

TOP TEN TAKEAWAY TIPS FOR THE ADVENTURE OF GROWING OLD IN JAPAN

Presentation by Wm. (Wilhelmina) Penn (author of *The Expat's Guide to Growing Old in Japan*, available from Amazon stores worldwide and I think it can be ordered from Kinokuniya's Sapporo Station branch. It seems the books they had in stock have sold out.)

Growing old in Japan is the ultimate Japan experience but how does one prepare? Penn noted that when she started working on the book in 2016 she had three main goals - to help get her papers in order to make things easier for her daughter, and to stop procrastinating and really figure out the nitty gritty details of the topic and then collect the information in one place so her aging brain didn't have to keep looking it up over and over again. And so the book was born.

She said educating ourselves and stocking up with accurate knowledge on how the system works is really the best road map for this journey into the unknown. That said, it took her awhile to follow this sound advice. In 2016 when she sat down to write the book, she was already over 65 years old; but, she added, it's never too late (or for the more conscientious never too early) to get started.

When she did finally start researching pensions, senior housing and health care, wills and inheritances, it really did turn into an exciting

adventure of discovery. Every day she would turn up some new bit of information and say “Wow, I didn’t know that... but I should have.” She also realized how lucky she'd been to have had good advice over the years to keep from falling into any of the many potential potholes out there.

She also came away with the realization that much of the information available in Japanese or English is just basic information that scratches the surface. Some of the most important key points get buried deep in the text in either language. Or in the case of English brochures, they often do not get mentioned at all. So the first part of the great adventure was trying to scratch below the surface and figure out in plain language what a lot of this all really means for us in day-to-day life.

Then she shared with the audience what she considers ten of the key points from the book - things that we need to know and that she hopes everyone who reads the book will take away with them. (See the accompanying PDF for a short synopsis.) She concluded by cautioning the audience that she was not a lawyer, accountant, care manager or professional in any of these fields. When confronted with these issues, always seek out the assistance of the pros who keep up on it all and can guide you as you pursue the complexities of your own great adventure.