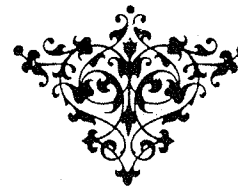


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nihongo notes 8

The Japan Times  
**situational  
japanese 3**

by osamu mizutani  
nobuko mizutani



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The Japan Times

## FOREWORD

This book is a compilation of 74 columns appearing in *The Japan Times* from February 16, 1986 to July 19, 1987. (The preceding 498 columns have been published as *Nihongo Notes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6* and 7. *Nihongo Notes 6* and 7 are entitled *Situational Japanese 1* and 2.)

It is a great pleasure for us to be able to publish another volume, and we are very grateful for your continued interest. We hope that you will enjoy reading this volume and that it will help you to understand the Japanese language more fully.

In this volume, we have attempted to explain, among other things, how some basic words and phrases are used in social life, how the Japanese modify their speech depending on the purpose, and what expressions are most likely to precede certain categories of speech such as making a request, apologizing, stating an opinion, and reporting what another person has said. Throughout, we have concentrated on actual speech patterns used in daily life.

We would like to acknowledge the help of Janet Ashby, who checked the English for these columns and offered valuable suggestions just as she did for the preceding seven volumes.

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#### Note Concerning Romanization

The romanization used in this book (as well as in *An Introduction to Modern Japanese*) is based on the Hepburn system with the following modifications.

1. When the same vowel occurs consecutively, the letter is repeated rather than using the "-" mark.  
ex. *Tookyoo* (instead of *Tōkyō*)
2. The sound indicated by the hiragana *ん* is written with "n" regardless of what sound follows it.  
ex. *shinbun* (instead of *shimbun*)  
ex. *shinpai* (instead of *shimpai*)

The words connected with hyphens are pronounced as one unit.

- ex. *genki-desu*  
ex. *Soo-desu-ne*

## ...*deshoo-ka* and ...*desu-ka*

Mr. Lerner happened to pass by Miss Yoshida when she was answering the phone, and heard her say

*Dochirasama-deshoo-ka.*

(May I ask who is speaking, please?)

And after that, she asked

*Oyakusoku-deshoo-ka.*

(Do you have an appointment? — *lit.* Is it your appointment?)

Mr. Lerner noticed that she used *deshoo-ka* instead of *desu-ka* both times, and wondered if this was more polite.

\* \* \*

In the sentences above, Miss Yoshida could have said

*Dochirasama-desu-ka.*

*Oyakusoku-desu-ka.*

But these sentences sound more demanding than those ending with *deshoo-ka* when spoken with the same tone. Using *deshoo-ka* makes a question sound less demanding. In response to someone trying to call your attention,

*Hai, nan-deshoo-ka.*

(Yes. What can I do for you?)

sounds more polite than

*Hai, nan-desu ka.*

Using *deshoo-ka* is also recommended when politely asking about someone's opinion or wishes. For instance, saying

*Kore-de yoroshii-deshoo-ka.*

これで よろしいでしょうか。

(Will this be all right?)

*Nanji-ni ukagaeba yoroshii-deshoo-ka.*

何時に うかがえば よろしいでしょうか。

(What time would you like me to come?)

sounds more reserved than saying *Kore-de yoroshii-desu-ka* or *Nanji-ni ukagaeba yoroshii-desu-ka*.

However, *Soo-deshoo-ka* cannot be used in place of *Soo-desu-ka* (Is that so?). *Soo-deshoo-ka* is not a reserved version of *Soo-desu-ka*; rather, it indicates criticism or a negative judgment. For instance, in the following conversation *Soo-desu-ka* should be used.

A: *Kochira-no hoo-ga ii-to omoimasu.*

(I think this is better.)

B: *Soo-desu-ka. Ja, sore-ni shimashoo.*

(You do? Then I will decide on that one.)

If *Soo-deshoo-ka* were used it would be followed by something like:

B: *Soo-deshoo-ka. Sore-wa amari yoku nai-to omoimasu-ga.*

(You really do? I'm afraid I don't think that's so good.)

## ... *n-ja nai-deshoo-ka* meaning 'it seems to me ...'

Mr. Mori, the director of the company, showed a plan submitted by a colleague of Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada and asked them their opinion of it. Mr. Lerner glanced through the plan and was going to say

*Taihen ii-to omoimasu.*  
(I think it is very good.)

when Mr. Takada said

*Nakanaka ii-n-ja nai-deshoo-ka.*  
なかなか いいんじゃないでしょうか。

Mr. Lerner understood that Mr. Takada also approved of the plan, but he wondered what implication ... *n-ja nai-deshoo-ka* has in this case.

...*n-ja nai-deshoo-ka* shows the speaker's reserve in expressing his opinion. For instance,

*Ii-n-ja nai-deshoo-ka.*

means "I should think it is good." It does not mean "It is not good." In the same way

*Iku-n-ja nai-deshoo-ka.*  
行くんじゃないでしょうか。

means "It seems to me that he is going to go."

Thus, ... *n-ja nai-deshoo-ka* can be replaced by ... *to omoimasu* as far as the substantial meaning of the statement is concerned, as in

*Ii -to omoimasu.*  
*Ii -n-ja nai-deshoo-ka.*

although ...*n-ja nai-deshoo-ka* sounds more reserved.

When preceded by nouns and noun-like adjectives (*na* adjectives), ... *nan-ja nai-deshoo-ka* is used as in

*Kore, Yamada-san-no nimotsu-nan-ja nai-deshoo-ka.*

(This might be Mr. Yamada's luggage.)

*Ano-hito, byooki-nan-ja nai-deshoo-ka.*

あの人、病気なんじゃないでしょうか。

(I'm afraid he is sick.)

In this type of sentence, the *da* of ... *da-to omoimasu* changes to *na* as in

... *byooki -da-to omoimasu.*

... *byooki -nan-ja nai-deshoo-ka.*

## **Nandemo used to convey uncertain information**

Mr. Lerner asked Miss Yoshida this afternoon if she knew anything about Mr. Kobayashi, who had been absent from the office for a week. She answered

*Nandemo okāasan-ga byooki-da-soo-desu-kedo.*  
(I heard that his mother is sick or something.)

Mr. Lerner wondered what the first word *nandemo* meant in her sentence.

\* \* \*

*Nandemo* literally means "whatever it is," and is often used in this sense as in

*Nandemo ii-kara kaku mono-o kashite-kudasai.*  
(Please lend me something to write with. Anything will do.)

*Taberareru mono-nara nandemo kamaimasen-yo.*

(Anything is all right as long as it is edible.)

But in Miss Yoshida's speech above, *nandemo* was used in a different way. It is sometimes used to indicate that the speaker is going to convey a bit of information although he is not absolutely sure if it is true. When the speaker uses this word, he concludes his sentence with such expressions as ... *soo-desu* (I hear ...), ... *to yuu koto-desu* (I understand ...), ... *to yuu hanashi-desu* (it is said that ...) and the like, as in

*Yamada-san-wa nandemo gofun-bakari okureru-to yuu koto-desu.*  
(I understand Mr. Yamada is going to be about

five minutes late or something.)

*Nandemo kondo kaisha-o yameta-soo-desu-yo.*  
なんでも こんど 会社を やめたそうですよ。  
(I heard he has quit his job.)

It is often said that in Japanese one has to wait until the last part of the sentence to know whether it is in the affirmative or negative. But there are words that imply the rest of the sentence, and help the listener understand quickly. For instance, *doomo* or *chotto* often imply that the sentence is going to be negative either in meaning or form. In the same way, by hearing *nandemo* the listener knows that what follows is the speaker's giving of uncertain information.

## Zehi used to express one's will and wishes

It started snowing while Mr. Lerner and his colleagues were talking at lunchtime yesterday. They all hoped it would stop snowing by the time they left the office. Mr. Lerner said

*Yamimasu-yo. Zehi yamimasu.*

meaning "It will stop snowing. It certainly will."

They all laughed as if amused. Mr. Lerner wondered if he should have used another word such as *kitto* or *kanarazu* instead of *zehi*.

\* \* \*

*Kanarazu* and *kitto* are used to indicate certainty about what will happen in the future (or what happened in the past), as in

*Kono keekaku-wa kitto seekoo-suru-daroo.*

(This plan will certainly succeed.)

*Kitto kite-kudasai-ne.*

(Please be sure to come.)

*Ashita kanarazu mairimasu.*

(I will come tomorrow without fail.)

These two words can be used both when stating one's own judgment and when expressing one's will or wishes. The difference between *kanarazu* and *kitto* is that *kitto* sounds more familiar.

On the other hand *zehi* is used only when expressing one's will or wishes, as in

*Zehi ukagaitai-to omoimasu.*

ぜひ うかがいたいとおもいます。

(I would very much like to come.)

*Zehi oide-kudasai.*

ぜひ おいでください。

(Please be sure to come.)

*Zehi* cannot be used when stating one's judgment, as in *Kono keekaku-wa zehi seekoo-shimasu*. It can be used if one expresses one's desires as in

*Kono keekaku-wa zehi seekoo-sasetai-desu-ne.*

(We certainly hope to see this plan succeed — *lit.* We certainly want to have this plan succeed.)

In Mr. Lerner's statement above, it would have been appropriate to say

*Zehi yande-hoshii-desu-ne.*

(We certainly hope it will stop snowing.)

But his statement can be taken as a slightly twisted form of this sentence; this is why the listeners took it as a humorous expression.



## ...*wa* used at the end of a sentence

When Mr. Okada had finished his business discussions and was leaving the office yesterday, he said

*Isogashikute, isogashikute, komarimasu-wa.*  
いそがしくて、いそがしくて、こまりますわ。  
(I'm so busy that I don't know what to do.)

Mr. Lerner knew that many Japanese businessmen complain about being busy, but he wondered why Mr. Okada used *wa* at the end of his sentence; isn't *wa* a feminine ending?

\* \* \*

In feminine speech *wa* is used at the end of a sentence to emphasize the speaker's intentions or judgment, as in

*Kyoo-wa kinoo-yori samui-wa.*  
(It's colder today than it was yesterday.)  
*Moo kaeru-wa.*  
(I'm going home now.)  
*Sonna koto, arimasen-wa.*  
(That's not so.)

Sometimes *wa* is also used by men to emphasize their intentions or judgment, although the frequency of use by men is much lower. The two *wa* are thought to be the same in origin; in classical works and in dialects *wa* is used for emphasis by both men and women. But nowadays the men's *wa* is not used as often as the women's *wa*. And the two are pronounced differently. Namely, women's *wa* is usually pronounced slightly higher in pitch than what precedes it, as in

*Kyoo-wa kinoo-yori samui<sup>-wa</sup>.*

On the other hand, men's *wa* is pronounced lower than what precedes it, as in

*Kyoo-wa kinoo-yori samui<sub>-wa</sub>.*

*Moo kaeru<sub>-wa</sub>.*

*Sonna koto, arimasen<sub>-wa</sub>.*

Another difference is that women's *wa* is often followed by *yo* and *ne*, as in

*Kyoo-wa kinoo-yori samui-wayo.*  
*Moo kaeru-wane.*

But men's *wa* is seldom followed by *yo* and *ne*.

## Kono mama meaning 'Just as it is now'

Mr. Lerner and his colleagues had a meeting to discuss several things yesterday afternoon. It took more time than expected and it was past five o'clock before it was finished. Mr. Lerner started taking back the chairs that had been brought in from other rooms, when Miss Yoshida came up and said

*Doozo kono mama-ni shite-oite-kudasai. Ato-wa watashi-ga shimasu-kara.*

(Please leave them as they are. I will take care of them later.)

Mr. Lerner thought to himself that he was not yet able to use *kono mama*; he would have said something like *Doozo nokoshite-kudasai* (Please leave them.)

\* \* \*

... *mama* is added to verbs (usually in the *-ta* form) and (pro)noun-plus-*no*, as in

*Megane-o kaketa mama nete-shimaimashita.*

(I went to sleep with my glasses on — *lit.* I slept as I wore my glasses.)

*Kutsu-no mama haitte-mo kamaimasen-ka.*

(Can I go in with my shoes on?)

When an older person comes into the room and the people sitting start standing up, he will often say

*Doozo sono mama. (lit. Just as you are.)*

どうぞ その まま。

meaning "Please be seated as you are now" or "Don't trouble to stand up."

Expressions with *mama* imply that some necessary action has not been taken yet, as in

*Kooto-no mama shokujji-o suru-nowa yoku nai.*

コートのまま

(It is not appropriate to have a meal with one's coat on. — *kooto-no mama* implies that one should take off one's coat.)

*Tatta mama-ja hanashi-ga dekimasen-kara, kakete-kudasai.* 立ったまま

(We can't talk well while standing. Please take a seat.)

*Kawa-no mama taberu hito-mo arimasu-ga, watashi-wa muite taberu hoo-ga suki-desu.*

(Some people eat them with the skins left on, but I prefer peeling them.)

**...mashoo-ka (Shall I...?)  
used to inquire about someone's  
wishes**

Mr. Lerner and his colleagues had a meeting to discuss several problems the other day. The discussions continued for a long time and the air became filled with cigarette smoke. Mr. Lerner stood up and asked Miss Yoshida

*Mado-o akete-moraitai-desu-ka.*

meaning "Would you like me to open the window?" She thanked him immediately, but he felt that his offer had not been stated quite right.

\* \* \*

When offering help or inquiring as to someone's wishes, the most appropriate form to use is ...*mashoo-ka* as in

*Onimotsu, omochi-shimashoo-ka.*

お荷物、お持ちしましょうか。

(*lit.* Shall I carry your luggage?)

*Ashita nanji-ni kimashoo-ka.*

あした 何時に 来ましょうか。

(*lit.* What time shall I come tomorrow?)

To directly put into Japanese such English sentences as "Would you like me to carry your luggage?" does not sound right. Saying something like *Nimotsu-o motte-moraitai-desu-ka* (*lit.* Do you want me to carry your luggage?) or *Ashita nanji-ni kite-moraitai-desu-ka* (*lit.* What time do you want me to come?) can be understood but these sound like direct translations.

Moreover, ...*te-moraitai-desu-ka* is impolite because it sounds as if the other person is anxious

to receive help from you. ...*tai-desu* is usually used to refer to the speaker's feelings; it can be used in questions only in familiar speech. You can ask a friend or family members such questions as *Mizu nomitai?* (Want some water?) or *Moo kaeritai?* (Do you want to go home now?), but otherwise it is impolite to ask another's wishes directly with ...*tai-desu-ka*.

At a store the clerk will ask you politely

*Nani-o sashiagemashoo-ka.*

(May I help you? — *lit.* What shall I give you?)

He or she would never say *Nani-ga hoshii-desu-ka*. At a sushi shop, the cook at the counter will ask you *Tsugi-wa nan-ni shimashoo-ka* (*lit.* What shall I serve you next?). He would not say *Tsugi-wa nani tabetai-desu-ka*.

## Expressions used when offering a gift

Mr. Lerner helped Mr. Takada with some letters in English a few days ago. Mr. Takada brought a packet of handkerchiefs to the office today and handed it to him as a token of gratitude while saying

*Amari ii mon-ja nai-kedo, tsukatte-kudasai.*

(These are not very good, but please use them.)

Mr. Lerner accepted it and thanked him. While doing so he wondered if the expression he had learned — *tsumaranai mono-desu-ga* — could also be used in this case.

\* \* \*

Expressions used when offering a gift vary depending on the situation. On formal occasions a polite expression

*Makoto-ni tsumaranai mono-desu-ga, doozo.*

(This is very small but — “please accept it” implied)

is used. Older people use this expression more often than younger people because they have more occasions to speak formally.

This expression is used in its familiar version, too, as in

*Kore, tsumaranai mono-da-kedo.*

これ、つまらないものだけど。

(This is small but — “please take it” implied.)

Sometimes the pronunciation is even more casual,

as in

*Kore, tsumannai mon-da-kedo.*

*Kore, tsumaran mon-da-kedo. (used by men)*

On less formal occasions, various expressions to depreciate one's gift are used, as in

*Taishita mon-ja nai-n-da-kedo.*

たいしたもんじゃ ないんだけど。

(This isn't much.)

*Ki-ni iranai-kamo shirenai-kedo.*

(lit. You might not like it, but.)

*Sukoshi-bakari-de hazukashii-n-da-kedo.*

(lit. This is so little that I'm ashamed.)

There are cases when people praise their own gift as in

*Kitto ki-ni iru-to omou-yo.*

(I'm sure you will like it.)

*Sugoku oishikatta-kara tabete.*

(It was so delicious I want you to eat it.)

But these expressions are used only between good friends or family members. Young people nowadays do not like very formal expressions but they still usually speak lightly of their gifts in some way or other rather than directly praising them.

## ... *n-desu-ga* used for making a request

Mr. Lerner was looking at some watches in a department store yesterday when a young woman chose a watch and handed it to the salesman, saying

*Ano, okurimono-nan-desu-ga...*

あの、おくりものなんですが……

(*lit.* This is a present, but ...)

and the salesman said *Kashikomarimashita* (Certainly). Mr. Lerner wondered if *Okurimono-desu* can also be said in this case.

\* \* \*

The young woman could have simply said *Okurimono-desu* (It is a present) or *Okurimono-ni shite-kudasai* (Fix it like a present), too. But the ending ...*n-desu-ga* is a common expression of request; by adding ...*n-desu-ga* she implied "...so please wrap it so that it can be used as a present." ...*n-desu-ga* is used as in

*Isogu-n-desu-ga...*

(I am in a hurry — "please come tomorrow — "could you let me do it some other time?" implied.)

*Ashita korarenai-n-desu-ga...*

(I can't come tomorrow — "could you let me do it some other time?" implied.)

While simply saying *Okurimono-desu*, *Isogimasu* or *Ashita koraremasen* is just stating a fact or condition, saying ...*n-desu-ga* implies "so please act accordingly." (In the case of nouns and *-na* adjectives, *nan-desu-ga* is used instead of ...*n-*

*desu-ga*.)

Since ...*n-desu-ga* implies that one wants the other person to act in accordance with one's wishes, it can sound rather demanding depending on the situation. If you said *Isogu-n-desu-ga...* in a definite tone, it might sound as if you were self-centered. Therefore it is best to start the sentence with *anoo...* or *sumimasen* to imply your hesitation about troubling the other person, as in

*Anoo... isogu-n-desu-ga...*

あのう……いそぐんですが……

(Excuse me. I'm in rather a hurry.)

*Sumimasen. Ashita korarenai-n-desu-ga...*

(I'm sorry. I can't come tomorrow.)

## Wakarimashita used to show consent

Mr. Lerner called Mr. Okada at his office to make sure of the time of their next meeting. He was not there and a woman offered to take a message for him. When Mr. Lerner gave her his message, she said.

*Wakarimashita.* (I understand.)

Mr. Lerner remembered that *Wakarimashita* is very often used in such cases; he wondered if this corresponds to "Yes, I will."

\* \* \*

The expression *Wakarimashita* literally means "I have understood," and does not mean that the speaker is going to do what he was asked to do. To be very polite and exact, one should say

*Hai, wakarimashita. Otsutae-shimasu.*  
(Yes, I understand. I will tell him so.)

In the same way, one should answer as in

A. *Ashita itsumo-yori ichijikan hayaku kitekureru?* (Could you come one hour earlier than usual tomorrow?)

B. *Hai, wakarimashita. Ichijikan hayaku mairimasu.*

(Yes, I understand. I will come one hour earlier.)

But actually the last part is very often left out, and one just says

*Hai, wakarimashita.* はい、わかりました。

or

*Wakarimashita.*

By saying *Wakarimashita*, one usually implies that one is going to do what the other person has requested.

There are also two politer expressions of consent; *kashikomarimashita* and *shoochi-shimashita*. *Kashikomarimashita* (Certainly) is used as a very polite answer, mostly by people such as hotel employees and department store clerks. *Shoochi-shimashita* (I understand) is commonly used by people working for business enterprises. Both are used either by themselves or together with expressions meaning "I will."

In familiar conversation, *Wakatta* (I understand) and *li-yo* (all right) are used. (Women often add *wa* as in *Wakatta-wa* and *li-wayo*.) These expressions are generally not followed by expressions meaning "I will."

## Nanmee-sama-desu-ka (How many are there in your party?)

When Mr. Lerner, Mr. Takada and Miss Yoshida went into a restaurant to have dinner a few days ago, the man at the door asked them

Nanmeesama-desu-ka. 何名さまでですか。

(How many are there in your party? — lit. How many people are you?)

and Mr. Takada answered

Sannin. (Three.)

Mr. Lerner had not known the counter *mee*; he thought human beings are counted *hitori*, *futari*, *sannin*. . . . And he was also interested in this use of *sama*.

\* \* \*

In daily conversation it is common to count people in the following way: *hitori*, *futari*, *sannin*, *yonin*, *gonin*, *rokunin*, *shichinin*, *hachinin*, *kunin*, *juunin*, etc. Another counter for people *mee* (name), is used on formal occasions. This term is used more often in writing than in speech, and is mainly used for referring to people belonging to a group or organization, as in

Kotoshi-wa nijuumee-no shain-ga atarashiku saiyoo-sareta.

(Twenty new people have been employed this year.)

Kono kookoo-niwa danshi-ga 500 mee, joshi-ga 400 mee imasu.

この 高校には 男子が 500名、女子が 400名います。

(There are 500 male students and 400 female students in this high school — *danshi* (male) and *joshi* (female) are also formal.)

In restaurants, both *nannin* and *nanmee* are used. And when they are used, *sama*, is usually added for politeness.

Nimee-sama-nara osekiga gozaimasu-ga, sanmee-sama-deshitara, chotto omachi-itadaku koto-ni narimasu-ga.

(We have a table for two, but if you are three you might have to wait for a while.)

*Sama* is added not only to *nanmee* and *nannin* but also to terms indirectly referring to people as in:

Otsure/sama-ga omachi-desu.

(Your friend is waiting, sir.)

Dochira-sama-deshoo-ka. (May I ask who is speaking, please?/May I ask your name?)

## ...*na* used when talking to oneself

Mr. Lerner and his colleagues were talking about what they would like to do during the summer. Mr. Takada said he would like to go to Hokkaido, and Miss Yoshida agreed, saying

*Watashi-mo ikitai-na-to omoimasu.*  
(I also would like to go there.)

Mr. Lerner wondered why she added *na* to *ikitai* (I want to go); he had thought that *na* is used only by men.

\* \* \*

There are several particles that are added to the end of sentences to show the speaker's emotions or attitude. *Ne* is used when the speaker expects the listener to agree; *yo* is used when the speaker wants to emphasize his statement. The particle *na* expresses the speaker's emotions in a monologue-like statement.

*Samui-na.* さむいな。

means "Oh, it's so cold!"

*Iya-da-na.* いやだな。

means "How disagreeable!" or "How I hate it!"

Since *na* expresses one's emotions directly, it can be used only in familiar conversation or when talking to oneself. Men often use it at the end of a sentence in familiar conversation, but women usually use it before ...*to omou* (I think that...) rather than at the end of the sentence even in familiar conversation.

Women use *na* at the end of a sentence when talking to themselves or thinking aloud. They, as well as men, will say to themselves when getting up on a Monday morning, for instance:

*Aa nemui-na. Motto nete-tai-na.*

(Oh, I'm so sleepy. How I wish I could sleep some more.)

But after getting dressed and going out for the day they stop using this type of sentence.

Sentences like ...*na-to omoimasu* can be used in polite speech by both men and women. Miss Yoshida used this when she could have said *ikitai-to omoimasu*. By adding *na* she expressed her emotions more vividly. It sounds more lively to add *na* as in

*Kore-wa omoshiroi-na-to omotte, shirabete-mimashita.*

これは おもしろいなと 思って、しらべてみました。

(I thought this was interesting and investigated it.)

*Donna hito-to kekkon-shitai-na-to omoimasu-ka.*  
(What type of person would you like to marry?)



## ...*wa* not used with 'all,' 'every'

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida were watching TV at the office during lunch yesterday. After watching a short scene in a drama, she asked him how much he had understood. He was happy that he had been able to understand everything, so he said

*Zenbu-wa wakarimashita.*

Then she repeated

*A, zenbu wakarimashita?*

He had used *wa* after *Zenbu* to emphasize it, but he wondered if that was wrong.

\* \* \*

The particle *wa* is used to specifically take up a topic in contrast with other topics. Namely, when one says

*Kore-wa omoshiroi.*   これは おもしろい。  
(This is interesting.)

one contrasts *kore* with others such as *sore* and *are*, implying "Others are not interesting but this is interesting." In the same way, when saying

*Watashi-wa ii-to omoimasu.* (I think 'it is good.)

one implies "I don't know what others think about it, but I think it is good."

Thus *wa* is often used with a negative verb as in

*Zenbu-wa wakarimasen-deshita.*

全部は わかりませんでした。  
(I didn't understand all of it.)

which implies that the speaker understood some, not all.

In the same way,

*Mainichi-wa ikimasen.*   毎日 は 行きません。  
(I do not go there every day.)

implies that the speaker goes there on some days, not every day.

Since *wa* isolates something from a group, it is not appropriate to use it with words meaning "all" or "every." Saying the following would sound strange:

*Zenbu-wa yoku dekite-imasu.*  
*Minna-wa oishikatta-desu.*  
*Mainichi-wa ii tenki-deshita.*

These sentences are all right if *wa* is taken out. (Mr. Lerner should have said *Zenbu* ... instead of *Zenbu-wa* ...)

To emphasize that everything is well-made or delicious, one can use other expressions as in

*Dore-mo kore-mo yoku dekite-imasu.*  
(They are all well-made, every one of them.)  
*Nani-kara nani-made oishikatta-desu.*  
(It was delicious, every bit of it.)

## Yaru and ageru meaning 'to give'

Mr. Lerner visited the Takadas' last Saturday. When he arrived, one of their neighbors, Mrs. Matsumoto, was about to leave. He heard her say

*Sorosoro akachan-ni miruku-o ageru jikan-desu-kara...*

(It is about time to feed the baby.)

After she left, Mr. Takada said she should have used *yaru* instead of *ageru* (to give), but Mrs. Takada was in favor of *ageru*.

\* \* \*

It is generally explained that *ageru* is used when giving something to one's equals and superiors and *yaru* when giving something to one's inferiors, but there are other factors involved in deciding which one to use. One has to consider not only to whom one gives something but also with whom one is talking about the action of giving.

To refer to giving something to one's family members when speaking with them, one can use either *ageru*, or *yaru*; men usually use *yaru* while women prefer *ageru*, as in

Men: *Kore yaru-yo.* これ やるよ。  
(I'll give it to you.)

Women: *Kore ageru-wa.* これ あげるわ。  
(I'll give it to you.)

But when reporting one's giving something to one's family members in conversation with non-family members or acquaintances, it is traditionally regarded as correct to use *yaru* regardless of the

relation between the speaker and the family member to whom he has given something. Thus,

*Kodomo-ni yarimashita.*

子どもに やりました。

(I gave it to my child.)

*Haha-ni yarimashita.* (I gave it to my mother.)

In this case women also should use *yaru*.

This is based on the idea that one should identify oneself with one's family members when talking with someone politely, and one's own family members should be regarded as inferior to the listener. Therefore saying,

*akachan-ni miruku-o ageru*

is not appropriate because it sounds like one is giving something to someone else's baby. (The word *akachan* is used to refer to someone else's baby, while *akanboo* is used to refer to one's own baby; thus Mrs. Matsumoto's choice of words sounded even stranger to Mr. Takada, who follows the traditional ideas of polite speech.)

Nowadays this custom seems to be changing; many young mothers use *ageru* when referring to giving something to their children. Either consciously or unconsciously, they have begun to stop making a distinction between expressions used directly to their family members and those used when talking with non-family members.

## *Soo-desu-ne* and *Sore-wa soo-desu-ne*

A busy day had come to an end and everybody was getting ready to leave, when Miss Yoshida remarked with a sigh of relief

*Yatto owarimashita-ne.* (We've finally finished!)

Mr. Lerner agreed and said

*Sore-wa soo-desu-ne.*

meaning "That's right," but she said he should have said

*Soo-desu-ne.* そうですね。

instead.

\* \* \*

To agree with what someone has said, one usually says

*Soo-desu-ne.* (That's right.)

This is the most common answer. To emphasize one's readiness to agree, one can say things like

*Honto-ni soo-desu-ne.* (You're certainly right).

or

*Mattaku soo-desu-ne.* (Perfectly so.)

On the other hand, *Sore-wa soo-desu-ne* is used when one wants to approve the good points that the other person has made, as in

A: *Kore, kane-mo kakaru-shi mada jiki-ga hayai-desu-kara.* . .

(This costs a lot, and it is still too early for it.)

B: *Sore-wa soo-desu-ne. Ja, yamemashoo.*

それは そうですね。じゃ、……

(What you say is true. Let's not do it.)

Mr. Lerner should not have used *Sore-wa soo-desu-ne* when Miss Yoshida had simply expressed relief; he had no reason to recognize some merit in her remark.

When one is going to disagree after admitting that the other person's opinion has some merit, *Sore-mo soo-desu-ga* is used as in

A: *Kore, kane-mo kakaru-shi, mada jiki-ga hayai-desu-kara.* . .

B: *Sore-mo soo-desu-ga, hayai hoo-ga ii-tomo kangaeraremasu-kara-ne.*

それも そうですが……

(That's so, but it is also true that the earlier we start the more likely it is that we will succeed.)

Here *sore-mo soo-desu* means "that, as well as other views of the matter, is right."

## Yaru and suru meaning 'to do'

When Mr. Lerner went into the office yesterday morning, Miss Yoshida and Mr. Kobayashi, the youngest worker in the office, were discussing how the floor had gotten stained with coffee. Miss Yoshida said.

*Watashi-ga yatta-n-ja arimasen-yo.*  
(I didn't do it.)

and Mr. Kobayashi also said

*Boku-mo yarimasen-deshita-yo.* (I didn't do it, either.)

The real criminal was found later, but what interested Mr. Lerner was the difference between *yaru* and *suru*; he had thought that women prefer *suru*.

\* \* \*

Both *suru* and *yaru* are used to mean "to do something," as in

A: *Nichiyoo-niwa nani-o shimasu-ka.*

日曜日には 何を しますか。

(What do you do on Sundays?)

B: *Tenisu-o yarimasu.* (I play tennis.)

テニスを やります。

One difference between the two is that *yaru* is more familiar and is not used on formal occasions. Another difference is that *yaru* is usually used for physical and lively actions rather than mental action.

Some actions can be referred to by either *suru*

or *yaru*, while others are never referred to by *yaru*.

1. Both *suru* and *yaru* are used with:

<i>tenisu</i> (tennis)	<i>enkai</i> (banquet)
<i>yakyuu</i> (baseball)	<i>pachinko</i> (a kind of game)
<i>benkyoo</i> (study)	<i>shigoto</i> (work)
<i>kenka</i> (quarrel)	

2. Only *suru* is used with:

<i>dokusho</i> (reading)	<i>keekaku</i> (planning)
<i>soodan</i> (consultation)	<i>doryoku</i> (effort)
<i>kekkon</i> (marriage)	<i>keeken</i> (experience)

With the words in 1. both *suru* and *yaru* can be used but with some differences between the two. One uses *yaru* when talking about the action in its physical aspect, while *suru* is used when the speaker considers it as an overall action. Consequently, *yaru* sounds more familiar and cannot be used on formal occasions or in respectful speech.

*Suru* cannot be replaced by *yaru* in set expressions such as:

*ureshisoona kao-o suru* (to have a happy look on one's face)

*iku koto-ni suru* (to decide on going)

*bon'yari-shite-iru* (to be absent-minded)

## Denwa-saseru and denwa-shite-morau

Recently Mr. Lerner called Mr. Okada at his home so that he could change the date of their next meeting. He was out and Mrs. Okada said

*Modorimashitara, odenwa-sasemasu-node . . .*

もどりましたら、お電話させますので……

(lit. When he returns, I will make him call you.)

Mr. Lerner thanked her, but while doing so he wondered why she had used *denwa-saseru* instead of *denwa-shite-morau* (ask him to call). He had learned that the causative . . . (*s*)*aseru* form is used to indicate that the speaker forces someone, usually inferior, to do something; although Mrs. Okada sounded very gentle, is she actually a domineering person?

\* \* \*

The causative form, made by adding . . . *aseru* or . . . *saseru* to the negative base of a verb, is used to indicate that someone forces another to do something regardless of his will. It is appropriate for a parent to say something like

*Kodomo-ni yarasemashita.*

子どもに やらせました。

(I had my child do it.)

*Musuko-ni benkyoo-sasetai-n-desu-ga.*

(I wish I could make my son study harder.)

This form cannot be used when one politely asks someone to do something. You should use . . . *te-morau*, which literally means “to receive a

favor of . . . ing” as in

*Yoshida-san-ni yatte-moraimashoo.*

吉田さんに やってもらいましょう。

(Let's ask Miss Yoshida to do it.)

When speaking between good friends, one can use . . . *te-morau* even when referring to having someone in one's family do something, as in

*Nyooboo-ni tetsudatte-moratta-yo.*

(I asked my wife to help me.)

But when referring to having a family member do some service for an acquaintance, it is polite to use the . . . (*s*)*aseru* form. By using this form one implies that one is carrying out the acquaintance's wishes for him. Namely, when saying *odenwa-sasemasu*, Mrs. Okada implied “I am going to force my husband to fulfill your wishes.” If she had said *odenwa-shite-moraimasu*, (I will receive the favor of calling you from my husband,” it would sound impolite because she would be placing priority on her husband's wishes instead of on Mr. Lerner's.

## Adding *o* to adjectives

When Mr. Lerner was hurrying toward the station yesterday morning, Mrs. Takahashi, who was cleaning the street in front of her house, smiled and said

*Ohayai-desu-ne.* お早いですね。  
(You're early.)

Mr. Lerner just said *Ohayoo-gozaimasu* (Good morning) and continued on his way, but later he wondered if the polite prefix *o* can be added to any adjective, not just *hayai*.

*O* is added to adjectives and *-na* adjectives (noun/quasi adjectives) to describe someone's condition politely, as in

*Oisogashii-desu-ka.* おいそがしいですか。  
(Are you busy?)

*Ogenki-desu-ka.* (How are you? — *lit.* Are you healthy?)

*Ohima-desu-ka.* (Are you free now?)

In these sentences, it will sound rude or familiar if one leaves out the *o*.

Besides these adjectives, others describing someone's age, abilities and the like are also used with *o* as in

*Owakai-desu-ne.*  
(You are young. He/She is young.)

*Ojoozu-desu-ne.*  
(You are good at it. He/She is good at it.)

Adjectives describing someone's weak points are, however, not usually used with *o*. One does not say things like *Oheta-desu-ne* (You are not good at it). *O* is not added to such adjectives as *heta* (unskillful), *osoi* (late, slow), *kechi* (stingy), *nonki* (easy-go-lucky), *binboo* (poor) and the like.

Most kanji compound adjectives are not used with *o*. Some of these are used with *go*, as in *goshinsetsu* (kind), *gonesshin* (enthusiastic), etc. But one does not add *o* to such words as *majime* (serious), *kinben* (diligent), *shoojiki* (honest) and the like. These words can be used with ... *te-irassharu* instead of *desu* to make the expression respectful, as in

*Majime-de-irasshaimasu-ne.*  
(You're very serious.)

But one often refrains from talking this way in polite conversation, because it is not polite to sound as if one is directly evaluating others.

Sometimes *o* is used to make the expression polite even when it is not related to someone's condition, as in

*Osamui-desu-ne.* おさむいですね。  
(It's cold, isn't it?)

*Oatsuku natte-mairimashita-ne.*  
おあつく なってまいりましたね。  
(It has become hot, hasn't it?)

## ... *te-irassharu* replacing ... *desu*

When Mr. Lerner visited Professor Takahashi the other day, Mrs. Takahashi asked him, while serving him a cup of tea,

*Kono-goro-wa oisogashikute-irasshaimasu-ka.*  
(Are you busy these days?)

Mr. Lerner answered that he, was, and reflected that he was not yet able to use this *te-irassharu* form himself yet.

\* \* \*

The verb *irassharu* by itself is used to mean "to be," "to go" or "to come" when referring to someone with respect, as in

*Ima doko-ni irasshaimasu-ka.*  
(Where is he/she now?)

*Ashita irasshaimasu-ka.*  
(Are you coming tomorrow?)

*Kore-kara dochira-e irasshaimasu-ka.*  
(Where are you going now?)

When this verb is used with the ... *te* form of an adjective, it shows respect to the person to whom the adjective applies; in this usage it replaces *desu*, as in

*Isogashii-desu-ka.* (Are you busy?)  
*Oisogashikute-irasshaimasu-ka.*  
おいそがしくていらっしゃいますか。

*See-ga takai-desu.* (He is tall.)  
*Osee-ga takakute-irasshaimasu.*

*Ogenki-desu-ka.* (Are you healthy?)  
*Ogenki-de irasshaimasu-ka.*

With nouns too, ... *de irassharu* is used to make the expression more respectful, as in

*Yamada-sensee-de-irasshaimasu-ka.*

山田先生でいらっしゃいますか。

(Are you Professor Yamada?)

*Donata-de-irasshaimasu-ka.* (Who are you?)

*Amerika-no kata-de-irasshaimasu-ka.*

(Are you from the United States?)

... *te-irassharu* can also be used with verbs as in

*Oshigoto-o shite-irasshaimasu-ka.*  
(Are you working?)

but it sounds more refined to leave out the verb and use the noun-plus-*de-irassharu* form instead, as in

*Oshigoto-de-irasshaimasu-ka.*

In the same way, such expressions are used very often:

*Odekake-de-irasshaimasu-ka.*

お出かけでいらっしゃいますか。

(Are you going out now?)

*Okaeri-de-irasshaimasu-ka.*

(Are you going home now?)

## Paper-recycling truck announcement

When Mr. Lerner was talking with Mrs. Takada at her house last Saturday, he heard a paper-recycling truck calling out for used magazines and newspapers. He had often heard this type of announcement before, but he had not been able to understand what they were saying; this time he could understand the announcement completely, thanks to Mrs. Takada's help.

*Taihen osawagase-shite-orimasu. Maido onajimi-no chirigami-kookan-de-gozaimasu.*

(Very sorry to disturb you again. This is your paper-recycling agent.)

He was impressed that the announcement was very polite, although he could not understand what each phrase meant exactly.

\* \* \*

*Osawagase* in *osawagase-shite-orimasu* comes from *sawagaseru*, which means "to cause someone to make much ado." The expression *osawagase-suru* is often used in daily life when one has caused someone to stop in the middle of some work and go to some special trouble for one. For instance, when you go to a colleague working on his own tasks, ask him for instructions, and have received them, it is polite to thank him, and add

*Doomo osawagase-shimashita.*

(I'm sorry to have caused you trouble.)

Since paper-recycling agents usually circle slowly in one area for some time, they use the form . . . *te-orimasu*, the polite version of . . . *te-imasu* (I'm do-

ing . . .) as in

*Osawagase-shite-orimasu.*

(*lit.* I am causing you to make much ado.)

*Maido*, the first word in the second sentence of the announcement, means "ever time," "every so often." This is used by salesclerks, as in

*Maido arigatoo-gozaimasu.*

(Thank you for your patronage — *lit.* Thank you for every time.)

Only sales people use this expression; it would sound strange if one said this to an acquaintance. If you want to express gratitude to someone for frequent help, you should say *Itsumo arigatoo-gozaimasu* instead.

*Onajimi* means "familiar to you." Thus

*Maido onajimi-no chirigami-kookan-de-gozaimasu.*

literally means "This is the exchanging-for-tissue car that is very familiar to you," actually meaning "Thank you for your constant patronage of me, your paper-recycling agent."

All in all, this announcement is very polite as well as quite professional.



## Polite refusal

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida visited the Takahashis' last Saturday. When Miss Yoshida offered them a container of fruit they had brought saying

*Tsumaranai mono-desu-ga.*

(This is something very small for you.)

Mrs. Takahashi refused, saying that they shouldn't have gone to so much trouble. Then Miss Yoshida said

*lie, honno sukoshi-desu-kara.*

(*lit.* No, it's just a little bit, so . . .)

Then Mrs. Takahashi accepted it saying that she couldn't very well refuse it since they had gone to so much trouble although she felt she really shouldn't accept it.

Mr. Lerner wondered if there is a set pattern of offer-refusal-repeated offer-acceptance in such situations.

\* \* \*

It is regarded as appropriate to refuse an offer once in polite situations. When accepting a present, the recipient often says things like

*Konna koto-o shite-itadaite-wa komarimasu.*

こんなことをしていただいてはこまります。

(You shouldn't do this — *lit.* If you do this for me, I'll be embarrassed.)

*Kore-wa itadaku wake-niwa ikimasen.*

(I shouldn't accept this — *lit.* I can't very well accept this.)

The person offering the present will reinforce the offer by repeating the first statement in a modified form, as in

*lie, honno sukoshi-desu-kara.*

いいえ、ほんの 少しですから。

*Kokoro-bakari-no mono-desu-kara.*

(It's merely a token of my gratitude.)

When the giver thus reinforces his offer, the recipient usually accepts it, unless it is an inappropriate kind of present, saying things like

*Dewa, sekkaku-desu-kara itadakimasu.*

では、せっかくですから いただきます。

(I will take it, since you kindly say so.)

*Sore-dewa choodai-itashimasu.*

(Then I will receive it.)

(Both *itadakimasu* and *choodai-itashimasu* are very humble expressions meaning "to receive a favor.") And he will add an expression of gratitude such as *Arigatoo-gozaimasu* or *Sumimasen*.

## The . . . *te* form used with expressions of apology and gratitude

Mr. Okada, who is usually punctual, was a few minutes late for an appointment with Mr. Lerner yesterday. He apologized for his delay with a deep bow. But Mr. Lerner could not hear clearly whether he said

*Osoku narimashite mooshiwake arimasen.*  
(I'm very sorry I'm late.)

or

*Osoku narimashita. Mooshiwake arimasen.*  
\* \* \*

When someone speaks quickly or while bowing, it is sometimes hard to distinguish whether he has said . . . *mashite* or . . . *mashita* since the difference is only that of *e* and *a*. And foreigners often make mistakes in the use of . . . *ta* and . . . *te* in speaking as in hearing.

In fact Mr. Okada's apology was almost certainly *Osoku narimashite mooshiwake arimasen*, because phrases preceding expressions of apology or gratitude usually end with *te* as in

*Osoku natte sumimasen.*

おそく なって すみません。

*Tetsudatte-kurete arigatoo.*

てつだってくれて ありがとう。

(Thank you for your help.)

*Otesuu-o okake-shite, sumimasen-deshita.*

(I'm very sorry to have troubled you.)

*Okurete gomen-nasai.* (Sorry to be late.)

In these expressions, *ta* cannot take the place of *te*. Mr. Okada used a more polite version of the . . . *te*

form, namely . . . *mashite*. This form sounds formal or polite, as in

*Otesuu-o okake-shimashite mooshiwake arimasen.*

お手数を おかけしまして 申し訳 ありません。

(I'm sorry I troubled you.)

*Gobusata-itashimashite, mooshiwake gozaimasen.*

(I'm sorry I didn't write to you for so long.)

It is wrong to use *kara* or *node* as in *Osoku natta-kara/node sumimasen* or *Tetsudatte-kureta-kara/node arigatoo* (Thank you for helping me). You can use such ending if you make two sentences instead of one, as in

*Tetsudatte-kureta-kara hayaku sumimashita.*  
*Doomo arigatoo.*

(I could finish it sooner because of your help.  
Thank you.)

## Polite questions

The other evening Mr. Lerner was watching a TV program on current affairs that asked various people for their opinions. He noticed that most of the interviewer's questions ended in . . . *wa?* They went like this:

*Oshigoto-wa. . .?* お仕事は……？

(What's your occupation? — *lit.* As for your work?)

*Osumai-wa. . .?* おすまいは……？

(Where do you live? — *lit.* As for your residence?)

*Otoshi-wa. . .?* (How old are you? — *lit.* As for your age?)

He wondered why such sentence as

*Oshigoto-wa nan-desu-ka.*

*Osumai-wa doko-desu-ka.*

*Otoshi-wa ikutsu-desu-ka.*

were not used.

\* \* \*

When asking questions politely, such direct words as *nan(i)* (what), *doko* (where), *ikutsu* (how many, how old) and *ikura* (how much) are often replaced by other words. For instance, instead of *Oshigoto-wa nan-desu-ka*, one will often say

*Donna oshigoto-o shite-irasshaimasu-ka.*

(What type of work are you engaged in?)

And instead of saying *Osumai-wa doko-desu-ka* one will often say

*Osumai-wa dochira/dono-hen-deshoo-ka.*

(*lit.* What direction is your residence/In what area is your residence located?)

In this way, such indirect wordings as *donna*, *dochira* and *dono-hen* are preferred to more direct questions with *nan(i)* and *doko*.

But to be more polite, one often ends one's questions with *wa*, as mentioned above. Asking with . . . *wa?* leaves room for choosing how to answer the question. Namely, if you said *Donna oshigoto-o shite-irasshaimasu-ka*, the other person will have to describe what type of work he is engaged in. Although the wording is polite, it does not permit the person who replies to choose how to answer.

On the other hand, if you asked *Oshigoto-wa. . .?* the other person can choose from various possible answers such as *Hai, yatte-imasu* (Yes, I'm working), *Ee, chotto yatte-imasu* (Yes, I'm engaged in some kind of work), *Booeki-no hoo-no shigoto-o shite-imasu* (I'm engaged in trade) or *X-to yuu kaisha-ni tsutomete-imasu* (I work for Company X). The . . . *wa?* questions are more polite because they show consideration toward the other person by not pressing him to give a definite answer.

... (*suru*)*to ii* used as  
a reserved expression of advice

Mr. Lerner had to call on someone at his office for business discussions yesterday afternoon. When he was checking its location on the map, Mr. Takada said

*Chikatetsu-de iku-to ii-desu-yo.*

地下鉄で 行くと いいですよ。

(Why don't you take the subway? — *lit.* It will be good to take the subway.)

Mr. Lerner thanked him and left. While walking to the subway station, he wondered how the expression *iku-to ii* (*lit.* it is good if one goes) compares with *itta hoo-ga ii* (you had better go) and *ittara doo-desu-ka* (how about going?).

\* \* \*

The expression ... *ta hoo-ga ii* is used to advise someone to take a certain action, as in

*Ame-ga furisoo-da-kara, kasa-o motte-itta hoo-ga ii-desu-yo.*

(Since it looks like it's going to rain, you had better take an umbrella with you.)

*Ano-hito-wa okorippoi-kara, ki-o tsuketa hoo-ga ii-yo.*

(As he gets angry easily, you had better be careful.)

Since ... *ta hoo-ga ii* sounds positive, it can sound too pushy in social situations. ... *tara doo/ikaga-desu-ka* is less forceful than ... *ta hoo-ga ii*, but it still sounds positive and enthusiastic:

*Sukoshi yasundara doo-desu-ka.*

(Why don't you take a rest?)

*Sukoshi oyasumi-ni nattara ikaga-desu-ka.*

(Why don't you take a rest? — more polite)

On the other hand, the dictionary form of a verb plus *to ii* is used to advise someone by way of proposing an effective method rather than by urging one to do something as in

*Kore-o tsukau-to ii-desu-yo.*

(*lit.* It will be good to use this.)

*Kasa-o motte-iku-to ii-yo.*

かさを もっていくと いいよ。

(*lit.* It'll help to take an umbrella with you.)

Thus this expression sounds less positive and more reserved than the other two.

## Words referring to meals

Mr. Lerner stayed overnight at a Japanese-style hotel the other day. A woman came into the room with a cup of tea when he arrived, and asked

*Ofuro-ni nasaimasu-ka, oshokuji-ni nasaimasu-ka.*

(Which would you like to have first, a bath or your meal?)

Mr. Lerner chose a bath, and while going down to the bath area, he wondered if the word *oshokuji* was ever used by his colleagues at the office.

\* \* \*

There are several words, used to refer to meals. *Shokuji* is used for all meals — breakfast, lunch and dinner — as in

*Kesa, shokuji-o shite-kimashita-ka.*

けさ、食事を してきましたか。

(Did you have something to eat this morning?)

*Isogashikute yukkuri shokuji-o suru hima-mo arimasen.*

(I am so busy that I cannot spend much time on meals.)

The word *shokuji* sounds rather formal and is used most often in formal situations such as with announcements at a meeting:

*Shokuji-no yooi-ga dekite-imasu-kara shokudoo-ni oide-kudasai.*

(Your meal is ready. You are asked to proceed to the dining hall.)

When the polite prefix *o* is added to *shokuji*, it is used in very polite speech, as in

*Oshokuji-de-irasshaimasu-ka.*

お食事ていらっしやいますか。

(Are you having a meal? vs. light refreshments, said by a restaurant employee.)

To refer to specific meals on formal occasions, such words as *chooshoku* (breakfast), *chuushoku* (lunch) and *yuushoku* (supper) are used.

In daily conversation, the following words are more commonly used:

Meals in general: *gohan* (polite, men and women), *meshi* (men, familiar)

Breakfast: *asagohan* (polite, both men and women), *asameshi* (men, familiar)

Lunch: *ohirugohan* (mostly women), *ohiru* (men and women), *hiru* (men), *hirumeshi* (men, familiar)

Dinner: *bangohan* (men and women), *yuuhan* (men), *banmeshi* (men, familiar)

For example, office employees will talk at lunch time like this:

*Ohiru, tabe-ni ikanai?*

(Shall we go out for lunch? — between colleagues, said by men and women)

*Hiru (meshi), kui-ni ikoo-ka.*

(How about lunch? — between male colleagues)

*Ohiru, osumi-desu-ka.*

(Have you had lunch yet? — to one's superior, used by men and women)

## **Soodan-suru and oshiete-itadaku** (To discuss and to be taught)

Mr. Mori, the director of the company, asked Mr. Lerner to get into contact with Professor Kimura so that they could ask his advice on their new project. Mr. Lerner asked Miss Yoshida to help him because it was his first call to a distinguished scholar whom he had never met.

He first wanted to say

*Kimura-sensee-desu-ka. Watashi-wa X-sha-no Raanaa-desu. Shigoto-no koto-de soodan-shitai koto-ga arimasu.* (Professor Kimura, I am Lerner of X Company. I'd like to talk with you about our work.)

but Miss Yoshida said that this somehow sounded impolite.

\* \* \*

The expression *soodan-shitai koto-ga arimasu* should be changed. If *go . . . suru*, a humble expression, is added as in *gosoodan-shitai koto-ga arimasu*, it will sound less impolite, but still is not fully appropriate.

The word *soodan* is used when two people discuss some specific procedure or method concerning a project on an equal basis, rather than one giving advice to the other. It is appropriate to use it as in

*Minna-de soodan-shite, sooji-no buntan-o kimemashita.*

(We talked together and decided on each person's role in the cleaning.)

Thus, even if one said *gosoodan-shitai*, it is still inappropriate if one is asking someone for advice.

Mr. Lerner should have said instead

*Shigoto-no koto-de oshiete-itadakitai koto-ga arimashite. . .*

仕事の ことでおしえていただきたい ことがありまして……

(*lit.* I have something I'd like your advice about, concerning our work.)

Needless to say, this should be preceded by such remarks as

*Oisogashii tokoro, osoreirimasu-ga.*

(I'm very sorry to trouble you when you're so busy.)

And when calling someone for the first time, it is polite to start with something like

*Kimura-sensee-de-irasshaimasu-ka. Kochira-wa X-sha-no Raanaa-to mooshimasu. Totsuzen odenwa-itashimashite, mooshiwake gozaimasen. Oisogashii tokoro. . .*

(Is this Professor Kimura? I am Lerner of X Company. Please excuse me for calling you abruptly like this.)

## Responding to invitation-like comments

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida met an older woman at a party the other day. She said she was a relative of Mr. Takada, their colleague, and asked them to come out to her residence in the country. She explained what nice scenery she enjoys there and added

*Honto-ni zehi irashite-kudasai-ne.*  
(Really, please come by all means.)

Miss Yoshida smiled and answered

*Hai, arigatoo-gozaïmasu.*  
(Thank you very much.)

and added

*Zehi ukagawasete-itadakïmasu.*  
ぜひ うかがわせていただきます。

(I will come by all means — *lit.* I will receive your favor of allowing me to come by all means.)

Mr. Lerner later asked her if she really meant to go. She said no, and asked him what else she could have said.

\* \* \*

It is sometimes difficult to judge whether an invitation is really meant or is being made merely to be polite. Generally speaking, if someone really wants to invite you for a visit, he will go into a specific discussion of when and how to get there. If he doesn't, you can judge that he is not particularly interested in having you come. In such cases you should politely thank him by saying

*Hai, arigatoo-gozaïmasu.*

You can dismiss the matter with this. Or, to be polite, you can add

*Ukagaimasu.* (I will come.)

or

*Ukagawasete-itadakïmasu.* (I will come — more humble.)

If you add *zehi* (by all means), it will sound more polite.

There are cases when a foreigner, taking such an invitation at face value, goes to visit, and is received with surprise and embarrassment. But those who have extended this kind of invitation without expecting an actual visit did not mean to lie. Very often they feel that they should make such remarks to be polite. Especially when they have mentioned living in a nice area or if they have discovered you share mutual friends, they will feel obliged to make such remarks.

## Expressions for idling away one's time

When Mr. Lerner and his colleagues met after a three-day weekend and were talking about how they had spent the holidays, Mr. Takada said

*Ichinichi-juu uchi-de gorogoro-shite-ta.*

一日中 ごろごろしてた。

(I idled all the day away.)

and Miss Yoshida said

*Watashi-mo mikkakan burabura-shite-mashita.*

(I didn't do anything in particular during the three days.)

Mr. Lerner was interested in these expressions to refer to idling one's time away and wondered if saying *namakete-imashita* (I was lazy) can also be used.

\* \* \*

To say that you loafed away your free time, the simplest expression is

*Nanimo shimasen-deshita.*

(I didn't do anything.)

When you want to say that you spent the time leisurely doing nothing in particular you should say

*Burabura-shite-imashita.*

ぶらぶらしていました。

The word *burabura* describes things swinging to and fro, and figuratively describes people moving idly around, as in

*Ginza-o burabura aruite-kimashita.*

(I strolled leisurely along the streets in Ginza.)

The expression *gorogoro* originally describes something like a log rolling along, and it figuratively describes a person lying around and moving idly. The expressions *gorogoro-shite-iru* is often used to refer to a person, usually a man, spending most of his time stretched out in front of the TV or reading a newspaper or magazine.

The word *namakeru* is not appropriate in this case, because it implies a person not doing what one should, as in

*Namakenaide chan-to hataraitte-kure.*

(Don't fool around. Work hard now.)

Besides *burabura* and *gorogoro*, such expressions as follow are used in familiar conversation.

*Kinoo-wa ichinichi-juu boo-tto shite-ita.*

(I just loafed around all day yesterday.)

*Kare, boke-tto shite-ta-yo.*

(He was doing nothing.)



## ... (suru) koto-desu used for advice

Mr. Takada was sick for a week, probably due to overwork. When he came back to the office, Mr. Mori, the director of the company, asked him how he was, and said

*Amari muri-o shinai koto-da-ne.*  
(You shouldn't overwork.)

Mr. Lerner wondered if . . . *koto-da* is a common expression for giving advice.

\* \* \*

The dictionary form of a verb plus *koto-desu* or *koto-da* is used to give advice. The implication is "what you should do is . . ." This expression sounds quite definite, and is used as a kind of instruction or admonishment; therefore it is usually said by someone in a stronger position to someone in a weaker position. For instance, a boss may say to an employee who has made a mistake.

*Motto ki-o tsukeru koto-da.* (You should be more careful.)

Or, a teacher will say to a student whose explanation was not clear,

*Hoka-no hito-ni yoku wakarū yoo-ni setsumee-suru koto-desu-yo.*

(You should try to explain so others can understand.)

The negative form is also used:

*Hito-o ate-ni shinai koto-da.*

(Don't depend on others.)

*Anna hito-no yuu koto-nanka honki-ni shinai koto-desu.*

(Don't take what someone like him says seriously.)

This expression is used when another expression such as . . . *ta hoo-ga ii* (you had better. . .) is felt to be too weak. For instance, when a doctor is advising a patient, it is often more appropriate to say

*Osake-wa yameru koto-desu.*

おさけは やめる ことです。

(You should stop drinking.)

or

*Amari nomanai koto-desu.*

あまり のまない ことです。

(You shouldn't drink too much.)

than saying *Osake-wa yameta hoo-ga ii-desu* or *Amari nomanai hoo-ga ii-desu*.

When one has to be definite about one's advice and still be polite, one changes the verb. For instance, if a doctor has to advise a patient who is a distinguished person or his senior, he will say

*Osake-wa oyame-ni naru koto-desu.*

(*oyame-ni naru* is more respectful than *yameru*)

*Amari meshiagaranaï koto-desu.*

(*meshiagaru* is a respectful counterpart of *nomu* or *taberu* (eat))

## Na used as familiar confirmation

Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada had been discussing a project, and found that they needed some help with it; they decided to ask Mr. Kobayashi, the youngest worker in the office. Mr. Takada said to Mr. Lerner

*Ja, ima tanonde-mo ii-desu-ne.*  
(We can ask him now, right?)

and when he agreed, he called Mr. Kobayashi over and asked for his help. After explaining the project, he said.

*Ja, ii-na. Tanonda-yo.*  
じゃ、いいな。たのんだよ。

(OK? Thank you — *lit.* It is all right now, isn't it? We have asked you.)

Mr. Lerner was interested in this use of *na*. He thought that it was used when talking to oneself, but now Mr. Takada had used it with someone else.

\* \* \*

One common usage of the particle *na* is to add it to a statement directed to oneself, as in

*Aa, nemui-na.* (Oh, I'm so sleepy.)

*Komatta-na. Doo shiyoo.*

(What should I do? — *lit.* I'm in trouble, aren't I? What shall I do?)

It is also used to confirm that someone else is in agreement with you, as Mr. Takada did with Mr. Kobayashi. This is similar to *ne*, but more familiar; it is used mostly by men when talking to

younger people. In this usage *na* is somewhat raised in tone.

Father: *ii-na. Wakatta-na. Moo suru-n-ja nai-yo.*

いいな。わかったな。もう するんじゃないよ。

(Now you understand. You're not going to do it again, are you?)

Child: *Un, wakatta. Moo shinai.*

(Yes, I understand. I won't do it again.)

When *ka* is used before *na*, the tone is softened.

Father: *ii-kana. Wakatta-kana. Moo suru-n-<sup>j</sup>ina-nai-yo.*

If Mr. Takada had used *kana* instead of *na* when talking with Mr. Kobayashi, he would have sounded a little less demanding, although it would have sounded rather condescending.

Women do not usually employ this second usage of *na*; they use *ne* instead. In the same situation as the father admonishing his child above, the mother would have used *wane* as in

Mother: *ii-wane. Wakatta-wane. Moo suru-n-ja nai-noyo.*

## Uses of *taihen*

Mr. Takada asked Mr. Lerner to have dinner at his home last Friday, and the two went there directly after work. When Mrs. Takada received them and took her husband's suit jacket, he suddenly said

A, *taihen-da*. (*lit.* It's a big incident.)

He confessed that he had forgotten to post the letter Mrs. Takada had asked him to mail.

Mr. Lerner had thought *taihen-da* was used as an expression of sympathy, and wondered what other meanings it has.

\* \* \*

The word *taihen* literally means "a big accident" or "a serious incident," and it is also used to mean "big trouble" and "a lot."

Mr. Takada used this word in the first sense. This use is rather common in daily conversation. When reporting something bad, people often first say

*Taihen-desu-yo*. (It's terrible!)

たいへんですよ。

and then tell what is actually the matter, as in

*Kachoo-ga kootsuu-jiko-ni atta-n-da soo-desu.*  
(The section chief was in a traffic accident.)

Or, when people have overslept in the morning, they will often say

*Taihen-da. Neboo-sichatta.* (Oh no, I overslept!)

The second use is quite common. People say

*Taihen-desu-ne.* (That's too bad. That's tough.)

たいへんですね。

to express their sympathy when seeing someone having to work hard. To express sympathy for someone who has been through some misfortune like a traffic accident or a fire, people will say

*Taihen-deshita-ne.* (That was tough.)

たいへんでしたね。

Finally, *taihen* is used to mean "very much." One of the several words meaning "very much," *taihen* sounds rather formal, and is used in expressions of gratitude and apology, as in

*Taihen osewa-ni narimashita.*

たいへん おせわになりました。

(Thank you very much — *lit.* You took a great amount of care of me.)

*Taihen gomeewaku-o okake-shimashita.*

(I caused you a lot of trouble.)

## (suru)-n-nara meaning 'if you are to'

Yesterday afternoon Miss Yoshida said that she had eaten at the new restaurant that had opened recently near the office. When Mr. Lerner asked her about it she said it was good but crowded, and added

*Iku-n-nara ichiji-goro-ga yosaso<sup>e</sup>-dashu-yo.*  
(If you're going, I recommend going around 1.)

Mr. Lerner noticed her use of the "verb plus -n-nara" pattern and wondered if one could also say *ikeba* or *ittara* in this situation.

\* \* \*

While the *-eba* or *-tara* form of a verb refers to a condition where an action has already been completed, "dictionary form plus *-n-nara*" refers to a state where an action has not yet started.

*Ano mise-e ikeba/ittara* (if you go to that restaurant) is followed by such statements as

- ... *oishii mono-ga taberaremasu*  
(... you can eat delicious food)
- ... *shujin-ga yorokobu-deshoo*  
(... the owner will be happy to see you)

In these statements the speaker is thinking of what will happen when you are at the restaurant. On the other hand, *Ano mise-e iku-n-nara* (if you are to go to that restaurant) is followed by such statements as

- ... *moo sukoshi ato-no hoo-ga ii-deshoo*  
(... you should go sometime later)
- ... *ichiman-en-satsu-ga irimasu-yo*  
(... you will need a ¥10,000 bill)

In these latter statements the speaker is thinking of you as getting ready to go.

To give another example, *kono kusuri-o nomeba/nondara* (if you take this medicine) will be followed by:

- ... *genki-ni narimasu-yo*  
このくすりをのめば元気になるよ。  
(... you will feel better)
- ... *sugu naorimasu-yo*  
(... you will soon recover)

*Kono kusuri-o nomu-n-nara* (if you are to take this medicine) is followed by:

- ... *saki-ni shokuji-o shite-kudasai*  
(... have a meal first)
- ... *mizu-o motte-kimashoo*  
このくすりをのむのならお水をもってきましょう。  
(... I'll bring you some water)

This difference is for verb describing action. With verbs describing a state such as *aru* (there is) or *tariru* (to suffice), *-eba/-tara* and ... *nara* can be followed by the same phrases:

- Okane-ga areba/attara haratte kudasai.*
- Okane-ga aru-n-nara haratte-kudasai.*  
(Please pay if you have money.)

## Introducing a relative or colleague

When Mr. Lerner was going home after work yesterday afternoon he ran into Mr. Okada on the street. Mr. Okada was with a young woman, whom he introduced to Mr. Lerner as

*Musume-desu.* (This is my daughter.)  
むすめです。

The woman bowed to him saying *Doozo yoroshiku* (How do you do?). Mr. Lerner gave his name and added *Doozo yoroshiku*, and parted from them. Later he wondered why Mr. Okada did not give his daughter's name. When he came to think about it, he realized that he did not know the names of most of his colleagues' family members.

\* \* \*

The Japanese do not usually give the names of their family members when they introduce them. They just say

*Kanai-desu.* (This is my wife.)

家内です。

*Shujin-desu.* (This is my husband.)

主人です。

rather than saying *Yoshiko-desu* (This is Yoshiko) or *Kanai-no Yoshiko-desu* (This is my wife Yoshiko). They give names only when there is some special need for it, namely when their family members have to be introduced as individuals rather than simply identified as someone in their family.

A similar thing is observed when Japanese introduce their work colleagues, as in

*Uchi-no sha-no mono-desu.*

(lit. This person is from my company.)

*Kachoo-desu.* (He's the section chief.)

unless the colleagues are going to actively participate in the business discussions after the introduction.

Foreigners often feel embarrassed or angry at this custom. They feel it is impolite not to introduce someone present by name. But the Japanese do not mean to be impolite. Some do this just because it is the custom; others feel it is better not to cause unnecessary trouble to the listener by giving the name of someone who does not play an important role in the situation.

## Ippiki and ippon (one fish and bar)

Mr. Lerner wanted to cook some fish for himself, and stopped by at the fishmonger's near his house. He asked the fishmonger, pointing to a heap of mackerel pike,

*Sono sanma, ippiki kudasai.*

そのさんま、いっぴきください。

(Please give me one of those mackerel pike.)

He was rather proud of himself for remembering that fish should be counted with *hiki* instead of *hitotsu* (one piece), but the middle-aged fishmonger said

*Hai, sanma ippon.* はい、さんま いっぽん。

(lit. OK, one bar of mackerel pike.)

\* \* \*

Animals are usually counted with *hiki* as in

*ippiki, nihiki, sanbiki, yonhiki, gohiki, roppiki. . . .*

*Hiki* undergoes phonetic change into *piki* or *biki* depending on what precedes it. This counter is applied to all types of animals — quadrupeds, insects and reptiles, although birds are counted with *wa* as in *ichiwa, niwa, sanba*, and big animals are often counted with *too*.

The counter *hon* used by the fishmonger is for counting thin, long things such as pencils, poles, bottles and cassette tapes. *Hon* also undergoes phonetic changes as in

*ippon, nihon, sanbon, yonhon, gohon, roppon. . . .*

The fishmonger used *hon* because he regarded his merchandise as a lifeless object; he avoided using *hiki*, which should be used, strictly speaking, for living animals.

In the same way, while living human beings are counted with *ri* or *nin* as in

*hitori, futari, sannin, yonin, gonin, rokunin. . . .*

dead persons are counted *ittai* (one body), *nitai* (two bodies), etc.

Counters are used depending on how the person, animal or object is regarded in the situation. When one counts the number of sheets used for a letter, for instance, one says

*Sanmai-no nagai tegami-deshita.*

(It was a long letter on three sheets of paper.)

But when one counts a letter as a unit of correspondence, one uses *tsuu* as in

*Kyoo-wa tegami-o santsuu kaita.*

(I wrote three letters today.)

## ... to (and) and... toka (and others)

When Mr. Lerner asked Miss Yoshida what sports she liked, she answered

*Tenisu-to suiee-wa sukoshi dekimasu-kedo.*  
(I can play tennis and swim a little bit.)

And when Mr. Lerner asked her about Mr. Kato, she said

*Aa, ano-hito-wa supootsuman-da-kara, tenisu-toka, sukii-toka, yotto-toka, iroiro yaru-deshoo-ne.*  
(Since he is good at sports, I think he plays tennis, skis and sails and does various other things.)

Mr. Lerner wondered about the difference between *to* and *toka*.

\* \* \*

The particle *to* indicates that the speaker has cited everything. For instance, if one says

*Kinoo-wa Yamada-san-to Tanaka-san-ga kimashita.*

きのうは 山田さんと 田中さんが 来ました。

(Yesterday Mr. Yamada and Mr. Tanaka came.)

then just these two people came. On the other hand, if one says

*Kinoo-wa Yamada-san-toka, Tanaka-san-toka, iroirona hito-ga kimashita.*

きのうは 山田さんとか、田中さんとか、いろいろ  
な 人が 来ました。

(Yesterday Mr. Yamada, Mr. Tanaka and

others came.)

the speaker means that more than two people came.

The particle *ya* is used in a similar way to *toka*, as in

*Kinoo-wa Yamada-san-ya Tanaka-san-ya, iroirona hito-ga kimashita.*

The difference between *ya* and *toka* is that the latter sounds more familiar and tends to convey some feeling. For instance, saying *Yamada-san-toka Tanaka-san-toka iroirona hito-ga kimashita* implies such things as "so I had a busy day" or "so this place was lively."

The particle *toka* has another usage; it is used to convey someone's message, as in

*Yamada-san, atama-ga itai-toka, tsukareta-toka itte-ta-yo.*

(Mr. Yamada was saying things like he had a headache or was tired, and so on.)

In this usage, too, the sentence can imply such things as "he looked in poor condition" or "he didn't seem to feel like working." *Ya* cannot be used in this way; it is only used to connect two or more nouns or pronouns.

## *Imasara* meaning 'at this late stage'

Mr. Lerner's colleagues decided to have a sports day and all of them were going to participate in some kind of game. Miss Yoshida had consented to play tennis in a tournament, but suddenly, just two weeks before the meet, she asked to be excused on that day. Mr. Takada looked embarrassed and said

*Imasara sonna...*

(lit. At this time that kind of...)

Mr. Lerner understood from the situation that he meant it was perhaps too late for her to change plans; he was interested to find another expression that anticipates a negative statement.

\* \* \*

While *ima* simply means "the present" or "now," *imasara* implies that it is too late for something. For instance, when one has overslept and says while looking at the clock,

*Imasara isoidemo...*

(lit. Even if I hurry now...)

one implies that it is too late and hurrying will be useless. It is possible to complete the sentence, as in

*Imasara isoidemo ma-ni au hazu-ga nai.*

いまさら いそいでも 間に 合う はずが ない。  
(Even if I hurry, I won't be able to make it.)

but the last part is usually left out.

Mr. Takada's uncompleted sentence above can

be completed as follows:

*Imasara sonna kono<sup>+</sup>o iwarete-mo kaeru wake-niwa ikanai.*

(Even though you say that now, it is impossible to change at this late stage.)

One can replace *imasara* by *ima* in all of the sentences cited above, but using *imasara* implies the rest more clearly and the listener will understand more quickly.

This is similar to a number of adverbs that anticipate negative statements such as *doomo* (somehow), *chotto* (a little bit) or *sonna* (that kind of).

When *imasara* is followed by ... *no yoo-ni*, it means "(to realize something) as never before," as in

*Imasara-no yoo-ni ano-hito-no erasa-ga wakatta.*

(It was brought home to us how great he was.)

*Jibun-de kaimono-o shite-mite, imasara-no yoo-ni bukka-no takai koto-ga wakatta.*

じぶん で 買物 を して みて、いまさら の よう に 物価 の 高い こと が わか った。

(Buying things for myself, I realized for the first time how high prices are.)



## ...ijoo meaning 'now that ...'

Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada were waiting for Miss Yoshida at the station on the day of their picnic. Miss Yoshida, who is usually very punctual, did not show up at the appointed time. When Mr. Lerner suggested going ahead without her, Mr. Takada said

*Kuru-to itta-ijoo, kitto kuru-kara, machimashoo.*

Mr. Lerner agreed and they waited awhile longer until she turned up, but he did not understand this use of *ijoo*, which usually means "more than."

\* \* \*

When *ijoo* follows numbers, it means "... or more" or "more than..." For instance, when one says

*Mittsu-ijoo kaeba waribiki-ni naru-soo-desu.*

(I understand that if you buy three or more, there will be a price reduction.)

*ijoo* means "... or more." With bigger numbers, *ijoo* often means "more than" as in

*Nisen-nin-ijoo haireru ookina koodoo-desu.*

(It is a big hall that can hold more than 2,000 people.)

However, when *ijoo* is added to phrase or clause, it means "since..." or "now that..." When Mr. Takada said *kuru-to itta ijoo*, he meant "since she said she would come." Thus the whole sentence means "Since she said she would come, she will certainly come, so let's wait."

What follows the phrase ending in *ijoo* is a statement either of judgment or will, as in

*Erabareta-ijoo zenryoku-o tsukushimasu.*

えらばれた以上 全力を つくします。

(Now that I have been chosen (as your representative, etc.), I will do my best.)

*Nyuusha-shita-ijoo, kaisha-no hooshin-ni shitagatte-moraitai.*

(Since you are now a member of this company, I want you to act in line with its policies.)

## Genki-ja nai vs. genki-ga nai

When Mr. Takada appeared and said *Ohayoo-gozaimasu* (Good morning) to everybody at the office, Miss Yoshida said

*Nandaka genki-ga arimasen-ne. Dooka shita-n-desu-ka.*

(You seem tired. Is something wrong?)

Mr. Takada answered that he had not been able to sleep well because it was so noisy outside. Mr. Lerner wondered if *genki-ja arimasen-ne* could have been used in this case.

\* \* \*

*Genki* is followed by either *da/desu* or *ga aru/arimasu*, as in

- I. A: *Minasan okawari arimasen-ka.*  
(How's everybody?)  
B: *Hai, okagesama-de minna genki-desu.*  
(They're all fine, thank you.)
- II. A: *Moo sukoshi yarimashoo-yo.*  
(Let's continue a little while longer.)  
B: *Mada yaru-n-desu-ka. Zuibun genki-ga arimasu-ne.*  
(You're going to go on? You're full of energy.)

While *genki-da/desu* means "to be fine, to be healthy," *genki-ga aru/arimasu* means "to have strength, to have energy" *Genki* is used in these two ways in the negative, too.

- I. *Ano-hito kono-goro amari genki-ja nai yoo-desu-ne.*  
あまり 元気がない

(He does not seem to be very well these days.)

- II. *Ano-hito, kono-goro amari genki-ga nai yoo-desu-ne.*  
あまり 元気がない

(He does not seem to be very energetic/in high spirits these days.)

The word *byooki* can also be used in the same way with *ja nai* and *ga nai*:

- I. *Moo byooki-ja nai-kara shigoto-ni ikimasu.*  
(I am no longer sick, so I will start going to work again.)
- II. *Betsu-ni byooki-wa nai-to iwareta-keredo, kibun-ga yoku nai.*  
(I was told that there is nothing wrong with me, but I don't feel well.)  
*Dare-demo hototsu-ya futatsu byooki-ga aru mon-desu.*

(Everyone has one problem or other in regard to health.)

While *byooki-da/desu* means "to be sick," *byooki-ga aru/arimasu* means "to have some physical problem."

Some words are used both as a noun and an adjective: *kenkoo* (health), *kinben* (deligence) are, for instance, used as adjectives too. But only a small number of them are followed by *ga aru* or *ga nai* as are *genki* and *byooki*.

## *li kagen* (The appropriate degree)

Mr. Lerner stayed at a small *minshuku* inn in the country over the weekend. When he came back to his room from the Japanese-style bath, the woman who brought him dinner asked him

*Ofuro-no kagen-wa doo-deshita?*  
おふろの かげんは どうでした?

He guessed that she was asking about the bath, so he answered

*li ofuro-deshita.* (It was a nice bath.)

and she looked satisfied. But he did not quite understand the word *kagen*.

\* \* \*

The word *kagen* originally meant “adding and subtracting,” and has come to mean “degree,” “extent” or “condition.” The woman at the inn was asking Mr. Lerner how the condition of the water was.

This word is sometimes used to mean “health” as in

*Otoosan-no okagen-wa ikaga-desu-ka.*  
(How is your father?)  
*Kyoo-wa kagen-ga yoroshii-yoo-desu.*  
(He seems to be in quite good condition today.)

But this use is becoming less common now; it is usually replaced by *chooshi* (condition) or *guai* (condition).

When *kagen* is preceded by *ii*, it literally means “good condition” or “appropriate degree,” but ac-

tually it usually has a negative sense. Namely, saying

*li kagen-ni yamenasai.*  
いい かげんに やめなさい。

literally means “Stop at the right time,” but actually means “I want no more of that.”

Furthermore, *ii kagen-na* is used to mean “halfway,” “incomplete” or “perfunctory,” as in

*li kagen-na henji-o suru-na.*  
(Don't answer in an indefinite way.)  
*Ano-hito-no yaru koto-wa itsumo ii kagen-desu-ne.*

あの人の やる ことは いつも いい かげんで すね。

(He never does things right.)  
*Anna ii kagen-na yatsu-wa shin'yoo-dekinai.*  
(I can't trust an unreliable person like him.)

*li kagen* (appropriate degree) and *ii kagen-na* (halfway) are distinguished not only from the context but also from the pitch. Namely, *ii kagen* is pronounced as two words: *ii* is pronounced high-low, and *kagen* low-high-high. On the other hand *ii kagen-na* is pronounced as one word, low-high-high-high-high-high.

## Kore and kore-wa

When Mr. Lerner took a draft to Miss Yoshida for typing, Mr. Takada was there asking her to type something. He said

*Kore, chotto isogu-n-da-kedo.*

(Please hurry with this — *lit.* This, a little in a hurry, but)

and Miss Yoshida said she would do it right away. Mr. Lerner wondered if Mr. Takada could have said

*Kore-wa chotto isogu-n-da-kedo.*

instead. He also wondered if the particle *wa* is always left out in conversation.

\* \* \*

It is true that *wa* is very often left out in conversation while it is kept in written Japanese. However, it is not left out arbitrarily. One might say

*Kore-wa chotto isogu-n-da-kedo.*

(This is in a little hurry.)

too, but there is a difference in meaning between the two phrases *kore* and *kore-wa*.

When one says *Kore-wa isogu*, one is explaining what kind of work it is. If you want to say that some particular task has to be done before others, you will say

*Kore-wa hoka-no yori isogu-n-da-kedo.*

(This is in more of a hurry than others.)

In this type of sentence, *wa* is not left out after *kore*.

On the other hand, in saying *kore* without a particle and with a slight pause, one is attracting the other person's attention. After this single word *kore*, the listener expects such messages as

Please take care of this right away.

Please take special care of this.

I would like you to accept this.

Because "this," has the function of attracting the listener's attention, it is often used by itself when handing over something, as in

*Anoo, tsumaranai mono-desu-ga, kore.*

あのう、つまらない ものですが、これ。

(Excuse me. This is a very small thing I'd like to give you — *lit.* Well, it's a trifling thing but this. . .)

*Osoku natte sumimasen. Kore.*

(I'm sorry I'm late in returning this.)

## *Ima-doki* meaning 'not likely these days'

Mrs. Matsumoto, who lives next-door to Mr. Lerner, is a very kind woman. She always accepts parcels delivered for him while he is out, and brings them to him before he goes to her. When he told his colleagues about this, Mr. Takada said

*Ima-doki mezurashii hito-dane.*

(lit. She is a rare person in the present time.)

and everybody agreed. Mr. Lerner wondered if *kono-goro* can be used in place of *ima-doki*.

\* \* \*

*Kono-goro* simply refers to the present as in

- (1) *Kono-goro doyoobi-mo yasumu kaisha-ga ooku narimashita.*  
(These days more companies are closed on Saturdays.)
- (2) *Kono-goro-no kookoossee-wa see-ga takai.*  
(High school students are tall nowadays.)

It can also be used in reporting what one has been doing recently as in

*Kono-goro-wa asa hayaku okiru yoo-ni shite-imasu.*

(I get up early these days.)

On the other hand, *ima-doki* implies that something is not likely to happen in the present days. Thus

*Matsumoto-san-no yoona hito-wa ima-doki mezurashii.*

(It is very rare to find a person like Mrs. matsumoto now.)

*Ima-doki hyaku-en-gurai-de shokuji-ga dekiru hazu-ga nai.*

(It is now impossible to have a meal for ¥100 or so.)

*Ima-doki* is followed by a statement of the speaker's judgement. It cannot be used in place of *kono-goro* in sentences (1) and (2) above.

Sometimes *ima-doki* is used to warn others, as in

*Ima-doki sonna koto-o yuu-to warawaremasu-yo.*

いまどき そんな ことを 言うと わらわれますよ。

(Nowadays saying that is to invite people to laugh at you.)

And sometime the rest can be left out after *ima-doki*, as in

A: *Yasui otetsudai-san inai-deshoo-ka.*

(Can I find someone who will help with the housework cheaply?)

B: *Sore-wa ima-doki...*

(Not these days — a phrase meaning “will be impossible” is understood and left out.)

## Expressions of approximate number or amount

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida dropped by at a bookstore on their way to the station after work yesterday evening. He wanted to buy the latest issue of a magazine, but it had not arrived yet. The storekeeper did not know exactly when it would come, so Mr. Lerner said

*Ja, suujitsu ato-de mata kimasu.*  
(Then I'll come again in a few days.)

As they left the store Miss Yoshida said that *suujitsu* somehow sounded strange.

\* \* \*

*Suu* (several) is followed by expressions of number as in

*suu-nen* (several years)  
*suu-kai* (several times)  
*suu-nin* (several people)

It can be followed by or added to, such figures as *juu* (ten), *hyaku* (hundred) or *sen* (thousand), etc., as in

*suu-juu-nin* (several dozens of people — *lit.* several tens)  
*suu-hyaku-nin* (several hundreds of people — *lit.* several hundreds)  
*juu-suu-nin* (a dozen or so people — *lit.* ten and several)

In fact, this is a very convenient prefix to express the idea of "several."

But *suu* . . . is not used very commonly in daily

conversation. Instead, connecting two adjoining numbers is common, as in

*ni-san-nichi* 二、三日 (two or three days)  
*san-yo-nin* 三、四人 (three or four people)  
*shi-go-kai* 四、五回 (four or five times)  
*go-rop-pun* 五、六分 (five or six minutes)

When asking for more time before giving an answer to some proposition or other, one will often say

*Ni-san-nichi kangaesasete-kudasai.*  
(Please let me think about it for a few days — *lit.* two or three days)

In the situation mentioned above Miss Yoshida would have said

*Ni-san-nichi ato-de kimasu.*  
(I'll come in two or three days.)  
or  
*Go-roku-nichi ato-de kimasu.*  
(I'll come in five or six days.)

This type of expression is commonly used in conversation to show approximate number, but the figures are not always strictly used. Namely, when one says *ni-san-nichi* or *shi-go-nichi*, the numbers may cover a long or shorter period than that actually indicated by the figures, depending on the situation. For instance, one may say *ni-san-nichi matte-kudasai* (please wait two or three days) even when one wishes to be given more time than that.

## Pronunciation of certain sentence particles

When Mr. Lerner came back to the office after having lunch the other day, Miss Yoshida asked him if it was cold outside. He answered

*Ee, totemo samui-desu-yo.* (Yes, it's very cold.)

It was a very simple sentence and nothing was wrong, he thought, but Miss Yoshida softly laughed. She explained that the way he had said *yo* sounded funny.

\* \* \*

Since sentence particles, namely such words as *ka*, *ne*, *yo*, *sa*, *wa*, reflect the speaker's feelings, they have to be said with the right pronunciation. The particle *yo*, which is used to indicate emphatic feeling, should be said short and with a falling tone. Saying *yo* conspicuously high as in

*Samui-desu -YO!* さむいですよ。

will sound condescending, as if one were a mother talking to a child. This is probably what Mr. Lerner did. If one prolongs *yo* as in

*Samui-desu-YOO.*

it will sound as if one is trying to get the attention of someone who is going away without listening. Thus, it is safest, in most cases, to say *yo* short and low as in

*Samui-desu -yo.* さむいですよ。

It is advisable for foreigners to be particularly careful about the pronunciation of *ka*. When it is used to ask a question, it should be raised but said short as in

*Samui-desu -ka?*

In this case, only the *ka* should be raised, rather than with a continuous rising tone.

If one prolongs *ka* as in

*Samui-desu -KAA?*

it will sound strange. If *ka* goes up, it implies disbelief and can sound offensive.

Very often *ka* is added to mean "I see," as in

*Aa, soo-desu-ka.* (Oh, is that right?)

*Aa, ashita-desu-ka. Kekkoo-desu.*

(Tomorrow. . . That's fine with me.)

In these cases *ka* should definitely fall, as in

*Aa, soo-desu -ka.* ああ、そうですか。

## Telephone Conversation (1) Apologies for calling

Mr. Lerner answered the telephone at lunch-time when there was nobody else in the office. A man said

*Raanaa-san onegai-shimasu. Okada-to iimasu.*

(May I speak to Mr. Lerner? My name is Okada.)

Mr. Lerner answered

*Watashi-desu.* (Speaking — *lit.* It's me.)

Then Mr. Okada said

*A, Raanaa-san, ohiru-doki-ni mooshiwake arimasen-ga...*

(I'm sorry to trouble you at lunchtime.)

Mr. Lerner remembered that he had asked Mr. Okada to call him around noon. He thought Mr. Okada had no reason to apologize for calling, and was impressed by his politeness. At the same time he wondered if he himself always apologized when he should.

\* \* \*

The Japanese often start telephone conversations with apologetic expressions rather than expressions corresponding to "Good afternoon" or "How are you?" The most common expressions used when calling someone at work are:

*Oisogashii tokoro, mooshiwake arimasen-ga...*

おいそがしいところ、申し訳ありませんが……  
(I'm sorry to call when you are so busy.)

*Oshigoto-chuu, sumimasen-ga...*  
(I'm sorry to trouble you at work.)

Or, in a familiar tone, one sometimes says things like

*Isogashii tokoro, warui-kedo...*

(Sorry to call when you're busy — more familiar.)

When calling someone at home on their dayoff or in the evening, one says

*Oyasumi-no tokoro mooshiwake arimasen-ga...*

(I'm sorry to trouble you when you are off work.)

*Yabun mooshiwake arimasen-ga...*

(I'm sorry to call you at night.)

And if you are calling someone early in the morning, you should say

*Asa hayaku-kara sumimasen-ga...*

(I'm sorry to call you early in the morning.)

When calling someone at an odd hour, one says

*Konna jikan-ni mooshiwake arimasen-ga...*

こんな時間に、申し訳ありませんが……

(I'm sorry to call you at such an hour.)

Since there is no way of knowing if you are calling someone at an inconvenient time, it is advisable to make sure that you can continue talking by saying something like

*Ima yoroshii-deshoo-ka.*

今 よろしいでしょうか。

(Is it a good time for you to talk now?)



## ***Banzai* (Hurrah)**

Mr. Lerner came back from a trip on the Shinkansen. When he arrived at Tokyo Station, there was a crowd of several young people, mostly men, on a nearby platform. They suddenly started shouting

*Banzai!* (Hurrah!)

Mr. Lerner thought they were celebrating some kind of victory, but when he came closer, he saw that they were looking at a young man seated in the train.

\* \* \*

The word *banzai* literally means "may you live long." This is said to celebrate someone's longevity as well as health. To greet the Emperor on his birthday and on New Year's Day, people visit the Imperial Palace and shout

*Tennoo-heeka banzai!* (Long Live His Majesty!)

This *banzai* is also used to celebrate a victory. You must have seen, either in a stadium or on TV, winners hoisting their leader or coach and shouting this. Or, you may have seen winners shouting it while raising up both arms. At children's athletic meets, too, those who have won often use this expression.

It is also used to cheer or encourage someone leaving for a new position, or going on a honeymoon. The people Mr. Lerner saw on the platform had probably come to see their colleague off when he was leaving for his new place of work. In such

cases,

*Ganbare!* (Hang in there/Stick to it!)

is also used.

Some people do not like *banzai* because it reminds them of the war when soldiers used it, but is now commonly used as an expression of joy, good wishes or encouragement, as in

*Nihon Kabushiki-gaisha banzai!* (Glory for our company — *lit.* The Nihon Stock Company (fictional name) will live long — said on occasions such as an anniversary ceremony.)

*Okamoto-kun banzai!*

(A cheer for Mr. Okamoto — said when encouraging Mr. Okamoto on his taking a new post.)

## Telephone Conversation (2) Frequent response

When Mr. Lerner was talking with Mr. Okada on the phone yesterday afternoon, he noticed that Mr. Okada often repeated *moshimoshi* during the conversation. He thought *moshimoshi* (hello) was used only when starting a conversation on the phone, and wondered why Mr. Okada used it so much during the conversation.

\* \* \*

Mr. Okada said *moshimoshi* because Mr. Lerner did not give *aizuchi* when expected. The Japanese often give *aizuchi*, or reply words, in personal conversation, as in

- A. *Kinoo-no ohanashi-no koto-desu-ga...*  
(Concerning what we talked about yesterday)
- B. *Hai.* はい。
- A. *Shanai-de soodan-shite-mimashitara...*  
(When I discussed it with my colleagues)
- B. *Hai.* はい。
- A. *Mada chotto jiki-ga hayai-ja nai-ka...*  
(Isn't it a bit too early?)
- B. *Hai.* はい。
- A. *To yuu iken-ga kanari arimashite...*  
(Many said this, and)
- B. *Hai.* はい。

Speaker A could say the whole thing as in *Kinoo-no ohanashi-no koto-desu-ga, shanai-de soodan-shite-mimashitara, mada chotto jiki-ga hayai-n-ja nai-ka-to yuu iken-ga kanari arimashita*. But it is more customary to pause frequently and continue after having heard the listener's response.

This kind of response is given more frequently

in telephone conversation than in face-to-face conversation because the speakers cannot see the facial expression of the other person. Some foreigners feel that Japanese listeners are impolite when they give *aizuchi* before a sentence is finished. But the Japanese are used to conversation with frequent *aizuchi*, and if the other person does not give *aizuchi* when expected, they feel uneasy and say *moshimoshi* to confirm the other person's attention.

It is advised that you try to give a short reply when a Japanese speaker on the phone pauses, and when the Japanese speaker has said *moshimoshi*, reply *hai* without feeling irritated.

## Doozo and 'Please'

Mr. Lerner was hurriedly gathering together some papers needed for a meeting, when Miss Yoshida came by, and offered to help, saying

*Otetsudai-shimashoo-ka.* (Would you like me to help you? — *lit.* Shall I help you?)

Mr. Lerner said.

*Ee, doozo.*

meaning "Yes, please." Mr. Takada, who was working nearby, heard this and laughed. He explained that *doozo* should not be used when making a request. Mr. Lerner felt confused; don't the Japanese say *Doozo yoroshiku* (How do you do? — *lit.* Please be good to me) so often?

\* \* \*

*Doozo* is used in making requests as in

*Doozo onegai-shimasu.* (Please do so.)

*Kochira-e doozo.* (Please come this way.)

But when it is used alone, the speaker is usually urging someone to go ahead and do what he wants to do. For instance, to someone asking

*Tabako-o sutte-mo ii-desu-ka.* (May I smoke?)

*Doozo* is often used in reply, meaning "Please go ahead." Or, when offering something to drink or eat, one often says just

*Doozo.*            どうぞ。

meaning "Please help yourself."

When accepting an offer of help, however, saying *Doozo* sounds strange; it sounds as if one is saying "Please go ahead and help me, if you want to so badly." Thus it can sound very rude. One should say instead

*Onegai-shimasu.* (*lit.* I request it.)

Some people distinguish between *doozo* and *dooka* どうぞ vs. どうか; *dooka* is used solely for requests. But this distinction is not very common, and *dooka* is not used in daily conversation as often as *doozo*.

Thus it is advisable to use *Doozo* only in making requests, and use *Onegai-shimasu* or

*Sumimasen. Onegai-shimasu.*

すみません。お願いします。

(Thank you. Please help me.)

when accepting an offer of help.

## Telephone Conversation (3) Saying goodbye

Professor Takahashi called Mr. Lerner at the office yesterday afternoon to ask a few questions about Mr. Lerner's corrections of a paper he had written in English. When Mr. Lerner had answered all the questions, and Professor Takahashi had said

*Doomo arigatoo-gozaimeshita.*  
(Thank you very much.)

he was about to say goodbye. But Professor Takahashi again started apologizing for taking up his time. Mr. Lerner had several things to do at the office and was beginning to feel irritated, when Miss Yoshida called out from across the room

*Raanaa-san, okyakusama-desu-yo.*  
(Mr. Lerner, there's someone here to see you.)

Then Professor Takahashi immediately said goodbye, probably because he had heard what Miss Yoshida said. Mr. Lerner was thankful for her help, but still wondered how he could manage to say goodbye in a polite telephone conversation with a Japanese.

\* \* \*

Many foreigners wonder how they can appropriately end telephone conversations with polite Japanese. In a business conversation the Japanese stop shortly after the discussions are over, and they feel free to end a conversation between good friends. But in social situations even the Japanese themselves often find it rather difficult to find an opportunity to say

*Shitsuree-shimasu.* 失礼します。  
(Goodbye — more polite than *Sayonara*)

Since many Japanese regard it as polite to repeat their apologies or expressions of gratitude, you have to be prepared to spend about twice as much time as you would like in listening and responding to expressions of apology and gratitude.

One strategy to start bidding farewell is to say, when there is a slight pause after exchanging expressions of apology and gratitude,

*Anoo, mooshiwake nai-n-desu-ga...*  
(Well, I'm very sorry but ...)

in a hesitant way. Usually the other person will sense that you wish to end the conversation.

Another strategy is to have someone call you away from the telephone and come back after a few minutes and politely apologize

*Taihen shitsuree-itashimashita.*  
(I beg your pardon — *lit.* I was very rude.)

## Tondemo nai (Far from it)

Mr. Okada treated Mr. Lerner to dinner yesterday evening, saying that he wanted Mr. Lerner to have a good meal after working so hard to help him. After dinner Mr. Lerner thanked him saying

*Taihen gochisoosama-deshita.*

(Thank you very much for the delicious dinner.)

Then Mr. Okada said

*lie, tondemo nai.*

instead of *lie* or *lie, doo-itashimashite* (No, you're welcome). That made Mr. Lerner wonder when *tondemo nai* should be used.

\* \* \*

*Tondemo nai* means "Far from it," and is used as a strong denial, as in

I. A: *Omigoto-desu-ne.* (You're so good at it!)

B: *lie, tondemo nai.* (No, not at all.)

II. A: *Kono kuruma, gojibun-no-desu-ka.*

(Is this car yours?)

B: *Tondemo nai. Konna ii kuruma, kaeru hazuga arimasen-yo.*

(No, how could it be? I could never purchase such a costly car.)

*lie* is used most often in the usual exchanges of apologies and answers, and *lie, doo-itashimashite* sounds more formal, as in

I. A: *Osoku natte sumimasen.* (Sorry I'm late.)

B: *lie.* (Not at all.)

II. A: *Osoku narimashite, mooshiwake gozaimasen.*

(I am sorry to be late — more formal.)

B: *lie, doo-itashimashite.*

(No, not at all — more formal.)

*Tondemo nai* sounds emphatic; it implies surprise. Mr. Okada, in the case mentioned above, thought he didn't at all deserve Mr. Lerner's gratitude, and chose *tondemo nai* rather than *lie*.

Thus, *tondemo nai* is used when the speaker wants to strongly deny the other person's judgment or intention. Sometimes

*Tondemo arimasen.*

*Tondemo gozaimasen.*

*Tondemo nai koto-desu.*

are used with the same meaning.

## Oseji (A groundless compliment)

Mr. Lerner wore a new suit to the office yesterday morning. Miss Yoshida quickly noticed it and said

*Raanaa-san, sono fuku, totemo suteki.*  
(Mr. Lerner, that's a very nice suit.)

He felt pleased, and in reply to this, he said

*Oseji-o arigatoo.*

meaning "Thank you for your compliment." But this did not work; she looked hurt and said she never said *oseji*.

\* \* \*

*Oseji* in present usage means "a groundless compliment" or "flattery" in most cases. Expressions like *oseji-o yuu* (to say *oseji*) or *oseji-ga umai* (good at *oseji*) imply that a person praises others with no sincerity. The word "compliment," as in "Thank you for your compliment," has no exact equivalent in Japanese. *Oseji-o arigatoo* sounds quite sarcastic.

In polite Japanese conversation one usually denies a compliment with

*lie.* (No.)      いいえ。

or

*lie, sonna koto-wa arimasen.*  
いいえ、そんなことはありません。  
(No, that's not the case.)

But in friendly conversation one sometimes accepts praise or even thanks the other for it. Col-

leagues will exchange such remarks as

- I. A: *li sebiro-dane.* (That's a very nice suit.)  
B: *Yaa, doomo.* (Well, thanks.) — male conversation
- II. A: *Sono doresu, suteki.*  
(That's a very nice dress.)  
B: *Ara, doomo.* (Well, thanks.) — female conversation

Sometimes even in polite conversation one thanks the other for praise by saying

*Ohome-ni azukatte kyooshuku-desu.*  
(Thank you very much for your compliment —  
*lit.* I'm quite awestruck at receiving your praise.)  
*Osoreirimasu.*  
(Thank you very much — *lit.* I'm awestruck.)

But these expressions sound rather formal. Mr. Lerner should have just said

*Doomo.*      ども。      (Thanks.)  
or  
*Arigatoo.*      ありがとう。      (Thank you.)

**. . . te-hoshii meaning  
'I would like you to . . .'**

Miss Yoshida looked extremely busy preparing documents for a meeting yesterday morning. Mr. Lerner went to her and asked

*Tetsudai-ga hoshii-desu-ka.*

meaning "Would you like some help?" She smiled and said

*Ee, dekireba chotto tetsudatte-hoshii-n-desu-kedo.*

(Yes, that would be very helpful — *lit.*, I would like you to help me a little if possible.)

Mr. Lerner wondered if he should have used *tetsudatte-hoshii* instead of *tetsudai-ga hoshii*.

\* \* \*

When referring to an action, *hoshii* is used with the *te* form of a verb, as in

*Chotto matte-hoshii-n-da-kedo.*

ちよっと 待ってほしいんだけど。

(Would you wait a while? — *lit.* I would like you to wait a while but.)

*Ano-hito-niwa moo sukoshi hataraitte-hoshii-desu-ne.*

(It would be nice if he worked a little harder, wouldn't it?)

*Sore-wa iwanaide-hoshii-na.*

(I wish you wouldn't say that.)

In this usage, . . . *te-hoshii* resembles . . . *te-moraitai* (I would like you/him/her/them to . . .); in fact, . . . *te-moraitai* can take the place of . . . *te-*

*hoshii* in the three sentences above. However, . . . *te-hoshii* cannot be used in polite situations; to be polite, . . . *te-itadakitai* is used in place of . . . *te-hoshii* or . . . *te-moraitai*.

Saying *Tetsudatte-hoshii-desu-ka* to mean "Would you like me to help you?" is grammatically correct, but it is not commonly used in polite conversation. Between good friends people say something like

A: *Kore, motte-hoshii?*

(Do you want me to carry it?)

B: *Un, tanomu.*

(Yes, please.)

But in polite conversation it is more common to say

*Tetsudaimashoo-ka.* (*lit.*, Shall I help you?)

or, to be even more polite,

*Otetsudai-shimashoo-ka.*

おてつだいしましょうか。

## Anoo and eeto

At a welcome party held for a colleague, everybody made a short speech. Mr. Kobayashi, the youngest employee at the office, seemed to be nervous, and often paused as in

*Eeto, Kobayashi-desu. Boku-wa eeto, koko-dewa ichiban koohai-de, eeto . . .*

(Well, I am Kobayashi, I am, well, the youngest here and well . . .)

Mr. Lerner wondered if *anoo* could have been used in place of *eeto*, since he had been told to use *anoo* rather than *eeto* when looking for the right expression.

\* \* \*

In Mr. Kobayashi's speech *anoo* could have been used instead of *eeto*. Both expressions are used when one cannot think of the right word. The difference between the two is that while *eeto* is used simply to show that the speaker is looking for the right word, *anoo* expresses a hesitant attitude in looking for the right word.

*Anoo* is used to show polite hesitancy as in

*Anoo, sumimasen, chotto ukagaimasu-ga.*  
あのう、すみません、ちょっと うかがいますが。  
(Excuse me. May I ask you something?)

A: *Ashita doo-desu-ka.* (How's tomorrow?)

B: *Ashita-wa anoo, chotto tsugoo-ga . . .*  
(I'm afraid tomorrow is not very convenient for me.)

It is also used as a stopgap phrase like *eeto*, but in that usage too, *anoo* implies that the speaker is looking for the right expression so that he will not be impolite.

In other words, *anoo* shows the speaker's consciousness of the listener while *eeto* does not. Thus one uses *eeto* when talking to oneself as in

*Eeto, kyoo-wa nannichi-datta-kana.*

ええと、きょうは 何日だったかな。

(I wonder what day of the month today is.)

But one never uses *anoo* when speaking to oneself.



## Giving one's card to someone

A few days ago Mr. Lerner was introduced to a man from a company with which his company does business. He gave his business card to him saying

*Kore-wa watashi-no meeshi-desu.*

meaning "This is my name card." The man bowed politely and gave his card to him in return, but Miss Yoshida, who was with them, was trying hard to hold back her laughter. Later she asked him where he had picked up that expression. He answered that he had read it in a Japanese textbook, but she said she would never say that.

\* \* \*

When giving one's card to introduce oneself, it is customary to say either

*Doozo yoroshiku.* (How do you do?)

or

*Tanaka-desu* (or, *Tanaka-de-gozaïmasu*). *Doozo yoroshiku.* 田中です。どうぞよろしく。

(I am Tanaka. Glad to meet you.)

One does not usually say *Kore-wa watashi-no meeshi-desu* or *Watashi-no meeshi-desu*. (It's my name card.)

Saying *Kore-wa watashi-no meeshi-desu* when introducing oneself sounds like a translation of an English expression. Some Japanese might say this when giving their cards to foreigners, unconsciously choosing an English-like expression, but they do not say it with other Japanese.

One usually does not mention *meeshi* or *watashi-no meeshi* when introducing oneself, but

*meeshi* can be mentioned in other situations. For instance *Meeshi-o doozo* (Please accept my name card) will be said when one offers it in order to give the other person one's telephone number, as in

- A: *Ja, ato-de denwa-o shite-kudasaimasen-ka.*  
(Then would you call me later?)
- B: *Hai. Odenwa-bangoo-wa?*  
(Yes, of course. And what's your phone number?)
- A: *A, soo-desu-ne. Ja, meeshi-o-doozo.*  
(Oh, yes. Please have one of my name cards.)

## Expressions meaning 'enjoy'

Mr. Lerner was wondering what to say in Japanese when he wanted to say things like "Please enjoy your stay in Tokyo" or "I hope you enjoy your trip." He asked Miss Yoshida if he could say

*Tookyoo-taizai-o tanoshinde-kudasai.*  
(lit. Please enjoy your stay in Tokyo.)

She said it sounded like a direct translation. But she could not think of a good expression for it in Japanese.

\* \* \*

In English one uses such expressions as "enjoy . . ." or "have a good . . ." to express such wishes. But the Japanese do not have any expressions directly corresponding to such English expressions. You have to think about what is appropriate to say in each situation.

A Japanese will say to welcome a visitor from abroad to his home

*Yoku irasshaimashita. Doozo goyukkuri.*

よく いらっしやいました。どうぞ ごゆっくり。

(I'm glad you could come. Please make yourself at home.)

The word *tanoshimu* is used in formal or written language as in

*Ikkoo-wa Kyooto-no aki-o tanoshimimashita.*

(The group enjoyed autumn in Kyoto — said by a TV or radio announcer.)

But in personal conversation *tanoshimu* is not commonly used.

To mean "Are you enjoying college life?" one will say

*Gakusee-seekatsu-wa tanoshii-desu-ka.*

rather than

*Gakusee-seekatsu-o tanoshinde-imasu-ka.*

which sounds like a direct translation from English. Thus, at present, *tanoshimu* (to enjoy) is not as commonly used as *tanoshii* (enjoyable).

But it is true that many foreigners speaking Japanese wish they could say something in Japanese to mean "I hope you will enjoy. . . ." Although it is not customary for a Japanese to say things like

*Nihon-o tanoshinde-kudasai.*

(Please enjoy your stay in Japan.)

it does not sound impolite or offensive to hear it used.

. . . *de* vs. . . . *ni* meaning  
'in/at, etc.'

Mr. Lerner still sometimes makes mistakes in the use of *de* and *ni*. Today he inadvertently said

*Ano-hito-wa doko-de tsutomete-imasu-ka.*  
(Where does he work?)

and Miss Yoshida corrected him saying that he should use *ni* with *tsutomeru*. He wondered what verbs, besides *iru* (to be) and *aru* (to be), are used with *ni* instead of *de*.

\* \* \*

As a rule, *ni* is used with verbs indicating existence while *de* is used with verbs indicating action, as in

*Yamada-san-wa doko-ni imasu-ka.*  
(Where is Mr. Yamada?)

*Asoko-ni ginkoo-ga arimasu-ne.*  
(There is a bank over there.)

*Mainichi kaisha-de hatarakimasu.*  
毎日 会社で はたらきます。

(I work at my company every day.)

*Uchi-de nomu koohii-no hoo-ga oishii.*

(The coffee I drink at home tastes better.)

There are several other verbs commonly used to indicate existence, in addition to *iru* and *aru*, such as *sumu* (to live), *tomaru* (to stay overnight) and *tsutomeru* (to work for).

*Doko-ni sunde-imasu-ka.* (Where does he live?)  
*Ano hoteru-ni tomarimashita.*  
(I stayed at that hotel.)

*Kyonen-kara kono kaisha-ni tsutomete-imasu.*

去年から この 会社に つとめています。

(I have been working for this company since last year.)

These verbs refer to human beings (and other living things in the case of *sumu*) staying at a certain place without moving around. The verb *sumu* refers to being settled in a certain place; in this sense, it is different from the English verb "live," which also refers to acting as a living creature. *Tsutomeru* emphasize one's state as a member of a company rather than actually working. *Tomaru* in *hoteru-ni tomaru* refers to staying at a certain place, just like *sumu*.

Actually *tomaru* can be used either with *ni* or *de*; when it is used to mean "to stop moving," *de* is used.

- (1) *Asoko-ni kuruma-ga tomatte-imasu.*  
(There is a car stopped over there.)
- (2) *Asoko-de kuruma-ga tomatte-imasu.*  
(A car has stopped over there.)

are used in different situations. Namely, in (1) the speaker emphasizes the car being parked and staying still; in (2) the speaker emphasizes the car having suddenly stopped moving.

## Uses of *takusan* (much)

Mr. Lerner was having a good time at a party at his friend's house, when a Japanese acquaintance approached him and wanted to fill his glass with beer. Mr. Lerner said that he didn't want any more, but this man insisted on his emptying his glass, so he said

*Moo takusan-desu.*

meaning "No more, thanks." Later he remembered that this expression is not polite and asked Miss Yoshida about it. She said it wasn't, but added that the man deserved it for being so inconsiderate.

\* \* \*

The word *takusan* is commonly used to refer to a large quantity, as in

*Doozo takusan tabete-kudasai.*

どうぞたくさん食べてください。

(Please help yourself to the food — *lit.* Please eat much.)

*Zuibun takusan kaimashita-ne.*

(You've bought a lot of them.)

*Takusan* can be used both when an English speaker would use "much" or "many." (It is more conversational than *ooku-no* (many, much).)

However, when *takusan* is used with *moo . . . desu*, it is used as an emphatic expression meaning "I don't want any more of it." When declining an offer, one usually avoids this expression and says instead

*lie, moo kekkoo-desu.*

いいえ、もう けっこうです。

(No more, thanks.)

or

*lie, moo juubun itadakimashita.*

(No, thank you, I have had plenty.)

*Moo takusan-da/desu* is most commonly used when expressing annoyance as in

*Sensoo-wa moo takusan-da.*

戦争は もう たくさんだ。

(We don't want any more war.)

*Konna koto, moo takusan-desu-ne.*

(We don't need things like this, do we? — said when hearing news about some tragic accident or when annoyed by a train strike, etc.)

## Uses of *sappari* (refreshing: completely)

Mr. Takada asked Mr. Okada how he was doing with his *shakuhachi*, a Japanese instrument like a recorder. Mr. Okada said

*Sappari oto-ga demasen.*

(I'm not making any progress at all — *lit.* I don't make any sound at all.)

and asked Mr. Takada about his tennis. Mr. Takada answered

*Watashi-mo sappari-desu.*

(I'm not making any progress at all, either.)

Mr. Lerner understood that they were using *sappari* for negative emphasis, but he wondered if it was also used to mean “refreshing.”

\* \* \*

The word *sappari* is used in several ways. First, when it is used with *suru* (or *to suru*) it means “refreshing” as in

*Ofuro-ni hairu-to sappari-shimasu-yo.*

(Taking a bath will refresh you.)

*Kao-o arattara sappari-shimashita.*

(I felt refreshed after washing my face.)

This is most commonly used to refer to the pleasant condition when one has gotten rid of an unpleasant, humid feeling like that of the rainy season.

The form *sappari-shita* is often used to describe a light, pleasant taste as in

*Shokuyoku-ga nai-kara nanika sappari-shita*

*mono-ga tabetai.*

(I want something light since I don't have much of an appetite.)

*Aburak~~ko~~oi mono-no ato-wa sappari-shita mono-ga ii-desu-ne.*

(Something light is good after eating overly rich foods.)

When *sappari* is used alone without *suru/shita*, it means “completely”; this use is found mostly in negative statements.

*Wakai mono-no kangaete-iru koto-wa sappari wakaranai.*

(I have no idea what young people think.)

*Nan-to itta-ka sappari omoidasemasen.*

(I cannot recall by any means what it is called.)

## Hajimete, hajime-ni, hajime-wa

Mr. Lerner was talking about his experiences when he came to Japan for the first time, and he inadvertently said

*Hajime-ni osushi-o tabemashita.*

to mean "I had sushi for the first time." (I had never had sushi before) Then Miss Yoshida asked

*Sorekara nani-o tabeta-n-desu-ka.*  
(Then what did you have after that?)

and he realized that he should have used *hajimete* instead.

\* \* \*

The two phrases *hajimete* (for the first time) and *hajime-ni* (at first) are often confusing to foreigners. To refer to one's first experience, *hajimete* should be used as in

1. *Hajimete Nihon-ni kita toki-wa amari Nihongo-ga hanasemasen-deshita.*  
(When I came to Japan for the first time I could not speak Japanese very well.)
2. *Kono mise-wa hajimete-desu.*  
この店 は はじめてです。  
(I have never been to this shop before — lit. This shop is for the first time.)

On the other hand, *hajime-ni* is used to refer to two or more actions taken successively, as in

3. *Hajime-ni Kyooto-ni ikimashita. Sorekara Nara-ni ikimashita.*

(I visited Kyoto first, and then Nara.)

4. *Hajime-ni kochira-o yarimashoo.*  
はじめに こちらを やりましょう。  
(Let's do this first.)

You will also hear the Japanese use *hajime-wa*.

5. *Haime-wa taihen-desu-ga, sugu raku-ni narimasu.*  
はじめは たいへんですが、すぐ らくになり  
ます。  
(In the beginning you will find it difficult, but soon you will find it easy to do.)
6. *Hajime-wa omoshiroi-to omoimashita-ga, dandan akite-shimaimashita.*  
(In the beginning I thought it was interesting, but I gradually became tired of it.)

The phrase *hajime-wa* is used to contrast two conditions — what is stated first and what is mentioned later.

You can use *hajime-wa* instead of *hajime-ni* in (3) and (4) above when you want to emphasize the contrast between the two actions.

## Toshi (age)

Mr. Okada canceled an appointment with Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada because of illness last week. When they met yesterday he apologized and added

*Doomo toshi-de.*

(It's my age — *lit.* Somehow it's age.)

Mr. Lerner was wondering how to answer, when Mr. Takada immediately said

*Nani itte-ru-n-desu-ka.*

(How can it be? — *lit.* What are you talking about?)

\* \* \*

The Japanese often talk about *toshi* (age), and there are several set expressions using this word. *Toshi-desu/da* means "One is no longer young" as in Mr. Okada's statement. One often says things like

*Moo toshi-desu-kara muri-wa dekimasen-ne.*

(Since I am no longer young, I can't do too much.)

*Mata wasureta. Moo toshi-da-nee.*

もう 年だねえ。

(I forgot again. I guess I'm getting old.)

To such complaints the listener usually answers with

*Mada (-mada) toshi-ja arimasen-yo.*

(It's too early to say that — *lit.* It is not yet age.)

Or, one strongly denies this by saying

*Sonna koto arimasen-yo.*

(No, not at all.)

Or one even scolds the other for speaking nonsense, as Mr. Takada did in the case above.

Another expression, *toshi-ni niawazu* (underfitting one's age), is used for both old and young alike.

*Toshi-ni niawazu genki-da-ne.*

(He's so energetic for his years.)

*Toshi-ni niawazu yoojin-bukai-desu-ne.*

(He's too cautious for his young age.)

It seems that the Japanese have a traditional idea that one should behave according to one's age; old people especially are expected to be sensible, quiet and free from greed.

*Toshi-o kangaete-kudasai.*

(Please consider your age.)

is often said to aged people who like to be socially too active, be engaged in vigorous (rough) sports, and seek too much fun. This way of thinking is changing now, but expressions concerning *toshi* are still in use.

## . . . ja arimasen-ka (isn't it . . .?)

Mr. Lerner was asked to give a speech in Japanese about his experiences working in Japan to a group of businessmen. He wrote down what he was going to say and asked Miss Yoshida to read it. She returned it a few days later saying

*Nakanaka omoshiroi-ja arimasen-ka.*  
(lit. Isn't this very interesting?)

Mr. Lerner understood that she liked his speech, but found it strange to add . . . ja arimasen-ka to an adjective like *omoshiroi*.

\* \* \*

When *ja arimasen* is used to indicate negation, it follows nouns, pronouns and noun adjectives (-na adjectives). You cannot say things like

*Omoshiroi-ja arimasen.*  
*Dekiru-ja arimasen.*

Instead you have to say *Omoshiroku arimasen* to mean "It is not interesting," and *Dekimasen* to mean "I cannot do it."

But when *ja arimasen-ka* is used for emphasis, it can follow any form of adjectives and verbs, as in

*Omoshiroi-ja arimasen-ka.*  
おもしろいじゃ ありませんか。  
(It's interesting, don't you think?)

*Dekiru-ja arimasen-ka.*  
できるじゃ ありませんか。  
(Of course you can do it, can't you?)

*Kita-ja arimasen-ka.*  
(He came, didn't he?)

*Yoku nakatta-ja arimasen-ka.*  
(It wasn't good, was it?)

Sometimes *ka* is left out and the rising tone is used instead.

*Omoshiroi-ja arimaesen?*  
(Don't you find it interesting?)

In familiar speech *nai-ka* or *nai?* is used.

*Ii-ja nai-ka.* (Don't you think it's all right?)  
*Ii-ja nai?* (don't you think it's all right?)

. . . ja arimasen-ka sometimes implies a reprimand or criticism depending on the context.

*Dekiru-ja arimasen-ka.*  
(You can do it, can't you?)

can imply "Why did you tell me you can't?" or "What do you mean you can't do it?" And

*Kita-ja arimasen-ka*  
来たじゃ ありませんか。  
(He came, didn't he?)

can imply "Why did you say he was not coming?" Miss Yoshida said *Omoshiroi-ja arimasen-ka* to ease Mr. Lerner's fear of his speech being a poor one.



## Tsui (without meaning to)

Mr. Lerner and Mr. Okada were invited to the Takadas' last Saturday. When they were leaving in the evening, Mr. Okada said

*Tsui nagai-o shimashite . . .*

つい 長居を しまして……

(I'm sorry I stayed so long — *lit.* I stayed without meaning to.)

Mr. Lerner was interested in the word *tsui*, which seems to be used very often in apologies.

\* \* \*

*Tsui* means “unintentionally” or “without meaning to.” It is used to refer to an action which is not very sensible, as in

*Tsui nomisugite-shimatta.*

つい のみすぎてしまった。

(I ended up drinking too much.)

*Bikkuri-shite tsui ookina koe-o dashimashita.*

(I was so shocked that I yelled out before I realized it.)

One usually uses it when referring to one's own actions and it is often used in apology because it emphasizes that the speaker did not mean to inconvenience the other.

*Tsui okaeshi-suru-no-o wasurete-imashita.*

(I'm sorry. I should have returned it sooner — *lit.* I unintentionally forgot to return it.)

*Tsui jikan-o machigaete, sumimasen.*

(I'm sorry I was mistaken about the time of the appointment.)

Sometimes *ukkari-shite* (inadvertently) is added to *tsui* to emphasize that the speaker did not intend to inconvenience the listener.

*Tsui ukkari-shite, kasa-o machigaemashita.*

(I'm sorry I took your umbrella by mistake — *lit.* I inadvertently made a mistake about the umbrella without meaning to.)

. . . *te-shimau* is also used to reinforce the use of *tsui*, as in

*Tsui nomisugite-shimatte, atama-ga itai-desu.*

(I went and drank too much and now I have a headache.)

There is a completely different use of *tsui*, which emphasizes the shortness of a time period or the smallness of a space:

*Tsui ni-san-nichi-mae-deshita.*

つい 二、三日まえでした。

(It was only two or three days ago.)

*Tsui hyaku-meetoru-gurai saki-desu.*

(It's just 100 meters ahead.)

. . . *kirenai* (more than one can  
. . .)

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida were having dinner together at a restaurant yesterday evening. When a serving of beef was placed on the table, Miss Yoshida said

*Konna-ni takusan, tabekiremasen-ne.*

……食べきれませんね。

(There's so much that I can't eat all of it.)

Mr. Lerner agreed, but at the same time thought to himself that it was difficult to use expressions including *kireru* or *kirenai*.

\* \* \*

. . . *kireru* means "can finish . . . ing"; it is the potential form derived from *kiru* (to finish . . . ing), which is used as in

*Ichinichi-de yomi-kiru-nowa muri-desu.*

(It's impossible to read it all in a day.)

*Tsukare-kitte, sugu nete-shimatta.*

(I was completely tired and went to sleep right away.)

In actual usage . . . *kirenai*, the negative form, is often used together with verbs, as in

*Ichinichi-dewa yomi-kire-masen.*

(One cannot read it all in a day.)

*Mochi-kirenai hodo kaimono-o shimashita.*

(I bought so many things that I had difficulty carrying them home.)

In this way, . . . *kirenai* implies that something is too much for one's ability or more than one can

handle. Such expressions as *yari-kirenai* (*lit.* more than one can do) and *tsukiai-kirenai* (*lit.* more than one can associate with) are used to refer to the difficulty of acts.

*Atsukute yari-kiremasen-ne.*

あつくて やりきれませんね。

(It's unbearably hot — *lit.* It's so hot that we can't finish dealing with it.)

*Ano-hito, tsukiai-kirenai.*

(I can hardly associate with him.)

The second sentence refers to someone who is extremely selfish or ignorant.

. . . *kirenai* is often used together with *moo* (already) to mean "can't any longer" as in

*Moo machi-kirenai-kara, dekakemashoo.*

(We can't wait for him any longer. Let's go without him.)

*Moo gaman-shi-kirenai. Kaisha-o yameru.*

もう がまんしきれない。会社を やめる。

(I can't stand it any longer. I'm quitting my job.)

**. . . no koto (-o) meaning  
'about . . .'**

When Mr. Lerner returned to the office from lunch yesterday, several of his colleagues were talking in an amused manner. Miss Yoshida explained:

*Ima Katoo-san-no koto-o hanashite-ita-n-desu-  
yo.*

(We were talking about Mr. Kato.)

Mr. Kato must have provided an amusing topic again by his humorous carelessness, Mr. Lerner imagined. At the same time he wondered if *Katoo-san-ni tsuite* . . . could be used in place of *Katoo-san-no koto-o* . . . which he still cannot use easily.

\* \* \*

. . . *ni tsuite* is used to mean "about . . ." or "referring to . . ." as in

*Kono kiji-wa booeiki-masatsu-ni tsuite kaita  
mono-desu.*

この記事は貿易摩擦について書いたもので  
す。

(This article is about trade friction.)

*Daijin-wa zeesee-kaikaku-ni tsuite katatta.*

(The minister talked about tax reform.)

*Kondo-no senkyo-ni tsuite doo kangaemasu-ka.*

(What is your opinion of this election?)

As seen in the examples above, the difference between . . . *ni tsuite* and . . . *no koto (-o)* is that . . . *ni tsuite* is used with a logical and systematic explanation or judgement, while . . . *no koto (-o)* can be used for any situation, including stating personal likes or dislikes as in

*Katoo-san-no koto doo omou?*

加藤さんのことどう思う?

(What do you think of Mr. Kato?)

This can mean "What is your opinion of Mr. Kato's behavior?" as well as "Do you like Mr. Kato or not?"; in the second case, . . . *ni tsuite* cannot be used.

. . . *no koto (-o)* is used mainly in familiar conversation as in

*Mata boku-no koto-o hanashite waratte-ru-ne.*

(You're talking about me and laughing, aren't you?)

*Yamada-san-no koto kiita? Yameru-n-da-tte.*

(Did you hear about Mr. Yamada? He's quitting, I hear.)

## Expressions meaning 'finish . . .ing'

After work yesterday, Mr. Takada asked Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida to go out drinking with him. Miss Yoshida said

*Kore-o kakiageru-made matte-te-kudasai.*  
(Would you wait until I finish writing this?)

pointing to some papers. Mr. Lerner followed her example, saying

*Kono koohii-o nomiageru-made matte-te-kudasai.*

meaning "Would you wait until I finish drinking this coffee?" The two laughed but could not clearly explain what was funny.

\* \* \*

The word *ageru* (to lift, raise) is used as a suffix with the *-masu* form of a verb to add the meaning of "completing a task and achieving a perfect result after going through difficulties." It is used as in

*Rippana ronbun-o kaki-ageta-soo-desu.*  
(I heard he completed a fine thesis.)

*Kodomo-o sodate-agete-kara yukkuri ryokoo-o shimasu.*

子どもを そだてあげてから ゆっくり 旅行します。

(I will enjoy traveling after doing all I can to bring up my children.)

In Miss Yoshida's statement above, *ageru* is appropriate because she was going to finish writing

something, a strenuous task, but one cannot say *koohii-o nomi-ageru* as Mr. Lerner did, because drinking one's coffee does not involve any real achievement. In this case, he should have said . . . *nomi-owaru* instead.

. . . *owaru* is used when referring to the action of going through stages and reaching an obvious end, as in

*Moo sugu yomi-owaru-kara matte-te-kudasai.*

もう すぐ 読みおわるから 待っててください。  
(I'm going to finish reading it soon. Would you wait a short while?)

*Atsukute, nakanaka nomi-owarenai.*

(It's so hot I can't finish drinking it quickly.)

. . . *kiru* is used when referring to finishing dealing with a large number or quantity of things, as in

*Takusan atte, tabe-kiremasen.*

(There's so much that I cannot eat it all.)

*Ichinichi-de yomi-kiru-nowa muri-desu.*

一日で 読みきるのは おりです。

(It is impossible to read it all in one day.)

. . . *kiru* is used more often in the negative form than in the affirmative.

## Aru (to be) used for human beings

When Mr. Takada was eating the lunch that he had brought from home, Mr. Kobayashi, the youngest worker in the office, said

*Okusan-ga aru hito-wa ii-desu-ne.*

(It's nice to have a wife, isn't it? — *lit.* A person who has a wife is good.)

Listening to them, Mr. Lerner wondered if *okusan-ga iru* should be used instead of *okusan-ga aru*.

\* \* \*

In the sense of "to be in a certain place," *aru* is used for lifeless things and *iru* for living creatures, as in

*Asoko-ni ginkoo-ga arimasu.*

(There's a bank over there.)

*Asoko-ni neko-ga imasu.*

(There's a cat over there.)

On the other had, when referring to possession, *aru* is used both for living and inanimate things:

*Kyoo-wa okane-ga arimasen.*

きょうは お金が ありません。

(I don't have any money today.)

*Kodomo-ga futari arimasu.*

子どもが 二人 あります。

(I have two children.)

In this sense too, *iru* can be use in referring to living creatures. Mr. Kobayashi could have said *okusan-ga iru hito*. There is no substantial difference between *aru* and *iru* in this sense, although young peo-

ple seem to prefer *iru*, as in

*Tomodachi-ga takusan iru.*

(I have many friends.)

There is another case when *aru* is used to refer to the existence of human beings, as in

*Okane-no tame-nara nandemo suru hito-ga aru.*

(Some people will do anything for money — *lit.*

There are people who do anything if it is for the sake of money.)

*Asobu-yori hataraku hoo-ga sukina hito-mo arimasu-ne.*

あそぶより はたらく ほうが すきな 人も ありますね。

(Some people prefer work to play.)

Here *aru* is used to express the possibility of a certain kind of person existing, rather than referring to the fact of people actually occupying a certain space. In other words, *aru* refers to the abstract, rather than concrete, existence of human beings who have some specific characteristic.

## Ginkoo-e and ginkoo-ni (to the bank)

Miss Yoshida said to her colleagues when going out yesterday afternoon.

*Ginkoo-e itte-kimasu-kedo, nanika . . .*

(I'm going to the bank now. Anything I can do for you?)

and someone asked her to do some errand for him. Mr. Lerner suddenly realized that the Japanese use both *e* and *ni* to mean "to" as in *ginkoo-e iku* and *kaisha-ni iku*; he wondered if there is any difference between the two.

\* \* \*

In a very strict sense, *e* indicates the direction of an action while *ni* indicates a destination or specific location. Namely, when emphasizing direction *e* is used as in

*Hikooki-wa higashi-e tonde-ikimashita.*

飛行機は 東へ 飛んでいきました。

(The plane flew to the east.)

*Tanaka-san-wa achira-no hoo-e ikimashita-yo.*

(Mr. Tanaka went in that direction.)

On the other hand, *ni* is used to indicate a person's destination:

*Kuji-ni Kyooto-ni tsukimashita.*

(I arrived in Kyoto at 9.)

*Nihon-ni kuru koto-ga dekite, ureshii-desu.*

日本に 来る ことが できて、うれしいです。

(I'm happy to be in Japan — *lit.* I was able to come to Japan, and am happy.)

But actually many people do not make any distinction between the two when referring to going or coming to a certain place, although *tsuku* (to arrive) is usually used with *ni*.

It often happens that one uses *ni* twice in one sentence as in

*Doozo uchi-ni asobi-ni kite-kudasai.*

(Please come and visit us at home — *lit.* Please come to our house to play.)

The *ni* in *asobi-ni* in this sentence indicates the purpose of an action, as in *eega-o mi-ni iku* (to go to see a movie). In such sentences, *uchi-e* is often preferred to avoid using *ni* twice, as in

*Doozo uchi-e asobi-ni kite-kudasai.*

どうぞ うちへ あそびに 来てください。

*Kinoo Shinjuku-e eega-o mi-ni itta.*

(I went to Shinjuku to see a movie yesterday.)

## Moo (already)

Mr. Lerner and several other people at the office asked a restaurant nearby to deliver lunch yesterday. It took a long time to come and everybody became hungry. Someone said

*Moo sugu ichiji-da.*  
(It's almost one o'clock.)

Another said

*Demo, moo kuru-daroo.*  
(But it should be here soon.)

Mr. Lerner was interested in this use of *moo* (already). He had thought that *moo* is used with verbs ending in *ta*, and had not realized that it is also used when referring to the future.

In a very basic usage, *moo* is used with a verb indicating the completion of an action, and *mada* with verbs in the negative, as in

*Moo kimashita.* もう 来ました。  
(It has already come.)  
*Moo kimashita-ka.* (Has it come yet?)  
*Mada kimasen.* (It has not come yet.)

But in actual usage, *moo* is used to refer to the present and futures as well, as in

*Moo sanji-desu.* もう 3時です。  
(It's already three o'clock.)  
*Moo sanji-ni narimasu.*  
(It's going to be three o'clock soon.)

*Moo* implies "it is time for something to happen," as in

*Moo dekakemasu.* (I'm going out now — implying "I can't stay any longer.")

*Moo kaette-kuru-to omoimasu.*  
(I think he will return very soon now.)

The expression *moo . . . koro-da* is used to mean "it's about the time . . ." as in

*Ano-hito, moo kuru koro-desu.*  
あの人、もう 来る ころです。

(He should be here any moment now — *lit.* It's about the time he should come.)

*Moo atsuku naru koro-desu-gane.*

(It should be getting hot — implying "why is it still cool now?")

Some times *moo* is used with the negative form of verbs to mean "not . . . any longer," as in

*Moo konai-deshoo.* もう 来ないでしょう。

(He will not be coming again — implying "it is time he stopped coming.")

*Moo konna koto shimasen.*  
(I will not do it anymore.)

## ... *eba ii-deshoo* used to ask for instruction

When Mr. Lerner called a certain company to make an appointment with the director, a secretary asked him

*Onamae-wa doo kakeba yoroshii-deshoo.*  
(How do I write your name, please?)

She sounded very polite and pleasant. Mr. Lerner liked the expression ... *eba yoroshii-deshoo* and wanted to use it himself, but wondered if it was too feminine.

\* \* \*

... *eba ii-deshoo* or *eba yoroshii-deshoo* (more polite) is used by both men and women to politely ask for instruction. This literally means "will it be good if I ...?" When asking for directions, for example, it is best to say

*Eki-e ikitai-n-desu-ga, doo ikeba ii-deshoo.*  
駅へ 行きたいんですが、どう 行けば いいでしょう。

(I want to go to the station. How do I go?)

To ask where to transfer, you can say

*Doko-de norikaereba ii-deshoo.*  
(Where do I change trains?)

To make an appointment, one often says

*Nanji-ni ukagaeba ii-deshoo.*  
何時に うかがえば いいでしょう。  
(What time should I come?)

*Doko-e ukagaeba ii-deshoo.*  
(Where should I come to meet you?)

When asking for instructions, a direct question using ... *desu-ka* or ... *masu-ka* may sound rather abrupt. For instance, when one has received a business card but is not sure how to read a name written in kanji (this often happens because some kanji can be read in various ways), it will sound abrupt to say something like

*Onamae-no yomikata-wa nan-desu-ka.*  
(What's the way to read your name?)  
*Kono kanji-wa doo yominasu-ka.*  
(How do I read these kanji?)

It is best to say

*Onamae-wa doo oyomi-sureba ii-deshoo.*  
(How should I read your name, please?)

The ... *eba ii* form is also used between friends to indicate reserve, although it will undergo a change into a familiar tone.

*Nanji-ni ikeba ii?* 何時に 行けば いい?  
(What time shall I come?)  
*Ikura haraeba ii-no.*  
(How much should I pay?)



## ***Omachi-desu-ka* (Have you been waiting?)**

The bank was rather crowded when Mr. Lerner went in yesterday afternoon. He was handed a number and sat down to wait his turn. Then a man in a blue suit came over to him and asked

*Nagaku omachi-desu-ka.*

長く お待ちですか。

(Have you been waiting a long time?)

He answered that he had been waiting about 10 minutes, and then the man said

*Osoreirimasu-ga, moo sukoshi omachi-kudasai.*

(Would you kindly wait for a little while more?)

Mr. Lerner was interested in this use of *omachi*, which seems to be very convenient since it can be used both for a question and a request.

\* \* \*

The stem of the *-masu* form of a verb forms a noun; namely, *machi* from *machimasu* means "waiting," and *omachi* means "your/his/her waiting." *Omachi-desu*, literally meaning "His/Her waiting," actually means "He/She is waiting." When used as a question it can be either "Is he/she waiting?" or "Are you waiting?" When *kudasai* (please give me) is added to *omachi*, it means "please do me the favor of waiting."

To take another verb, *yomu* (to read), the stem can be used as follows:

*Oyomi-desu.* (He/She is reading it.)

*Oyomi-desu-ka.* (Is he/she reading it? or Are

you reading it?)

*Oyomi-kudasai.*  
(Please read it.)

お読みください。

This "o plus stem" form is often used in polite speech with customers, as in

*Kippu-o omochi-desu-ka.*

切符を お持ちですか。

(Do you have a ticket?)

*Kippu-o omochi-no kata-wa doozo Kochira-e.*

(These who have tickets are kindly requested to come this way.)

*. . . nai . . . wa nai*

Mr. Takada said that he was out of small change and asked Miss Yoshida to lend him some so that he could go out and buy some cigarettes. But Miss Yoshida said she was penniless. When Mr. Takada doubted that, she showed him her empty change purse and said

*Nai mono-wa nai-n-desu.*

Mr. Lerner did not quite understand. He thought that negating something twice makes it affirmative, so what Miss Yoshida said meant that she had money.

\* \* \*

By saying *nai mono-wa nai*, Miss Yoshida meant "I really don't have any." In this case, she emphasized that she did not have any money. Although she used a negative expression twice, she did not mean that she had money. When the same negative phrase is repeated, as in this case, it simply emphasizes the negation. This type of double negative can be called Group I, for explanation's sake.

- I. *Taberarenai mono-wa taberaremasen.*  
(I can't eat it by any means — *lit.* I can't eat what I can't eat.)  
*Dekinai koto-wa dekimasen.*  
(I simply can't do it — *lit.* I can't do what I can't do.)  
*Kawanai hito-wa kawanai-n-desu.*  
(Some people will never buy it.)

On the other hand, using a negative phrase and

*nai*, as in . . . *nai . . . wa nai/inai*, results in the affirmative. This can be called Group II.

- II. *Taberarenai mono-wa arimasen.*  
(I can eat anything — *lit.* There's nothing that I can't eat.)  
*Ano-hito-niwa dekinai koto-wa arimasen.*  
(He can do anything — *lit.* As for that person, there is nothing that he can't do.)  
*Kawanai hito-wa imasen.*  
(Everyone will buy it — *lit.* There is no one who will not buy it.)

Usually making the distinction between sentences in Group I and those in II is easy, because the same verb is repeated in Group I, as in *Dekinai koto-wa dekimasen*, while the sentences in Group II end either in *nai* or *inai*. But when *nai* is used twice as in Miss Yoshida's sentence,

*Nai mono-wa nai*

the distinction depends on the situation. This sentence can mean either "I really don't have it" or "There is nothing that I don't have" according to the context.

## O . . . *shimasu* used as a humble form

Mr. Lerner was talking on the phone when Mr. Okada came in, a little earlier than the appointed time. He saw Mr. Lerner talking on the phone, and said

*Koko-de omachi-shimasu-kara, doozo goyukkuri.*  
(I'll wait here. Please take your time.)

while sitting down on a chair near the door. Mr. Lerner thanked him and continued his telephone conversation, but he was not sure of this use of *omachi* (your waiting), which he had understood was used as a polite expression.

\* \* \*

The stem of a verb preceded by *o*, as in *omachi* and *oyomi*, is used in polite sentences as in *Omachi-desu-ka* (Are you waiting?) and *Oyomi-kudasai* (Please read it). When this form is followed by *shimasu* instead of *desu*, however, it indicates the speaker's action toward the listener in humble speech. For instance, saying

*Omachi-shimasu.* お待ちします。  
(lit. I'll do waiting for you.)

is more humble than

*Machimasu.*

In the same way, such sentences as follows are often used in daily conversation:

*Okotae-shimasu.* お答えします。  
(I'll answer your question — more humble than

“*Kotaemasu.*”)

*Oshirase-shimasu.* (I'll inform you — more humble than *Shirasemasu.*)

In humble speech, however, special verbs are often used rather than “*o* plus *shimasu*”; the most common special verbs are as follows:

*Ukagaimasu.* うかがいます。

(I'll ask you a question — more humble than *Kikimasu*) rather than *Okiki-shimasu.*

*Ome-ni kakarimasu.* お目に かかります。

(I'll see you — more humble than *Aimasu*) rather than *Oai-shimasu.*

*Haiken-shimasu.* (I'll look at something owned by you — more humble than *Mimasu*) instead of *Omi-shimasu*, which is not used.

*Mooshiagemasu.* (I'll tell you — more humble than *limasu*) instead of *Oii-shimasu*, which is not used.

## Shitsuree-desu-ga . . . used for making a request

When Mr. Lerner called a certain company and asked if he could talk to an employee there, the operator said

*Hai, shooshoo omachi-kudasai.*  
(Yes, just a moment, please.)

and added

*Shitsuree-desu-ga . . .* 失礼ですが……

She did not finish the statement and sounded as if she were waiting for him to answer. He immediately realized what she wanted and told her his name, but he wondered if

*Donata-deshoo-ka.*  
(May I ask who you are, please?)

is impolite.

\* \* \*

To ask someone's name, one can use such polite expressions as

*Donata-deshoo-ka.*  
*Donata-sama-deshoo-ka.* (more polite)  
*Dochira-sama-deshoo-ka.* (more polite)

rather than

*Dare-desu-ka.* (not polite)

However, the Japanese often refrain from directly asking a question or for a favor, and wait

for the other person to respond on his own accord by saying just

*Shitsuree-desu-ga . . .* (I'm sorry, but . . .)

The other person usually senses what is being requested from the situation. Company operators often use this expression alone rather than adding *donata-deshoo-ka.*

Such introductory remarks as the following are also used alone in the same way:

*Sumimasen-ga/kedo . . .*  
すみませんが/けど……  
*Osoreirimasu-ga/kedo . . .*  
おそれ入りますが/けど……

without specifying the favor one wants. For instance, an elderly woman will say

*Sumimasen-kedo . . .*

to ask other passengers to make room for her to sit down in the train. She can also say

*Sumimasen-kedo, tsumete-kudasaimasen-ka.*  
(I'm sorry, but could you move over for me?)

but it sounds more reserved not to refer to the specific action.

## Demo, sore-dewa . . . said before accepting an offer

Mr. Okada came to Mr. Lerner's office for business discussions yesterday afternoon, but he forgot to take some papers with him when he left. Mr. Lerner found them, and called Mr. Okada to tell him that he would send them to him by mail. Mr. Okada said

*Demo, sore-dewa . . .* でも、それでは……  
(lit. But if that is so . . .)

But when Mr. Lerner repeated the offer, Mr. Okada said he would be very grateful if Mr. Lerner did so.

\*   \*   \*

After *Demo, sore-dewa . . .* such phrases as the following are left out:

. . . *gomeewaku-deshoo.*  
(. . . it would be too much trouble.)  
. . . *mooshiwake arimasen.*  
(. . . I would be asking too much.)

*Demo, sore-dewa . . .* or *Demo, sore-ja . . .* is often used as a polite refusal before accepting someone's offer to help. Sometimes *amari* is added as in

*Demo, sore-dewa amari . . .*

To give another example, two people may talk in the following way in a restaurant after having a meal together:

A: *Koko-wa watashi-ga . . .*  
(Please let me pay for this.)

- B: *Demo, sore-ja . . .*  
(Well, I shouldn't let you do that.)  
A: *lie, kono-tsugi-wa onegai-shimasu-kara.*  
(No, this time it's on me. Next time you can treat me.)  
B: *Soo-desu-ka. Ja, doomo gochisoosama-desu.*  
(If you say so . . . Thank you very much for the nice meal.)

One usually accepts the offer after saying *Demo, sore-dewa . . .* When one really means to refuse an offer, one will say in a definite tone things like

*lie, kekkoo-desu.* (No, thank you.)  
*lie, daijoobu-desu.*  
(No, thank you. I can take care of it.)

In Mr. Okada's case above, if he did not want Mr. Lerner to send the papers by mail but wanted to come to get them himself, he would have said

*lie, kochira-kara ukagaimasu-kara.*  
(No, I will come to get them.)

## Yoroshii-deshoo-ka (Is it all right?)

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida were dining at a French restaurant yesterday evening. Miss Yoshida had left part of her food, and when the waiter came over, he asked

*Yoroshii-deshoo-ka.* (*lit.* Is it all right?)

and she nodded. Mr. Lerner wondered if the waiter could have said instead

*Osage-shite-mo yoroshii-deshoo-ka.*

(May I clear the table? — *lit.* Is it all right to take the things down?)

\* \* \*

When asking for instructions or permission, one often leaves out the first part of the sentence and just says

*Yoroshii-deshoo-ka*

or

*li-deshoo-ka.*

For instance, when one wants to make sure that a seat on the train or in the theater is unoccupied, one can say

*Koko, dareka kimasuka.*

(Is someone coming to this seat?)

or

*Koko, aite-imasu-ka.*

(Is this seat taken? —*lit.* Is this place open?)

But often one just says

*Yoroshii-desu/deshoo-ka*

or

*Koko, yoroshii-deshoo-ka.*

ここ、よろしいでしょうか。

This is like saying “May I?” rather than “May I sit here?”

*Yoroshii-deshoo-ka* is also used when one wants to make sure that the other person finds it convenient to talk on the telephone:

A: *Ima yoroshii-deshoo-ka.*

今 よろしいでしょうか。

(Is this a good time?)

B: *Ee, kekkoo-desu.* (Yes, it's fine.)

This short question is used in familiar conversation, too. For instance, when a mother wants to enter her son's room, she will say either

*Haitte-mo ii?* (Can I come in?)

or

*ii?* いい? (May I?)

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