2026 MASTER REFERENCE BIBLE • KEEP & BOOKMARK

The Complete Akiya Buying, Renovating & Rural Living Bible

The Definitive Step-by-Step Field Manual for Finding, Inspecting, Legally Acquiring, Clearing, Renovating, and Thriving in a Japanese Countryside Home—From ¥0 Municipal Giveaways to Heritage Kominka Farmhouses.

WHAT YOU WILL MASTER INSIDE THIS REFERENCE BIBLE:

- **Stage 1 (Hunting & Scouting):** Accessing official Municipal Akiya Banks directly without paying $10,000+ middleman consulting markups—plus getting a real 070/080/090 Japanese phone number & rural staging base.
- **Stage 2 (Structural Inspections):** The 20-Point On-Site Checklist (*Shiroari* termites, *Yukashita* joists, roof tiles, *Johkasou* septic tanks, and *Saikenchiku-Fuka* rebuildability traps).
- **Stage 3 (City Halls, Legal & Buying):** Navigating Judicial Scriveners (*Shiho Shoshi*), the Agricultural Land Act (*Nochi-ho* Art. 3), ¥3,000,000 government renovation grants, and mid-market international wires.
- **Stage 4 (Clearing & Decluttering):** How to turn inherited house contents (*Zanchibutsu*) into cash before comparing bulk disposal quotes.
- **Stage 5 & 6 (Renovating & Smart DIY):** Slashing contractor quotes by 40%, ordering millimeter-cut Japanese Cedar/Hinoki lumber, and renting tools/appliances instead of buying.
- **Stage 7 (Moving In & Rural Thriving):** 1-call utility setup, rural water purification, off-grid solar backup, and *Chonaikai* village etiquette.
- **Bonus Reference Sections:** Rapid-Fire 12-Question Q&A+ **45+ Vetted Services Indexed by Timeline Stage & Pain Point**.

📌 **SAVE & BOOKMARK THIS BIBLE RIGHT NOW:**
This manual is designed as a long-term companion you will return to at every milestone over the next 12 to 24 months.
• **Bookmark the Live Akiya Directory:** https://brusjapan.com/akiya/ (Updated daily across all 47 Prefectures)
• **Bookmark Interactive Web Edition:** brusjapan.com/akiya/guides/foreigners-akiya-buying-guide.html
• **Direct PDF Permanent Link:** brusjapan.com/akiya/guides/foreigners-akiya-buying-guide.pdf

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Welcome: Why You Should Keep This Bible on Your Desktop

Buying and restoring a vacant home (*Akiya* / 空き家) or traditional timber farmhouse (*Kominka* / 古民家) in Japan is one of the most rewarding life adventures on earth—and one of the last places in the developed world where you can still buy a solid house with land for **¥500,000 to ¥4,500,000 ($3,300 to $30,000 USD)**, or even **¥0**.

Yet 90% of English-language guides online are thin, 3-page pamphlets designed to funnel you into paying a $10,000 to $20,000 "foreigner consulting fee" on a house that was listed for free on a town hall website. We wrote this **Master Reference Bible** to be different. Whether you are currently daydreaming from overseas, flying in next month to inspect properties, negotiating with a city hall coordinator, clearing out 50 years of a previous owner's belongings, or hiring a local roofer, **save this file to your computer and phone right now**. Every time you hit a wall, open this guide to the corresponding stage—you will find the exact practical insider workaround and a direct link to the vetted Japanese service that solves it.

⭐ **Essential First Step — Bookmark These 3 Links in Your Browser (Press Ctrl+D or Cmd+D):**

1. **Live Nationwide Akiya Directory (689+ Official Municipal Listings across 47 Prefectures):** **https://brusjapan.com/akiya/** — New town hall properties arrive constantly as we expand into new rural municipalities.
2. **Bru's Japan Main Cultural & Rural Living Portal:** **https://brusjapan.com/**
3. **Interactive Web Version of This Bible (Always Updated):** **https://brusjapan.com/akiya/guides/foreigners-akiya-buying-guide.html**

📋 **Transparent Affiliate & Partner Disclosure (FTC & Japan CAA Stealth Marketing Compliance / 広告・PR表記):**
Bru's Japan is an independent bilingual rural real estate media portal and translation directory. To keep our municipal directory searchable and provide this comprehensive reference manual free of charge, many of the recommended solution links in this book are partner/affiliate links. If you click a link and book a service, request a free contractor quote, or purchase a product, Bru's Japan may earn a small referral commission **at zero extra cost to you** (in fact, many links unlock exclusive free inspections or comparison discounts). We only recommend vetted, reputable Japanese and international services—such as TSE Prime-listed inspection firms, official telecom providers, and major renovation networks—that genuinely solve real pain points in the Akiya lifecycle.

Master Roadmap: The 7 Stages of the Akiya Journey

Lifecycle Stage	Core Tasks & Hidden Challenges	Key Partner Solutions Inside
Stage 1: Hunting & Scouting	Locating municipal Akiya banks, getting a real 070/080/090 Japanese voice number, rural mountain data, ETC car rental, and low-cost staging stays.	Early Bird VIP, Mobal, Sakura Mobile, Gromoba eSIM, Skyscanner, DiscoverCars, Village House, TABILMO
Stage 2: Inspections & Checks	Checking underfloor joists, termites (*Shiroari*), roof leaks, septic tanks (*Johkasou*), attic pests, boundary stakes, and rebuildability.	Asante (Free Termite/Underfloor Check), FireWorks Pest Control, Trouble Resolution Assoc., Miraias, Wakegai
Stage 3: City Hall, Legal & Buying	Registering with town halls, Agricultural Land Act (Art. 3), Judicial Scriveners, ¥3M municipal grants, low-fee FX wires, and property loans.	Wise (Mid-Market JPY Wires), JFC Property Loans, Tsubasa Corp, Nippo Loans, Crecari Rent
Stage 4: Clearing & Decluttering	Handling inherited house contents (*Zanchibutsu*)—selling vintage clothes/antiques for cash first, then comparing bulk trash haulers.	Shichifuku (Home-Visit Cash Buyout), TreFac Move, Poimitsu (5-Quote Trash Compare), Ihin Seiri 110-ban, ECO Clean
Stage 5: Renovation & Reform	Pitting local contractors against each other for roofs, exterior walls, insulated unit baths, kitchens, and fresh tatami/shoji screens.	Zehitomo, Reform Hikaku Pro, Nikka Home, Ofuro no Reform-yasan, Toclas, Housing Bazaar, Sanjo Tatami
Stage 6: Smart DIY & Tools	Ordering custom millimeter-cut Japanese Cedar/Hinoki lumber, renting pressure washers & tools instead of buying, and barn storage.	Marutoku Shop (Custom Lumber), Rentio (Tool/Appliance Rental), BRIGHT DIY, Ebisu Tool, Luminous Club
Stage 7: Moving & Thriving	Comparing movers, 1-call utility activation, cheapest electricity, water purification, off-grid solar backup, and neighbor gift etiquette.	Hikkoshi Samurai, Denki Support, ENECHANGE, Waterpoint Jug, Jackery, EENOUR, Daimaru Gifts

Stage 1: Hunting & Scouting Your Akiya (Without Middleman Markups)

Japan currently has over **9 million vacant homes (Akiya)**—nearly 14% of all residential structures in the country. However, there are two completely separate real estate ecosystems in Japan:

- **Commercial Portals & Foreigner Consultancies:** English-language middlemen frequently take a ¥1,000,000 ($6,500) rural listing from a town hall website, re-list it in English, and tack on a $7,500 to $15,000 "project management or translation fee."
- **Official Municipal Akiya Banks (自治体空き家バンク):** Operated directly by local city, town, and village halls (*Shiyakusho / Yakuba*) across over 1,700 municipalities. Because their goal is rural revitalization and tax-base preservation—not commercial profit—houses are routinely listed from **¥0 to ¥3,500,000**, often bundled with municipal renovation grants.

🔥 **PAIN POINT #1: The Best Move-In-Ready Akiya Sell Out Within 48 to 72 Hours** **INSIDER HINT #1**

💡 **Pro Tip:** Roughly 80% of municipal Akiya need moderate to heavy work, while the top 20%—structurally sound, dry roof, parking space included, priced under ¥2.5M ($16,500)—attract immediate inquiries from both Japanese remote workers and international buyers. Don't waste time manually translating 1,700 separate Japanese town hall PDFs. Bookmark brusjapan.com/akiya and activate 0-hour Early Bird alerts so you see newly released municipal gems 48 hours before public catalog release.

🔒 **Bru's Japan Early Bird VIP Instant Alerts (0-Hour Priority Access)**
Get instant email notifications & unmasked municipal source links 48 hours before public release across all 47 prefectures. Just ¥980/month.

Unlock VIP Access →

🏠 **Bookmark the Live Nationwide Akiya Directory (689+ Verified Listings)**
Filter by region (Chugoku, Chubu, Kansai, Kyushu, Shikoku, Tohoku, Kanto, Hokkaido), land size, and price.

Browse Directory →

Overcoming the "Japanese Phone Number & Mountain Dead-Zone" Wall

Before you email a single city hall, understand a rigid rule of Japanese bureaucracy: **Municipal Akiya Bank application forms (利用登録申込書) require a domestic Japanese telephone number (070, 080, or 090)**. Rural town hall staff will almost never dial an international +1 or +44 number, and travel data-only eSIMs do not assign a voice number.

🔥 **PAIN POINT #2: City Halls Reject Your Application Without a 070/080/090 Voice Number** **INSIDER HINT #2**

💡 **Pro Tip:** Major Japanese carriers (Docomo, SoftBank, au) legally refuse to issue voice SIM cards to tourists without a Japanese Residence Card (*Zairyu Card*). However, **Mobal Japan** is specifically licensed to issue genuine 070/080/090 Japanese voice + data SIMs and eSIMs to foreign visitors using only a passport! Pick it up at Narita/Haneda/Kansai Airport or have it shipped home before your flight. If you already live in Japan but lack a Japanese credit card, **Daredemo Mobile** approves 100% of applicants via bank direct debit with zero credit check.

📞 **Mobal Japan — Official 070/080/090 Voice + Data SIM & eSIM**
No Residence Card or Japanese bank account required. Gives you an official Japanese voice number for City Hall & scrivener forms.

Get Mobal Voice SIM →

📱 **Daredemo Mobile (だれでもモバイル) — No-Screening Japanese Voice SIM**
For residents w ithout a credit card: 100% approval rate w ith bank account direct debit on Docomo's netw ork.

View Daredemo Mobile →

🔥 **PAIN POINT #3: Losing Google Maps & Live Translation in Remote Mountain Valleys** **INSIDER HINT #3**

💡 **Pro Tip:** When inspecting Akiya in mountainous prefectures like Nagano, Okayama, Shimane, or Tokushima, cheap roaming SIMs drop out completely—leaving you stranded without Google Lens (to read fuse boxes and property deeds) or voice translation with the seller. Always pair your phone with a multi-carrier cloud Pocket WiFi or a Docomo/SoftBank-backed domestic eSIM.

📶 **Sakura Mobile — Unlimited Expat Pocket WiFi & Long-Term SIM**
Full English technical support, airport pickup, and rock-solid rural mountain coverage on Docomo's backbone.

Get Sakura Mobile →

⚡ **Gromoba eSIM / Global Mobile & Glocal eSIM — Instant QR Code Data**
Activate high-speed domestic Japanese data in 3 minutes via QR code before landing. Ideal backup line for iPads and laptops.

Get Instant eSIM →

Rural Transport & Setting Up a Low-Cost Staging Base

You cannot scout rural Akiya by train alone. While the Shinkansen will get you to regional hubs like Okayama Station, Matsumoto, or Kumamoto, the actual houses sit 20 to 45 minutes up winding valley roads where village buses run twice a day. Furthermore, if you stay in ¥15,000/night city hotels for a 6-week scouting and closing trip, you will burn ¥630,000 ($4,200) on hotels alone!

🔥 PAIN POINT #4: Overpaying for Regional Flights, Car Rentals & Scouting Hotels INSIDER HINT #4

💡 **Pro Tip:** Instead of paying ¥15,000/night at hotels while house-hunting or waiting for renovation contractors, rent a **Village House** apartment for **¥20,000 to ¥30,000 per month** with *zero deposit, zero key money, zero agency fee, and no guarantor*! It gives you an instant base camp with a kitchen and parking spot near your target Akiya. For shorter 1–2 week scouting blitzes, compare regional flights and ETC-equipped rental cars in one search.

🛫 Skyscanner Japan — Compare Regional Flights, Hotels & Car Hire
Find the cheapest domestic flights into regional airports (Okayama, Yonago, Takamatsu, Oita, Matsumoto) + airport car pickup.

Search Skyscanner →

🚗 DiscoverCars & Tabirai Car Rental — Rural Car Hire with ETC
Compare Toyota, Nippon, Orix, and Times rental cars across rural train stations w ith English navigation & full insurance.

Compare Car Rentals →

🏢 Village House (ビレッジハウス) — ¥20,000/Month Zero-Deposit Base Apartments
Over 1,000 properties across all 47 prefectures. Foreigner-friendly, bilingual support, no key money or renew al fees.

Browse Village House →

🏡 TABILMO & Agoda — Whole-House Rural Cottages & Nightly Stays
Experience living in a w hole-house rental villa (*Ittogashi*) or countryside inn w hile scouting your target tow n.

Explore Stays →

Stage 2: Checking & Inspecting the House (Spotting Million-Yen Traps)

Nearly all Akiya in Japan are sold ***Genkyo Yushi* (現況有姿 — "As-Is, Where-Is")** with a waiver of seller liability for hidden defects (*Keiyaku Futekigo Sekinin Menseki*). Once you stamp the contract, any structural rot, termite nest, or collapsed septic tank is 100% your financial responsibility. Bring a flashlight, a marble (to test floor tilt), and a moisture meter, and walk through this **Mandatory 8-Point Structural Inspection Matrix**:

Inspection Zone	What to Look For On-Site	Red Flag / Dealbreaker Cost
1. Underfloor (Yukashita) & Sills (Dodai)	Lift a corner tatami mat or open the kitchen floor hatch (*Yukashita Shuno*). Shine a light on the ground sill beams (*Dodai*) and wooden piers (*Tsuka*).	Mud tubes, hollow-sounding timber, or damp soil = Active **Shiroari (Termites)**. Repair: ¥300k–¥1.5M.
2. Roof Tiles (Kawara) & Flashing	Step back 30m outside and sight along the roof ridge (*Mune*). Is the ridge wavy or sagging? Inside, check upstairs ceiling corners for dark water rings (*Amamori*).	Slipped tiles + rotted roof sheathing (*Nojiita*) requires partial re-roofing: ¥500k–¥2.5M.
3. Foundation Tilt (Katamuki)	Place a smartphone level app (or golf ball) on the central corridor floor. Check if sliding doors (*Tategu*) leave a triangular gap when closed against a post.	Tilt > 6/1000mm causes vertigo and requires jacking/shimming (*Ageya* or floor leveling): ¥400k–¥1.8M.
4. Sewage: Pit Toilet vs. Johkasou	Check the bathroom and outside manhole covers. Is it connected to public sewer (*Gesuido*), a modern fiberglass septic tank (*Gappei Johkasou*), or an old pit toilet (*Kumitori*)?	Converting a *Kumitori* pit toilet to a flush *Johkasou* septic system costs ¥800k–¥1.6M (though municipalities often subsidize 50%–80%!).
5. Water Supply & Hot Water Boiler	Turn on all faucets. Is it municipal water (*Josuido*) or well water (*Idomizu*)? Check the manufacturing year sticker on the outdoor kerosene/gas water heater (*Kyutoki*).	Boilers older than 12 years or burst frozen copper pipes cost ¥180k–¥350k to replace.
6. Electrical Panel (Bundenban)	Check the main breaker amperage above the entrance or changing room. Old houses often have only 20A or 30A (2-wire 100V) and porcelain knob-and-tube wiring.	Upgrading to 50A/60A 3-wire 100V/200V (for induction stoves & A/C units) costs ¥120k–¥300k.
7. Attic Wildlife & Hornet Nests	Peer into the attic inspection hatch (*Tenjo-ura*) in the closet ceiling. Look for droppings, chewed insulation, or paper wasp nests.	Raccoons (*Araiguma*), civets (*Hakubishin*), and giant hornets (*Suzumebachi*) destroy ceilings.
8. Road Access & Rebuildability	Measure the road width touching the plot. Under Japan's Building Standards Act Art. 42, your land must touch a recognized road (≥4m wide) for at least **2 meters**.	If frontage is <2m, the property is **Saikenchiku-Fuka (Non-Rebuildable)**—you can renovate, but can never tear down and build a new house.

🔥 PAIN POINT #5: Fear of Hidden Termites (Shiroari) & Underfloor Rot Beneath Pretty Tatami

INSIDER HINT #5

💡 **Pro Tip:** Never guess what is happening under the floorboards! Japan has two destructive termite species: *Yamato Shiroari* (which eats damp bathroom/north-side wood) and the voracious *Ie-Shiroari* (Formosan termite, which builds giant nests and eats all the way up to roof beams). Here is the ultimate insider hack: **Asante (アサンテ)**, a Tokyo Stock Exchange Prime-listed company and Japan's largest termite specialist, performs a **100% Free Underfloor Inspection & Digital Photo Report**! With the seller's or agent's permission (or immediately upon closing), book Asante to crawl under the house, photograph every beam, measure wood moisture, and give you a written quotation for free.

🐜 Asante (アサンテ) — 100% Free Professional Underfloor & Termite Inspection

TSE Prime-listed industry leader (600,000+ homes inspected). Technicians crawl under the floor and provide a free photo report & estimate.

Book Free Inspection →

🐝 FireWorks Pest & Wildlife Control — Hornet, Raccoon & Civet Removal

Over 200,000 cases resolved. Same-day emergency removal of giant hornets (*Suzumebachi*), attic civets, rats, and pests.

Get Pest Removal Quote →

🔥 PAIN POINT #6: Unclear Property Value, Boundary Disputes, or Non-Rebuildable Status

INSIDER HINT #6

💡 **Pro Tip:** In rural Japan, sellers sometimes price an Akiya based on emotional attachment rather than market reality—or the plot has complex shared ownership, missing boundary stakes (*Kokkyo*), or *Saikenchiku-Fuka* restrictions. Before overpaying—or if you ever need an independent valuation or exit strategy—use these specialized real estate resolution & appraisal services.

⚖️ Real Estate Trouble Resolution Association (一般社団法人不動産トラブル解決協会)

Fair, neutral third-party real estate appraisal and consultation for complex, defective, or boundary-disputed properties.

Request Fair Valuation →

🏘️ Miraias Smart Brokerage (ミライアス) & Wakegai (ワケガイ)

Free property valuation, transparent smart brokerage, and specialist buyouts for distressed or non-rebuildable real estate.

Check Property Value →

Stage 3: Reaching Out to City Halls, Legal Hurdles & The Purchase Procedure

Can a non-resident foreigner on a 90-day tourist waiver legally buy a house and land in Japan? **Yes—100%.** Japan places zero citizenship or residency restrictions on freehold real estate ownership (except for designated defense zones near military bases under the Important Land Investigation Act). You receive the exact same fee-simple title deed (*Kenri-sho / Toroku Shikibetsu Joho*) as a Japanese citizen.

The 5-Step Municipal Akiya Bank & Closing Workflow

1. **Akiya Bank User Registration (利用登録):** Submit the municipality's Applicant Registration Form (usually 2 pages asking for your name, address, 070/080/090 phone number, and "purpose of use"—always emphasize community harmony, respectful maintenance, and long-term seasonal or permanent residence).
2. **Letter of Intent (購入申込書 / Konyu Moshikomisho):** Once you inspect the house and decide to buy, submit a written offer. If you have already obtained a free termite report or renovation estimate, you can politely negotiate the price down to cover urgent repairs.
3. **Important Matters Explanation (重要事項説明 / Juyo Jiko Setsumei):** If a local licensed broker (*Takken-shi*) is assigned by the municipality, they read a statutory disclosure document covering zoning, road frontage, utility connections, and disaster hazard maps.
4. **Sales Contract & Earnest Money (売買契約書 / Baibai Keiyakusho):** You sign the contract, affix a revenue stamp (*Inshi-zei*, typically ¥1,000–¥10,000), and pay a 10% earnest deposit (*Tetsukekin*).
5. **Settlement & Title Registration (決済・所有権移転登記):** A licensed **Judicial Scrivener (*Shiho Shoshi* / 司法書士)** verifies your passport, notarized Residence Affidavit (*Sensei Kyojusho* from your Embassy or home notary), and Domestic Tax Representative (*Nozei Kanrinin* if non-resident), then files the transfer at the Legal Affairs Bureau (*Homukyoku*).

⚠ Warning: The Agricultural Land Act (Nochi-ho Article 3) Trap!

This is the #1 legal landmine that derails rural property purchases in Japan. Many countryside houses consist of two separate land parcels in the registry: a **Residential Plot (*Takuchi* / 宅地)** under the house, and an adjacent **Farmland Plot (*Ta* / 田 rice paddy or *Hatake* / 畑 vegetable field)**.

Under **Article 3 of the Agricultural Land Act (農地法第3条)**, it is strictly illegal to transfer title to registered farmland unless the local **Agricultural Committee (*Nogyo Iinkai*)** approves you as an active full-time farmer! How do buyers solve this?

- **Solution A (Exclude or Lease the Farmland):** Buy only the *Takuchi* residential parcel and have the seller retain or separately lease the farmland parcel.
- **Solution B (Article 5 Farmland Conversion / 農地転用):** Hire a licensed **Administrative Scrivener (*Gyosei Shoshi* / 行政書士)** to file an Article 5 application converting the small garden plot from *Hatake* to *Takuchi* or *Zasshuchi* (Miscellaneous Land) as a condition precedent (*Teishi Joken*) before closing.

How to Claim Up to ¥3,000,000 in Free Municipal Subsidies (補助金)

Over 70% of rural Japanese municipalities offer generous cash grants to buyers who purchase through the official Municipal Akiya Bank! Always ask the town hall's *Ijyu Teijyu Sokushin-ka* (Migration Promotion Desk) about these 3 stackable grants **before** you sign a renovation contract (grants cannot be claimed retroactively after work starts!):

- **Akiya Renovation Subsidy (空き家改修補助金):** Typically covers 1/2 to 2/3 of contractor renovation costs, capped between **¥500,000 and ¥2,000,000** (especially when hiring a contractor headquartered inside that municipality).
- **Zanchibutsu Disposal Subsidy (家財処分補助金):** Pays 1/2 of bulk household trash clearing costs, typically up to **¥100,000–¥200,000**.
- **Johkasou Septic Conversion Grant (合併処理浄化槽設置補助金):** Pays **¥400,000 to ¥900,000** toward replacing an old pit toilet with an eco-friendly biological septic tank.

🔥 **PAIN POINT #7: Losing $2,000+ to Predatory Bank FX Spreads & Rejected International Wires** **INSIDER HINT #7**

💡 **Pro Tip:** If you do not have a Japanese resident bank account, paying the seller or Judicial Scrivener via a traditional US/UK/EU bank SWIFT wire is a nightmare—traditional banks secretly mark up the USD/JPY exchange rate by 3% to 4.5% and rural Japanese *Shinkin* banks often freeze incoming foreign wires for weeks. Instead, open a free **Wise Multi-Currency Account**. You can convert USD, EUR, GBP, AUD, or CAD into Japanese Yen at the real mid-market Reuters rate and send a domestic Japanese Zengin transfer straight into your Judicial Scrivener's client trust account (*Azukari-kin Koza*) in hours!

💷 **Wise — Multi-Currency Account & Low-Fee International Property Transfers**

Save 3%–4% on closing funds and renovation w ires. Hold JPY in your ow n account and w ire directly to Japanese scriveners & contractors.

Open Free Wise Account →

🔥 **PAIN POINT #8: Megabanks Refuse Mortgages on Wooden Houses Older Than 22 Years** **INSIDER HINT #8**

💡 **Pro Tip:** Japanese tax law sets the statutory depreciation life of a wooden house at 22 years, meaning mainstream retail banks rarely lend on vintage Kominka. However, if you have Japan residency or own existing real estate in Japan and want to unlock capital for a major renovation, second home, or rental investment property, specialized real estate collateral lenders evaluate the underlying land and asset potential with fast, flexible underwriting.

🏢 **JFC (ジェイエフシー) & Tsubasa Corp — Real Estate Collateral & Renovation Loans**

Free preliminary screening for property acquisition, renovation capital, and real estate investment financing across Japan.

Check JFC Loan Options →

💳 **Nippo (日宝) Property Loans & Crecari Chintai (Credit Card Rent Payment)**

40+ years of real estate financing expertise at Nippo; or use Crecari to pay rent by credit card and preserve liquid cash for renovations.

Explore Financing →

Stage 4: Clearing the House & Turning Leftover Items (Zanchibutsu) into Cash

Here is a reality that shocks almost every first-time Akiya buyer: when an elderly homeowner passes away or moves into a care facility, their children in Tokyo rarely have the time to empty a 7LDK farmhouse and two storehouses (*Kura*). As a result, the vast majority of cheap Akiya are sold ***Zanchibutsu Ari* (残置物あり — "With All Existing Contents Included")**.

You will open closets and *Kura* barns to find stacks of silk kimonos, vintage wooden chests (*Tansu*), lacquerware, Bizen/Kutani pottery, retro cameras, old clothes, farm tools, and 40-year-old refrigerators. If you blindly hire a local disposal company on Day 1, they will charge you **¥350,000 to ¥800,000 ($2,300 to $5,300)** to throw everything—including valuable antiques—into an incinerator!

🔥 **PAIN POINT #9: Paying Huge Disposal Fees to Throw Away Items That Actually Have Cash Value** **INSIDER HINT #9**

💡 **The "Appraise First, Dispose Second" Golden Rule:** Never let a trash company touch the house until a free home-visit buyout specialist (*Shuccho Kaitori*) walks through! Even bags of old, torn clothing from closets are bought by **Shichifuku (七福)** for **¥1,000 per bag guaranteed**, alongside vintage watches, kimono, ceramics, cameras, and tools. Doing a free buyout visit first clears out bulk volume and puts ¥20,000 to ¥150,000+ cash in your pocket toward your dumpsters!

💰 **Shichifuku (総合出張買取 七福) — Free Home-Visit Cash Buyout (¥1,000/Bag Clothes + Antiques)**

Pays ¥1,000 per bag even for torn/old clothing, plus instant cash appraisal for kimono, antiques, ceramics, w atches, and household goods.

Book Free Cash Buyout →

🚚 **TreFac Moving & Buyout (トレファク引越) — Move + Sell Unwanted Furniture in One Step**

Operated by Treasure Factory: appraises and buys unw anted furniture & appliances right during your move to reduce moving costs.

Get TreFac Quote →

🔥 PAIN POINT #10: Getting Overcharged by a Single Local Trash Hauler for Full-House Cleanouts

INSIDER HINT #10

💡 **Pro Tip:** Once you have kept the treasures and cashed in the sellable items, you still have rotted tatami, broken washing machines, and decades of clutter to haul away. Calling a single company often results in a ¥500,000+ quote. By using a multi-company comparison portal like **Poimitsu (ぽいみつ)** or **Ihin Seiri 110-ban**, up to 5 vetted local disposal operators bid against each other—routinely cutting your clean-out invoice by 40% to 55%! Also, never pay recycle fees for old computers left in the house—mail them for free to **PC Sokai Zero**.

♻️ **Poimitsu (ぽいみつ) — Compare Up to 5 Akiya Clean-Out & Bulk Trash Quotes Free**

Japan's top comparison engine for Akiya decluttering, estate clearing, and bulk trash removal. Pit up to 5 local pros against each other.

Compare 5 Trash Quotes →

🧹 **Ihin Seiri 110-ban (遺品整理110番) & ECO Clean (ECOクリーン)**

TSE-listed nationw ide netw ork of certified estate-clearing specialists (*Ihin Seirishi*). Transparent flat-rate truck packages.

Get Clean-Out Estimate →

💻 **PC Sokai Zero (PC送壊ゼロ) — 100% Free Disposal of Old Computers & Laptops**

Found broken PCs in your Akiya? Box them up and ship them for free disposal & certified data destruction instead of paying municipal e-w aste fees.

Free PC Disposal →

Stage 5: Renovating & Reforming Your Akiya (Slashing Contractor Quotes by 40%)

The secret to a financially smart Akiya transformation is knowing **where to hire licensed pros** and **where to never pay middleman general contractor markups**. In Japan, hiring one big general contractor (*ゼネコン/工務店*) to manage everything adds a 25% to 35% management fee (*Shokeihi*) on top of every subcontractor's bill.

Realistic 2026 Akiya Renovation Cost Benchmark Table

Renovation Item	Single-Contractor Quote	Smart Comparison / Direct Pro	Recommended Route
Cold Tile Bath → Insulated Unit Bath	¥1,200,000 – ¥1,800,000	**¥680,000 – ¥1,050,000**	Ofuro no Reform / Nikka Home
Pit Toilet → Flush Toilet + Bidet	¥450,000 – ¥850,000	**¥220,000 – ¥420,000**	Nikka Home / Zehitomo
Modern System Kitchen Replacement	¥950,000 – ¥1,600,000	**¥550,000 – ¥900,000**	Toclas / Nikka Home Re:est
Roof Ridge / Tile Repair & Exterior Paint	¥1,400,000 – ¥2,500,000	**¥750,000 – ¥1,400,000**	Zehitomo / Reform Hikaku Pro
Tatami Renewal (8-Mat Room) & Shoji	¥120,000 – ¥180,000	**¥45,000 – ¥85,000**	Sanjo Tatami Direct
Bamboo / Weed Clearing & Tree Pruning	¥180,000 – ¥350,000	**¥60,000 – ¥140,000**	Zehitomo Local Landscapers

🔥 **PAIN POINT #11: Rural Contractor Monopolies Charging Double (Or Refusing Small Jobs)** **INSIDER HINT #11**

💡 **Pro Tip:** In small towns, calling the only construction sign you see by the train station often leads to inflated "captive customer" pricing. Instead, use **Zehitomo (ゼヒトモ)** to connect directly with independent local roofers, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, and landscapers (who keep 100% of their fee with zero commission cut), and run a parallel comparison on **Reform Hikaku Pro** and **Housing Bazaar** (which specializes in natural-wood, kominka-friendly local builders).

🔨 **Zehitomo (ゼヒトモ) — Hire Local Roofers, Carpenters, Plumbers & Landscapers Direct**

Answer 4 quick questions and receive free quotes from up to 5 local artisans for roof repair, exterior painting, tree cutting, or remodeling.

Get Free Zehitomo Quotes →

📊 **Reform Hikaku Pro (リフォーム比較プロ) & Housing Bazaar (自然派工務店紹介)**

Compare vetted local renovation companies side-by-side—or match with natural-material builders who understand traditional timber homes.

Compare Contractors →

🔥 PAIN POINT #12: Freezing 1970s Tile Bathrooms & Rusted Stainless Kitchens INSIDER HINT #12

💡 **Pro Tip:** Traditional Japanese tile bathrooms (*Zairai工法*) drop to near-freezing in winter—causing "heat shock" and rotting the surrounding деревянные sill beams through tile cracks. Upgrading to a sealed, insulated modular **Unit Bath** and modern **System Kitchen** is the single highest-ROI upgrade you can make. Always get a direct-construction estimate from **Nikka Home** and **Ofuro no Reform-yasan**, and visit a **Toclas Showroom** to select high-durability Japanese artificial marble countertops and insulated tubs.

🛁 **Nikka Home Re:est (ニッカホーム) — Direct-Construction Kitchen & Bath Reform**

One of Japan's largest in-house施工 (direct build, no middleman sub-subcontracting) renovation companies. Fast online estimate simulator.

Get Nikka Home Estimate →

♨️ **Ofuro no Reform-yasan (お風呂のリフォーム屋さん) & Toclas Showroom (トクラス)**

Specialists in converting cold tile baths into insulated unit baths—plus book a free Toclas show room tour to choose your kitchen & bath fixtures.

Quote Bath Remodel →

🔥 PAIN POINT #13: Musty, Sun-Bleached Tatami Mats, Torn Shoji & Dingy Wallpaper INSIDER HINT #13

💡 **Pro Tip:** Nothing transforms an old Japanese room faster or more affordably than fresh rush-grass tatami (*Igusa*—which naturally regulates humidity and smells incredible) and crisp *Fusuma / Shoji* doors. Don't haul heavy tatami mats yourself: **Sanjo Tatami (三条たたみ)**, founded over 80 years ago, brings free physical samples to your house anywhere in Japan, picks up your old mats, and installs brand-new tatami & shoji with a 5-year warranty! For Western rooms needing fresh wallpaper (*Kurosu*) or flooring, use **Naiso Master**.

🎍 **Sanjo Tatami (三条たたみ) — Nationwide Tatami, Fusuma & Shoji Renewal**

80+ years of craftsmanship. Free home sample consultation, pickup, and installation from just 1 mat—including w ater-resistant & modern Ryukyu tatami.

Request Free Sample Visit →

🎨 **Naiso Master (内装マスター) — Wallpaper, Flooring & Interior Remodeling**

Nationw ide interior specialists for replacing stained w allpaper, repairing dryw all, and laying durable cushion or w ood flooring.

Get Interior Quote →

Stage 6: Smart DIY, Custom Japanese Lumber & Renting High-End Gear

Once the roof is dry and the plumbing is modern, doing your own cosmetic and carpentry work (converting rotted tatami rooms into solid wood flooring, applying natural *Shikkui* lime plaster over dark mud walls, building a cedar deck, and organizing the *Kura* barn) will save you **¥1,500,000 to ¥3,000,000**.

⚖️ **Crucial Japanese DIY Law Check:** In Japan, any homeowner can legally do carpentry, flooring, tiling, plastering, painting, and low-voltage smart home setups. However, **touching hardwired 100V/200V electrical wiring behind walls or replacing wall outlets/switches legally requires a Second-Class Electrician License (*Daini-shu Denki Kojishi*)**. Never DIY hardwired electrical work—it voids Japanese fire insurance!

🔥 **PAIN POINT #14: Hauling 4-Meter Planks Without a Truck & Non-Standard Room Sizes**

INSIDER HINT #14

💡 **Pro Tip:** Traditional rural houses in Western Japan (Kansai, Chugoku, Shikoku, Kyushu) are built to *Kyoma* (京間) dimensions (where 1 tatami = 191cm × 95.5cm), which is larger than modern Tokyo *Edoma* (176cm × 88cm) plywood sheets sold at generic home centers! Instead of renting a truck and struggling with a circular saw, professional Japanese DIYers order directly from **Marutoku Shop (マルトクショップ)** in Kagawa Prefecture. You enter your exact length, width, and thickness in millimeters online, and they precision-cut solid Japanese Cedar (*Sugi*), *Hinoki* cypress, Oak, or Walnut—including tongue-and-groove floor joints, bevels, and urethane coating—and ship it straight to your Akiya doorstep!

🌲 **Marutoku Shop (木材通販のマルトクショップ) — Millimeter-Cut Japanese Cedar, Hinoki & Hardwood**

Order 1 board or a whole room of custom-cut solid wood flooring, live-edge counter slabs, and shelving delivered directly to your rural home.

Order Custom-Cut Lumber →

🔥 PAIN POINT #15: Spending ¥250,000+ Buying Heavy Tools & Appliances You Only Need Temporarily

INSIDER HINT #15

💡 **Pro Tip:** When you first take possession of an Akiya, you need a commercial Kärcher high-pressure washer to blast 30 years of moss off the stone walls, a heavy-duty dehumidifier to dry out the rooms, a robot vacuum, and a 360° camera to document before/after progress—plus maybe a temporary refrigerator and microwave before your real kitchen is built. Don't buy them! Use **Rentio (レンティオ)**, Japan's #1 gadget & appliance rental service, to rent pressure washers, tools, cameras, and home appliances for a few thousand yen with free round-trip shipping!

🧰 **Rentio (レンティオ) — Rent Pressure Washers, Dehumidifiers, Cameras & Appliances**

Over 3,500 items available for short-term or monthly subscription rental. Return easily from any rural 7-Eleven or Yamato office.

Browse Rentio Rentals →

🔧 **BRIGHT DIY & Ebisu Tool (えびすツール) — Precision DIY Tools & Industrial Consumables**

Innovative laser measures, w oodw orking jigs, sanding discs, cutting blades, and ISO-certified w orkshop consumables at w holesale prices.

Shop DIY Tools →

🚗 **Luminous Club (ルミナスクラブ), Spacia Pipe & FINE KAGU / CAGUUU**

Japan's #1 heavy-duty steel storage racks for your *Kura* barn, modular DIY pipe joints, and designer modern-Japanese furniture & lighting.

Shop Storage & Furniture →

Stage 7: Moving In, Utilities, Off-Grid Backup & Thriving in the Village

You have closed on your house, cleared the clutter, and completed the essential renovations. Now comes the transition from "project" to "home." Rural Japanese infrastructure has several quirks that catch newcomers off guard:

- **Moving Quotes Vary by 200%:** Long-distance moving quotes into rural prefectures vary wildly depending on whether a mover has an empty return truck (*Kaeri-bin*) heading your way.
- **Rural Winter Heating & Electricity Bills:** Large single-pane farmhouse rooms can send winter electricity bills soaring past ¥35,000/month unless you switch off the default legacy regional power tariff.
- **Fiber Optic Wait Times:** Getting NTT Flet's Hikari fiber pulled across rural telephone poles can take 4 to 8 weeks—you need instant plug-and-play or rechargeable WiFi from Day 1.
- **Old Pipes & Bath Boilers:** Houses that sat vacant for 3+ years have stagnant rust in the water lines and bacterial biofilm inside the reheating bath boiler loop (*Oidakikan*).

🔥 PAIN POINT #16: Expensive Moving Quotes & Navigating 4 Separate Japanese Utility Calls

INSIDER HINT #16

💡 **Pro Tip:** Never book the first moving company you call. Run a 60-second comparison on **Hikkoshi Samurai** or **Hikkoshi Rakutto NAVI** to cut moving fees by up to 50%. Then, instead of struggling through 4 separate technical Japanese phone calls to turn on electricity, gas, water, and internet at your new rural address, use **Denki Support Center** or **Hikkoshi Porta**—their staff handle all utility activations for you in one free call, and compare the cheapest regional power plans on **ENECHANGE**!

📦 **Hikkoshi Samurai (引越し侍) & Hikkoshi Rakutto NAVI — Compare 300+ Moving Companies**

Find long-distance and rural movers with empty return-truck discounts—saves up to 50% on relocation costs.

Compare Moving Quotes →

⚡ **ENECHANGE (エネチェンジ) & Denki Support Center — Slash Rural Power Bills**

Compare the cheapest regional electricity & gas tariffs in your prefecture and activate all utilities in one free concierge call.

Compare Power Plans →

📡 **GigaSet WiFi (ギガセットWiFi) & Nyanko Wi-Fi — No-Construction Instant Internet**

No waiting 2 months for fiber construction and no 2-year contract lock-in. Instant high-speed WiFi right out of the box.

Get Instant WiFi →

🔥 **PAIN POINT #17: Rusty Rural Pipes, Well Water Concerns, Bath Slime & Typhoon Blackouts** **INSIDER HINT #17**

💡 **Pro Tip:** Even though Japanese tap water is heavily treated, rural homes often have older plumbing or private well water (*Idomizu*). Keep a **Waterpoint Lifewater Jug** in your kitchen for instant, high-capacity purified drinking and cooking water. Before soaking in an existing bathtub with a reheating loop (*Oidaki*), hire **Kireiyu** to flush out years of hidden legionella/biofilm from inside the boiler pipes. Finally, every rural homeowner in Japan needs a **Jackery** or **EENOUR** solar portable power station—both to run power tools in off-grid barns and to keep your fridge, WiFi, and phones running during autumn typhoon power outages!

💧 **Waterpoint Lifewater Jug — High-Performance Rural & Kitchen Water Purifier**
Removes chlorine, pipe rust, lead, and impurities effortlessly without expensive under-sink plumbing modifications.

Get Lifewater Jug →

🧼 **Kireiyu (キレイユ 風呂釜洗浄) & Migakuru (ミガクる) — Deep Pipe & Move-In Cleaning**
Commercial-grade sterilization of hidden bath boiler circulation pipes + full pre-move-in house scrubbing.

Book Deep Cleaning →

🔋 **Jackery Solar Power Stations & EENOUR Generators — Off-Grid & Typhoon Backup**
Power circular saws in off-grid sheds and keep refrigerators & Starlink/WiFi running during rural typhoon blackouts.

Shop Jackery Solar →

The Unwritten Rules of Rural Community Integration (Chonaikai & Temiyage)

Your long-term happiness in the Japanese countryside depends 90% on your relationship with your immediate neighbors and the local ***Chonaikai / Jichikai* (町内会・自治会 — Neighborhood Association)**. Follow these three golden rules during your first week:

1. **Do the *Hikkoshi Aisatsu* (Move-In Greeting) Before Renovation Noise Starts:** Visit the local village leader (*Kucho / Jichikaicho*) and the houses immediately surrounding yours. Bring a nicely wrapped gift box (***Temiyage***, costing ¥1,500–¥3,000 per household—boxed sweets, cookies, tea, or local sake wrapped in *Noshi* paper reading *Go-Aisatsu* ご挨拶).
2. **Understand the *Kairanban* (回覧板):** A clipboard with local town notices will be placed in your mailbox. Read it, stamp or initial your family name in the box, and walk it over to the next neighbor on the list within 24–48 hours.
3. **Show Up for Communal *Kusakari* (草刈り):** Twice a year (usually May and September at 7:00 AM on a Sunday), the village gathers to clear weeds along irrigation canals and roads. Showing up with a smile and a pair of work gloves earns you instant, lifelong respect and protection from the entire village!

🔥 PAIN POINT #18: Choosing Proper "Temiyage" Neighbor Gifts & Getting a Rural Car

INSIDER HINT #18

💡 **Pro Tip:** Don't show up empty-handed when introducing yourself to the *Chonaikai* head! Order authentic, department-store wrapped *Go-Aisatsu* gift boxes from **Daimaru Matsuzakaya** or a bottle of award-winning **Ginten Luxury Sake** for the village chief. And once you settle in, if you want a brand-new 4WD Kei truck or SUV with zero down payment and all taxes/shaken inspections bundled into a flat ¥10,000–¥20,000/month payment, check **Orico Car Life**.

🎁 **Daimaru Matsuzakaya Online & Ginten Sake — Proper "Go-Aisatsu" Neighbor Gifts**

Order prestigious department-store wrapped sweets (with official *Noshi* greeting paper) and luxury Japanese sake delivered before move-in day.

Order Neighbor Gifts →

🚙 **Orico Car Lease (オリコで乗ーる) — Flat-Rate Rural 4WD & Kei Truck Leasing**

Choose from 300+ domestic models with road tax, weight tax, and Shaken maintenance bundled into one low monthly fee.

View Car Plans →

12 Vital Akiya Questions Answered (With Actionable Hints & Links)

Q1: Does buying an Akiya in Japan grant me a residency visa or permanent residency?

Answer: No. Property ownership and immigration status are completely separate under Japanese law. However, owning a debt-free home in Japan dramatically lowers your cost of living if you hold a Digital Nomad Visa, Cultural Activities Visa, Business Manager Visa (e.g., running a licensed *Minpaku* guesthouse or rural consultancy), Student Visa, or Spouse/Work Visa—or you can use it up to 180 days/year on standard visa-free tourist entries.

💡 **Pro Hint:** Even as a non-resident, you must have a real Japanese 070/080/090 phone number for property management → **Get a Mobal Japan Voice SIM (No Residence Card Required)**

Q2: Is a "¥0 (Free) Akiya" really free, or what are the hidden closing costs?

Answer: Even on a ¥0 giveaway or a ¥500,000 Akiya, you must pay statutory closing costs: Judicial Scrivener fee (¥60,000–¥120,000), Registration License Tax & Real Estate Acquisition Tax (based on the town hall's Fixed Asset Tax valuation, not the ¥0 price—usually ¥30,000–¥90,000), and optional gift/acquisition tax if gifted from an individual. Budget at least ¥250,000–¥400,000 ($1,700–$2,700) for closing fees.

💡 **Pro Hint:** Wire closing funds directly to your Judicial Scrivener in JPY without losing 4% to bank exchange fees → **Open a Free Wise Multi-Currency Account**

Q3: How much is annual property tax (Fixed Asset Tax / 固定資産税) on a rural Akiya?

Answer: Shockingly low! Because rural land valuations are modest and wooden structures over 22 years old are fully depreciated for tax purposes, annual Fixed Asset Tax (*Kotei Shisan-zei*) on a typical countryside Akiya is usually just **¥12,000 to ¥45,000 ($80 to $300 USD) per year**! (Warning: never leave an Akiya collapsing and untended, or the city can designate it a *Kanri Fuzen Akiya* and remove the 1/6 residential land tax discount).

💡 **Pro Hint:** Unsure if an Akiya's asking price or valuation is fair? → **Request a Neutral Valuation from the Real Estate Trouble Resolution Association**

Q4: How can I tell if an old farmhouse has secret termite (Shiroari) damage before spending millions?

Answer: Visual checks of tatami mats only catch advanced damage. Termites start in dark, damp underfloor ground sills (*Dodai*) near the bathroom and north wall.

💡 **Pro Hint:** Don't guess—book a 100% free professional underfloor crawl & photo diagnostic from TSE Prime-listed **Asante (アサンテ Free Termite Inspection)**.

Q5: The house I love is packed to the ceiling with the old owner's furniture and clothes. Should I walk away?

Answer: Never walk away from a great house because of clutter! Use the clutter as leverage to negotiate ¥300,000–¥500,000 off the purchase price, then use our 2-step clearing method.

💡 **Pro Hint:** Step 1: Call **Shichifuku (七福)** to buy old clothes (¥1,000/bag!) and antiques for cash. Step 2: Compare 5 bulk trash haulers on **Poimitsu (ぽいみつ)** for the lowest clean-out rate.

Q6: What is the single most important renovation to do first before moving in?

Answer: Assuming the roof doesn't leak, prioritize the **Bathroom & Toilet**. Replacing a freezing cold 1970s tiled bath with a modern insulated Unit Bath and converting the toilet to a heated washlet makes a 100-year-old house feel like a luxury modern hotel inside.

> 💡 **Pro Hint:** Compare direct-build unit bath & kitchen quotes via **Nikka Home Re:est** and **Ofuro no Reform-yasan**.

Q7: Where can I buy solid Japanese Cedar (Sugi) and Hinoki wood cut to fit my irregular old rooms?

Answer: Rural home centers only carry standard rough construction lumber, and you need a Kei truck to transport it.

> 💡 **Pro Hint:** Order custom millimeter-cut Japanese Cedar, Hinoki, and hardwood delivered straight to your Akiya from **Marutoku Shop (マルトクショップ)**.

Q8: I only visit Japan for 1–2 months at a time to renovate. Should I buy expensive power washers and appliances?

Answer: No! Buying and storing ¥300,000 worth of Kärcher pressure washers, laser levels, dehumidifiers, and temporary appliances wastes capital.

> 💡 **Pro Hint:** Rent pressure washers, tools, cameras, and home appliances by the week or month on **Rentio (レンティオ)** and return them at any 7-Eleven.

Q9: How do I get high-speed internet at my rural house immediately if fiber optic construction takes 2 months?

Answer: Rural fiber (*Hikari*) requires pole-to-house engineering surveys. In the meantime—or permanently if you visit seasonally—use a contract-free cloud router that connects automatically to the strongest local 4G/5G tower.

> 💡 **Pro Hint:** Order a no-contract, no-construction router from **GigaSet WiFi** or **Sakura Mobile**.

Q10: Is tap water or well water in a 60-year-old rural Akiya safe to drink right away?

Answer: Municipal water in Japan is strictly regulated, but water sitting inside an Akiya's old supply pipes—or private well water—can contain pipe rust, chlorine odor, or sediment.

> 💡 **Pro Hint:** Run all taps for 15 minutes and purify all drinking/cooking water with the **Waterpoint Lifewater Jug**.

Q11: What happens when a rural typhoon knocks out power in the mountains?

Answer: Fallen bamboo and cedar trees on mountain roads can delay power restoration for 12 to 48 hours. If your water pump or kerosene heater fan relies on electricity, a blackout cuts heat and water too.

> 💡 **Pro Hint:** Keep a high-capacity solar battery generator charged at home → **Jackery Solar Portable Power Stations** & **EENOUR Generators**.

Q12: How do I find newly listed municipal Akiya before everyone else on social media sees them?

Answer: By the time an Akiya goes viral on Instagram or YouTube, 50 people have already called the town hall. You need to monitor municipal bank delta arrivals at the source.

Pro Hint: Bookmark **brusjapan.com/akiya** and join **Early Bird VIP Instant Alerts (48h Priority Access)**.

The Master Akiya Resource Bible (45+ Vetted Partners)

Bookmark this section! Every service below has been vetted and organized in exact chronological order from your first scouting flight to your move-in party. Click any blue/orange button or link to open the official service page.

Stage 1: Property Hunting, Connectivity, Flights, Car Hire & Staging Stays

Service / Brand	Why You Need It & Best Use Case	Direct Link
Bru's Japan Early Bird VIP	0-hour instant alerts & direct municipal links 48h before public release across all 47 prefectures (¥980/mo).	Unlock VIP →
Bru's Japan Akiya Directory	Search 689+ official municipal Akiya bank listings across 1,718 Japanese towns & cities. Bookmark daily!	Open Directory →
Mobal Japan Voice SIM/eSIM	Official 070/080/090 Japanese phone number required on City Hall Akiya Bank forms. No residence card needed.	Get Mobal SIM →
Sakura Mobile	Unlimited Pocket WiFi & long-term SIMs on Docomo's rural network with full English support.	Sakura Mobile →
Daredemo Mobile	100% approval Japanese voice + data smartphone contract via bank direct debit (no credit card required).	Daredemo SIM →
Gromoba eSIM & Global Mobile	Instant QR-code eSIM and high-speed Pocket WiFi rentals for scouting trips across Japan.	Gromoba eSIM →
Glocal eSIM & trifa	Flexible multi-country and domestic Japan eSIM data packages via easy smartphone app.	Glocal eSIM →
Skyscanner Japan	Instant comparison of domestic regional flights, hotels, and airport car rentals across Japan.	Skyscanner →
DiscoverCars & Tabirai Car	Compare rural rental cars with ETC highway cards & English GPS across regional train stations.	Compare Cars →
Ren-Navi & Airtrip Car Rental	Compare 100+ local Japanese car rental companies for long-term regional property scouting.	Ren-Navi Cars →
Village House (ビレッジハウス)	¥20,000/month apartments with ¥0 deposit, ¥0 key money, ¥0 agency fee—ideal staging base during renovations!	Village House →
TABILMO, Agoda & Jalan	Book whole-house rental cottages (*Ittogashi*), ryokan, and rural business hotels while house-hunting.	Book Stays →

Stage 2 & 3: Structural Inspections, Pest Control, Valuation, FX Wires & Loans

Service / Brand	Why You Need It & Best Use Case	Direct Link
Asante (アサンテ)	TSE Prime-listed #1 specialist: **100% Free Underfloor Crawl, Termite & Moisture Inspection** with photo report.	**Free Inspection →**
FireWorks Pest & Wildlife	Same-day eradication of giant hornets (*Suzumebachi*), attic raccoons, civets, and rodents.	**Pest Removal →**
RE Trouble Resolution Assoc.	Neutral third-party property valuation and consultation for boundary or structural defect disputes.	**Fair Valuation →**
Miraias & Wakegai	Transparent smart brokerage valuation and specialized buyouts for non-rebuildable or inherited homes.	**Wakegai / Miraias →**
Wise Multi-Currency Account	Send JPY closing payments & contractor wires at the real mid-market exchange rate (saves 3%–4% bank markup).	**Open Wise Free →**
JFC, Tsubasa & Nippo Loans	Real estate collateral & property utilization loans for renovation capital or investment purchases.	**Property Loans →**

Stage 4, 5 & 6: House Clearing, Cash Buyouts, Renovation Quotes, DIY Lumber & Rentals

Service / Brand	Why You Need It & Best Use Case	Direct Link
Shichifuku (出張買取 七福)	Free home-visit buyout: pays **¥1,000/bag even for torn clothes** + cash for kimono, ceramics & antiques!	**Cash Buyout →**
Poimitsu (ぽいみつ)	Compare up to 5 Akiya clean-out, estate clearing & bulk trash haulers at once to cut disposal costs by 50%.	**Compare 5 Quotes →**
Ihin Seiri 110-ban & ECO Clean	TSE-listed nationwide network for full-house *Zanchibutsu* sorting, clearing, and heavy item removal.	**Estate Clearing →**
PC Sokai Zero	100% Free mail-in disposal and data wiping of old computers & laptops left inside the property.	**Free PC Disposal →**
Zehitomo (ゼヒトモ)	Get up to 5 free direct quotes from local roofers, exterior painters, carpenters, plumbers & landscapers.	**Find Local Pros →**
Reform Hikaku Pro & Housing Bazaar	Compare vetted renovation contractors side-by-side or match with natural-wood kominka builders.	**Compare Reform →**
Nikka Home Re:est & Ofuro Reform	Direct-build estimates for converting freezing tile baths into insulated Unit Baths and modern System Kitchens.	**Kitchen & Bath →**
Toclas Showroom	Reserve a showroom consultation for high-durability Japanese system kitchens and modular baths.	**Toclas Showroom →**
Sanjo Tatami & Naiso Master	Free home sample visit for brand-new tatami mats, *Fusuma* & *Shoji* screens—plus wallpaper/flooring pros.	**Sanjo Tatami →**
Marutoku Shop (マルトクショップ)	Order solid Japanese Cedar (*Sugi*), *Hinoki* & hardwood custom-cut to the millimeter and shipped to your door.	**Custom Lumber →**
Rentio (レンティオ)	Rent Kärcher pressure washers, laser levels, dehumidifiers, cameras & appliances by the week or month!	**Rent on Rentio →**
BRIGHT DIY, Ebisu Tool & Luminous	Precision DIY tools, industrial consumables, steel barn storage racks, and modern-Japanese furniture.	**Shop DIY Gear →**

Stage 7: Moving, Utilities, Water Purification, Off-Grid Solar & Community Gifts

Service / Brand	Why You Need It & Best Use Case	Direct Link
Hikkoshi Samurai & Rakutto NAVI	Compare 300+ moving companies to unlock up to 50% off long-distance rural relocation truck rates.	**Moving Quotes →**
ENECHANGE & Denki Support	Compare the cheapest regional electricity tariffs + free 1-call activation of pow er, gas, w ater & internet.	**Power & Utilities →**
GigaSet WiFi & Nyanko Wi-Fi	Instant no-construction, contract-free home & mobile WiFi w hile w aiting for rural fiber installation.	**Instant WiFi →**
Waterpoint Lifew ater Jug	High-capacity pitcher w ater purifier for old rural plumbing and w ell-w ater filtration.	**Water Purifier →**
Kireiyu & Migakuru Cleaning	Commercial sterilization of hidden bath boiler circulation pipes + full pre-move-in house scrubbing.	**Deep Cleaning →**
Jackery Solar & EENOUR	Solar portable pow er stations & inverter generators for off-grid DIY w ork and rural typhoon blackouts.	**Off-Grid Power →**
Daimaru Matsuzakaya & Ginten Sake	Department-store w rapped *Go-Aisatsu* neighbor gift boxes and luxury sake for your village chief introduction.	**Neighbor Gifts →**

Quick-Scan Pain Point → Solution Matrix

Stuck on a specific problem right now? Scan the bullet list below to jump straight from your **Pain Point** to the exact **Vetted Solution**:

- **Best cheap Akiya are already sold before I see them** → **Get 0-hour alerts 48h before public release: Bru's Japan Early Bird VIP & Bookmark Live Directory**
- **City Hall Akiya Bank form requires a Japanese 070/080/090 phone number** → **Passport-only Japanese Voice SIM/eSIM: Mobal Japan** (or no-credit-check **Daredemo Mobile**)
- **No cell signal or translation apps working in remote mountain villages** → **Docomo-backbone Pocket WiFi & instant eSIM: Sakura Mobile & Gromoba eSIM**
- **Rural buses only run twice a day—can't reach properties** → **Compare regional airport flights & ETC rental cars: Skyscanner & DiscoverCars / Tabirai**
- **Paying ¥15,000/night for hotels while scouting or renovating** → **Rent a ¥20,000/month zero-deposit staging apartment: Village House** (or **TABILMO Cottages**)
- **Worried about hidden termites (Shiroari) & rotted floor beams** → **Book a 100% Free underfloor crawl & photo report: Asante (アサンテ)**
- **Giant hornets (Suzumebachi), raccoons, or civets nesting in the attic** → **Same-day professional wildlife & nest eradication: FireWorks Pest Control**
- **Unsure if seller's price is fair or if property has boundary/rebuildability issues** → **Independent valuation & distressed property consult: RE Trouble Resolution Assoc. & Wakegai**
- **Losing $2,000+ to 4% bank FX markups when wiring closing funds to Japan** → **Mid-market JPY conversion & direct scrivener transfers: Wise Multi-Currency Account**
- **Traditional Japanese banks refuse loans on old wooden houses** → **Flexible real estate collateral & renovation financing: JFC Loans & Nippo**
- **House is stuffed with old clothes, kimono, dishes & antiques** → **Free home-visit buyout (pays ¥1,000/bag for clothes + antiques!): Shichifuku (七福)**
- **Single local trash hauler quoted ¥600,000 to empty the house** → **Compare 5 bulk trash & estate clean-out companies at once: Poimitsu (ぽいみつ) & Ihin Seiri 110-ban**
- **Old broken computers left behind in the house** → **100% Free mail-in PC disposal & data wiping: PC Sokai Zero**
- **Need reliable local roofers, exterior painters, carpenters, or weed clearers** → **Get up to 5 direct local artisan quotes with zero middleman fee: Zehitomo (ゼヒトモ)**
- **General contractor renovation estimate feels way too expensive** → **Benchmark against multiple vetted reform companies & kominka builders: Reform Hikaku Pro & Housing Bazaar**

• **Freezing 1970s tiled bathroom & outdated kitchen** → **Direct-build insulated Unit Bath & System Kitchen remodeling: Nikka Home Re:est, Ofuro no Reform & Toclas**

• **Musty, stained tatami mats & torn shoji/fusuma sliding doors** → **Free nationwide sample visit, pickup & brand-new tatami installation: Sanjo Tatami**

• **Dingy wallpaper (Kurosu) & worn interior flooring** → **Fast nationwide interior finishing & resheeting: Naiso Master**

• **Can't haul 4-meter cedar boards or cut exact Kyoma room dimensions** → **Order custom millimeter-cut Japanese Cedar, Hinoki & hardwood online: Marutoku Shop**

• **Don't want to spend ¥250,000 buying pressure washers, dehumidifiers & tools** → **Rent Kärcher washers, laser levels, cameras & appliances by the week/month: Rentio (レンティオ)**

• **Need specialty DIY tools, barn storage racks, or modern Japanese furniture** → **Shop direct online: BRIGHT DIY, Luminous Steel Racks & FINE KAGU**

• **Long-distance moving quote to the countryside is too high** → **Compare 300+ movers for return-truck discounts (up to 50% off): Hikkoshi Samurai & Rakutto NAVI**

• **Overwhelmed setting up Japanese electricity, gas, water & internet** → **Free 1-call utility setup + cheapest regional power comparison: Denki Support Center & ENECHANGE**

• **Fiber optic internet construction takes 6–8 weeks in the countryside** → **Instant plug-and-play no-construction WiFi: GigaSet WiFi & Nyanko Wi-Fi**

• **Worried about old galvanized water pipes, well sediment & dirty bath boiler loops** → **Purify drinking water & deep-sterilize bath pipes: Waterpoint Lifewater Jug & Kireiyu Pipe Clean**

• **Typhoon power outages or working in an off-grid barn without electricity** → **High-capacity solar portable power stations & generators: Jackery Solar & EENOUR**

• **Want to make a great first impression on rural neighbors & the village chief** → **Properly wrapped department-store "Go-Aisatsu" gifts & luxury sake: Daimaru Matsuzakaya & Ginten Sake**

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