

# 第4部 課題

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## 第17回 毎日パソコン入力コンクール 秋季大会

【課題】

第4部 英文B

Private lodgings must fit in with communities

制限時間 5分

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※この課題は、平成29年3月14日付 毎日新聞社説の英訳より引用しました。

(文字数3,600字程度)

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Editorial: Private lodgings must fit in with communities 

Japan has moved a big step closer to allowing private lodgings,  
or "minpaku," to be made available to travelers <sup>↓10級</sup> across the  
country with the Cabinet's endorsement of a bill that would allow <sup>↓8級</sup>  
people to rent out vacant rooms in private homes for up to 180 <sup>↓5級</sup>  
days per year. <sup>↓3級</sup>  <sup>↓準2級</sup>

Up until now, permission under the Inns and Hotels Act was <sup>↓2級</sup>  
required when operating a minpaku facility, like Airbnb, in an  
area outside a state-designated special strategic zone. But there  
has been a constant stream of operators failing to get permission  
and illegally providing such accommodation. A survey by the  
Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare found that just 2 percent  
of operators in metropolitan areas had obtained the necessary  
permission.  <sup>↓準1級</sup>

The new legislation would allow people to run minpaku facilities <sup>↓1級</sup>  
after notifying the prefectural governor. The government  
apparently hopes that the number of legal operators will increase  
as a result, alleviating a shortage of hotels stemming from the  
rapid increase in the number of travelers to Japan. 

But there are some points of concern. 

Minpaku facilities vary greatly both in nature and purpose.  
These facilities should be distinguished from each other in how  
they are handled, but the legislation doesn't necessarily do  
that. 

There are cases in which homeowners rent out empty rooms in  
their own homes, as well as others in which empty homes in

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underpopulated areas are rented out with the aim of revitalizing the area. These small-scale, "face-to-face" minpaku facilities have the potential to boost cultural exchange and encourage young people to travel, and we hope they will be actively promoted. 

However, under the new legislation, providers of minpaku lodgings are requested to provide explanations of the facilities and ask for guests to cooperate in noise prevention in foreign languages. But are blanket regulations on such face-to-face facilities necessary? 

At the same time, it remains uncertain how far authorities can go in cracking down on violators in cases where operators acquire large numbers of apartments and operate minpaku businesses. 

Moreover, is there a way of cracking down on businesses that operate minpaku facilities beyond the 180 day limit? If the situation is left unaddressed, inns and hotels that are not permitted to operate in residential areas will be left at a competitive disadvantage. 

Trouble with other residents is also an issue. For minpaku lodgings where the owner is absent, a business registered with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport is supposed to manage the facility. If shuttles carrying large numbers of foreign travelers are constantly blocking roads, or if the manners of those staying in the facilities are poor, then it could stir up sentiment causing people to reject foreigners in general. 

Depending on the circumstances in each area, the upper limit on the number of days in which visitors can stay could be reduced under local ordinances. If lodgings in apartment complexes and

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other such locations draw complaints from locals, and even small-scale, face-to-face minpaku facilities end up being restricted as a result, then that is a problem. 

The proposed legislation will be debated in the Diet in the future. Deregulation that merely focuses on increasing the number of foreign travelers to spark economic growth as domestic consumption reaches a plateau is not acceptable. 

Whether minpaku facilities are used by foreigners or Japanese, we should strive to make them places that promote mutual understanding and which coexist with communities.

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