



# HELLO OKAYA

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This newsletter is distributed four times a year by the Okaya International Exchange Association, with the aim of providing local foreign residents with information necessary for daily life, as well as insight into aspects of Japanese culture. Please feel free to contact us with your feedback or any questions you may have.

## Okaya City to switch to paid garbage collection and to introduce new garbage bags

In line with the upcoming change in the garbage collection system, specifically the levying of fees for household garbage starting April 2010, the city will also come out with new designated garbage bags.

The main purpose of the fees is to promote waste reduction by minimizing unnecessary waste and encouraging people to recycle. Although, it is said that a family of four will have to shoulder 8,500 yen of collection fees in a year, the new scheme will also challenge families to properly segregate their garbage, separating burnable waste into plastics and wet refuse, and in doing so reduces the burden of waste disposal. For the prescribed garbage bags, the new system will require additional fees from consumers on top of the price of purchasing the garbage bags.

A 45-liter bag will be charged with a 60 yen fee, 25 yen for a 22-liter and 10 yen for a 10-liter bag. The smaller the volume of garbage you put out, the lesser the fees you have to pay.

For the new prescribed garbage bags, the old white for burnable will be replaced with pink bags. Non-burnable will still use clear plastic bags but the old blue-colored prints will be replaced with orange-colored ones.

Even after April 2010, the current garbage bags can still be used until March 2012 provided that you stick "Certificate stamps" on the bags proving that you paid the required disposal fees. You cannot use the old garbage bag without this sticker. Be aware that "Certificate stamps" will be available for purchase only until March 2011.

Come April 2010, segregation of plastic wastes will also be implemented. The proper segregation of this waste is discussed inside this issue.

Separating household garbage is troublesome for anyone, but it would indeed be very economically helpful if families will commit to reduce, reuse and recycle.

We encourage the active cooperation of all Okaya City residents in this endeavor.



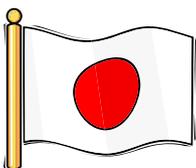
### ☆ Japanese Traditions

### ~One point Japanese culture~

#### The national flag

The Japanese kokki has a red circle on a white background. "Nippon" (Japan) basically means "land of the rising sun," so the red circle is a symbol of the rising sun. Just as the British flag is called "the Union Jack" and the American flag "the Stars and Stripes," the Japanese flag is called "hinomaru."

This red circle of hinomaru is used independently for all kinds of symbols. There are people who do not think that hinomaru is appropriate as kokki, because it was used also as a symbol of



the "suicide units" and other tragedies in the Second World War, and thus it is connected to unfortunate memories of the war.

#### Calligraphy

Shodo is the art of drawing characters with a brush and India ink to express spiritual depth and beauty. Shodo originally came from China, but in Japan, Chinese characters (kanji) were combined with the Japanese syllabary (kana), devised in Japan, to create this unique character art. With a brush soaked in Indian ink one can freely control, unlike with a pen, the thickness and the shading of the characters. Beyond the standard square style of writing (kaisho), calligraphic style can be divided into the somewhat simplified semicursive style (gyosho) and the still more simplified cursive style (sosho). Except for New Year's cards and the like, a brush is ordinarily not used for writing, but shodo is included in the elementary school curriculum.



#### Cookpot dishes

Japanese culture, which can be called "a culture of harmony," places importance on harmony among friends getting together to drink sake and eat, and nabe-ryori is appropriate for such gatherings. Soup stock and ingredients are put in a pot and heated; four or five persons sit around it, put soup and ingredients from the pot into their own bowls and eat. This enhances the bond of friendship and stimulates the discussion. There are all sorts of ingredients and soup stocks, as many flavors and ways of preparing, in fact, as there are households. Typical ingredients include fish, shellfish, a variety of vegetables and meats, and soup stocks are seasoned by soy bean paste or soy sauce.



# INFORMATION

# Towards Waste Reduction

-Okaya City's adopted approach-

For Inquiries ●Environment Division 0266-22-7040

## ●Composting of Food Waste (Wet Refuse)

Pickup points for food waste (wet refuse) started July last year. Raw garbage is converted to "compost" through natural soil treatment.

### 1. Separate

Separate the food waste thoroughly, keeping in mind NOT to put the following items inside the waste bag:

(Chopsticks, toothpick, plastics, cling wraps/cling-films, aluminum foils, rotten food, large quantities of pickled vegetable, cigarettes and flowers)

### 2. Drain

Drain any excess liquids. (Keeping it in airtight containers would be very convenient)

### 3. Disposal of Food Waste

Put your waste in the designated waste bags with your name written on it. Tie the top of the bag securely and put it in the yellow collection bag found at collection points.

(Put out before 8:30 AM on the designated collection day)

There are about 2 to 8 food waste pickup points on each zone in Okaya City. Pickup will be done once a week on the specified day of each collection point. Call the Environment Division to know the collection point nearest you.

## ●Recycling other plastic containers and packaging

1. Although all plastic containers and packaging with "プラ" identifying marks on them are basically recyclable, those without marks will still be collected (e.g. mayonnaise containers, instant noodle cups, convenient store bento boxes, empty candy bags, pet bottle labels).

2. It is necessary that we clean the containers first before putting it out in the garbage.

3. Other plastics will be collected using the prescribed bag.



## ●Switching to paid collection of household garbage

The purpose of switching to garbage collection requiring a fee is to encourage waste reduction and promote recycling.



Timing of Implementation	From April 2010
Method	Volume-restricted
Scope	「Burnable」and「Non-burnable」garbage
Fees (per sheet) (excluding price of bag)	45L 60yen, 22L 25yen, 10L 10 yen (same for burnable and non-burnable garbage)
Bringing directly to the Incineration Plant by the general public	100 yen (per 10kg)
Bringing directly to the Incineration Plant by private enterprises	150 yen (per 10kg)





### “Why do we need to reduce burnable waste?”

1. Burning garbage emits carbon dioxide. Do you know that the more carbon dioxide we produce, the more it contributes to global warming?
2. The remaining amount of ashes from the incinerated waste is about a tenth of the volume of the actual garbage. Every month in Okaya City, more than 130 tons of ashes are collected and buried in the garbage disposal site in Hizawa. If we continue at this rate, the site will be filled up by March 2015.

### ”How can we do it? ... Segregate small papers.”

1. Put all paper wastes in a paper bag

Prepare a strong paper bag with paper handles, and put all paper products in it (i.e. candy boxes, cosmetics boxes, toy boxes, shredded paper, envelopes, postcards, empty toilet paper rolls and others). When the bag becomes full, seal it with a paper adhesive tape, write a big [古紙](Used Paper) mark outside and put it out on “Used Paper” garbage collection days.



2. Put the carbon paper, gold paper, silver foil and plastic-coated paper in the “burnable” garbage bags.

### “ Check the contents of the “burnable” and “non-burnable” garbage bags one more time.”

1. Are there any wet refuse, papers, old clothes, and pet bottles inside the “burnable” garbage bag?  
→ Place all cans, bottles, pet bottles, tray, paper, summer clothes and jeans in the corresponding recycle bin.
2. Are there any bottles, cans, broken umbrellas, frying pans inside the “non-burnable” garbage bag?  
→ Place all aluminum cans, steel cans, glass bottles, metals in the corresponding recycle bin.

A little effort in separating garbage reduces waste. Give a careful thought on proper segregation.

### “Waste reduction is hitting two birds with one stone”

Although using garbage as fuel for cars are still in the realms of stories in movies, even right now, soaps are made from used cooking oil, biodegradable plastics are produced and the current trend is geared towards waste reduction. Isn't it wonderful that the things we throw away now, can be changed into something useful through new ideas and technology?

### 3R is the keyword for waste minimization!

Reduce, reuse and recycle are the 3Rs of waste minimization. This is an important point of view towards an ecologically oriented society that seeks to ease the burden on the environment. Through suitable cyclical use of reusable resources by segregation, we can decrease the consumption of our natural resources.

Before recycling, at first we need to use our resources carefully then use it again repeatedly.

- ① Reduce – Carefully use resources to reduce waste.

(Refuse plastic bags given at shops and go for simple packaging. Buy products that lasts and that are durable. Be aware of expiration dates and maximize the use of your supplies.)



- ② Reuse – Use resources repeatedly as long as it is possible.



(Buy products sold in reusable bottles and reuse containers. Hand down your unwanted things to people who might want it or put it out on sale at flea markets.)



- ③ Recycle – processing of used materials into new products.

(Clean bottles and cans before putting out. Properly segregated garbage can easily be recycled. If it is possible, buy only recyclable products. You can effectively utilize wet refuse by turning it to compost using waste processors.



## The feeling of “mottainai,” compels us to recycle

“Mottainai” is a Japanese term meaning “a sense of regret concerning waste when resources are not properly utilized.” It has also a meaning of gratitude for receiving natural blessings or a favor from someone. Due to the seemingly bountiful resources that we have, we might have forgotten how to make the most out of the value of something. Now is the time to remember the concept of “mottainai” to promote eco-awareness.

Everyone’s plea for Zero-Litter

### ●Anti-Littering Ordinance

Starting July 1<sup>st</sup> (Wed) last year, littering within Okaya is prohibited by city ordinance, specifically disposing of used cigarettes and empty cans outdoors and leaving behind dog poop in public places. This ordinance ensures a clean and habitable town which is free of litter. Littering and irresponsible pet ownership cause inconvenience to others. Let us all keep Okaya clean by minding our manners.



### 【Prohibited in all areas of Okaya City】

① It is prohibited to dispose of empty cans and empty bottles (including pet bottles), caps and cigarette butts, chewing gum, waste papers, plastic bags and other litters outdoors. ② It is prohibited for pet owners to leave behind animal waste outdoors.

### 【To all residents】

① When taking your dog for a walk outside, bring something to clean after your dog. Any collected waste should be brought home and flushed in the toilet. ② Let us all participate in the cleaning up activities of our area.



### 【To all business people】

① Be aware of anti-littering ② Properly manage all garbage collection bins installed near vending machines.  
③ Let us all participate in the cleaning up activities of our area.

### 【To all land owners】

① Maintain your land litter-free by regular clean up and cutting off grasses. ② Let us all participate in the cleaning up activities of our area.



### 【If a violation occurs】

Directive and Counsel – if a prohibited act is done, you will be directed to clean up within a period of time

Command – if you do not abide by the directive or counsel without a valid reason, you will be ordered to follow the command.

Penalty – if you do not follow the command without a valid reason, you will be reported to the authorities and be made to pay the penalty of not more than 100,000 yen

(Penalty is enforced starting January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010)