”**

People often expect others to understand without words.

They observe what everyone else is doing — this is called “reading the air.”

If you are unsure, it is completely okay to ask: “Is this alright?”

**29. “Why are rules enforced so strictly?”**

Japan has a long history of maintaining safety and trust through following rules.

**30. “Why do people stay polite but not get close?”**

Being polite does not always mean wanting a deep relationship. Distance can be part of respect.

**31. “Why is ‘because everyone does it’ such an important reason?”**

Group harmony is highly valued. Stability of the group often comes first.

**32. “Why do Japanese people suddenly become distant?”**

Some people express dissatisfaction quietly — by keeping distance rather than confronting directly.

**33. “Why do many Japanese people endure things silently?”**

Self-control and considering others’ feelings are often seen as mature and admirable behaviors.

**34. “What do trustworthy people have in common in Japan?”**

More than perfection, honesty, consistency, and good communication are valued.

**35. “What does it mean to live in Japan?”**

Living in Japan is not only about learning rules.

It is about noticing differences and adapting step by step.

There is no need to rush — you can take time to get used to life here.