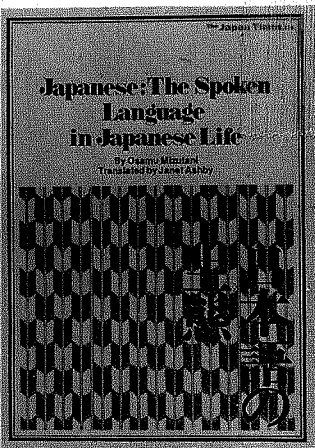


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Japanese: The Spoken Language in Japanese life

Osamu Mizutani

Translated by Janet Ashby

In this book Osamu Mizutani, a noted Japanese-language educator who has long experience in teaching Japanese as a foreign language, examines the intricacies and idiosyncrasies of spoken Japanese, a subtlety which the writer says has been largely ignored by the academic world.

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studying japanese in context

by

osamu mizutani

nobuko mizutani

The Japan Times

FOREWORD

This book is a compilation of the 70 columns which appeared in *The Japan Times* from December 13, 1981, to April 10, 1983, under the title "Nihongo Notes." (The preceding 280 columns have been published as Nihongo Notes 1, 2, 3 and 4.)

It is a great pleasure for us to be able to publish another volume of "Nihongo Notes," and we are grateful to you for your continued interest. We hope that you will enjoy reading it and find it of some help in understanding Japanese as it is used in Japanese society.

In this volume, while continuing to explain the actual usage of various Japanese expressions, we have attempted to take up more specific situations and to provide more detailed explanations. The columns in this volume include various expressions of reserve and consideration used toward the listener, and also several common mistakes that foreigners are apt to make.

For the convenience of the reader, we have added a list of the words and phrases discussed in all five volumes of "Nihongo Notes" as well as an index to important expressions classified according to usage.

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 four 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.

- When the same vowel occurs consecutively, the letter is repeated rather than using the "-" mark.
ex. *Tookyoo* (instead of *Tōkyō*)
- 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*

Soo-deshoo-ka
そうでしょうか
(I wonder)

Mr. Lerner has become able to handle daily conversation in Japanese fairly easily, but still finds difficult a few expressions that sound very similar but mean something very different. Just recently, Miss Yoshida and Mr. Lerner were listening to Mr. Okada complaining about his boss. Each time Mr. Okada explained how hurt he felt when he was treated unfairly, Miss Yoshida said

Soo-deshoo-ne.
そうでしょうね。
(It must be so.)

Mr. Lerner knew that *Soo-deshoo-ne* is used to express one's sympathy, and he wanted to use it, too. But when he actually did, he inadvertently said

Soo-deshoo-ka.
そうでしょうか。
(I wonder.)

Seeing Mr. Okada looking strange, and Miss Yoshida embarrassed, he suddenly felt as if he had not made any progress at all in Japanese.

* * *

To express one's sympathy toward someone with a problem, *Soo-desu-ne* is often used. For instance, when someone complains about his jet lag saying

Doomo mada atama-ga hakkiri-shimasen.

(Somehow my head doesn't work right yet.)

you might say

Soo-deshoo-ne.
(It must be so.)

Sometimes *ne* is prolonged to emphasize the feeling of sympathy as in

Honto-ni soo-deshoo-nee.
(It must be so, indeed.)

On the other hand, *Soo-deshoo-ka* is used to imply doubt or criticism, as in

- A: *Ima-nara ma-ni au-deshoo.*
(I think we can be in time if we start now.)
B: *Soo-deshoo-ka. Michi-ga komimasu-yo.*
(I wonder. The traffic will be heavy.)

Or, if someone says that a person is capable of doing some work and you say *Soo-deshoo-ka*, it can be an expression of opposition.

When trying to say *Soo-deshoo-ne*, Mr. Lerner might have used *Soo-deshoo-ka* by mistake because it sounds similar to *Soo-desu-ka* (Is that right?). *Soo-desu-ka* varies in nuance depending on the tone with which it is said, and it can sound sympathetic, but *Soo-deshoo-ka* cannot be used to express sympathy.

Chigaimasu ちがいます (You're wrong)

Last night Mr. Lerner tried to call an acquaintance on the phone, but must have somehow dialed the wrong number. The woman on the other end said

Chigaimasu.

ちがいます。

(You're wrong. — *lit.* It is different.)

He remembered that Miss Yoshida often uses *Chigaimasu* in conversation, not necessarily about something like a wrong telephone number. He had learned this expression as a synonym for *lie* (No) a long time before, but he hadn't used it himself.

* * *

Chigaimasu is often used in place of *lie* as well as with it. People say *lie.*, *Chigaimasu.*, or *lie, chigaimasu* depending on the situation.

It seems *Chigaimasu* is preferred when one wants to clearly tell someone that his statement is wrong. This is most often used when answering a question about factual information. For example, if you ask someone

Kono densha-wa kyuukoo-desu-ka.

(Is this train an express train?)

he will very likely reply in the negative with *Chigaimasu* or *lie, chigaimasu*.

But when the question concerns a personal judgment or evaluation, *Chigaimasu* is usually

avoided. For instance, when you say *Kore-ga ichiban ii-to omoimasu-ga.* . . (I think this is the best. What do you think? — *lit.* I think this is the best, but. . .) the other person will probably use some expressions other than *Chigaimasu* to indicate his disagreement. This is quite similar to the use of *lie*; the difference between *lie* and *Chigaimasu* is that the latter sounds more definite, and *lie, chigaimasu* is used when the speaker wants to emphasize his answer.

Chigaimasu is also used to point out a mistake pure and simple, like a clerk handing you something different from what you have asked for. You may say something like

Chigaimasu. Kore-ja arimasen.

ちがいます。これじゃありません。

(This is not what I asked for.)

when the salesgirl has handed you a silver tie pin instead of a platinum one.

Ashita-ni shitara doo-desu-ka
あしたにしたら どうですか
(Why don't you make it tomorrow?)

Yesterday evening Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada asked Miss Yoshida to go drinking with them after work, but she said that she had to work overtime to finish the day's work. Mr. Lerner was about to say

Ashita-ni suru-to doo-desu-ka.

to mean "How about doing it tomorrow instead?," when Mr. Takada said

Ashita-ni shitara doo?
あしたにしたら どう?

Mr. Lerner thought that Mr. Takada meant the same thing as he did, and wondered what difference there is between . . . *suru-to doo-desu-ka* and . . . *shitara doo-desu-ka*.

* * *

Ashita-ni suru-to doo-desu-ka also means "How will it be if you decide on tomorrow for it?" but this is a question about the result of making it tomorrow rather than actually suggesting making it tomorrow. If Mr. Lerner had asked this question, Miss Yoshida would have tried to explain what would happen, as in

Ashita-ni suru-to ma-ni awanaku naru-kamo shi-remasen.

(If I postpone the work until tomorrow, I may not be able to finish it in time.)

On the other hand . . . *tara doo-desu-ka* is an expression for making suggestions. You might say, for instance, to someone who is working and looks very tired

Sukoshi yasundara doo-desu-ka.
(Why don't you rest a while?)

To make this expression more polite, you can say

Sukoshi oyasumi-ni nattara ikaga-desu-ka.
少し お休みに なったら いかがですか。

Such other expressions as *Yasumeba ii-deshoo* or *Yasumu-to ii-deshoo* can also be used to make suggestions, but *yasundara doo-desu-ka* sounds less pressing and more reserved. And the last part — *doo-desu-ka*, *ikaga-desu-ka*, or *doo* (familiar) — can be left out; in this case the first part will be said with a rising intonation.

*Ichido ome-ni kakaritai-to
omoimasu*

一度 お目に かかりたいと 思います
(I'd like to see you sometime)

A Mr. Kimura called Mr. Lerner on the phone yesterday afternoon; he said that he was working on a certain project and wondered if Mr. Lerner could help him. After explaining the situation, he said

Ichido ome-ni kakaritai-to omoimasu-ga . . .
一度 お目に かかりたいと 思いますか……
(lit. I'd like to see you one time, but . . .)

Mr. Lerner told him when he would be available and hung up the phone, but he wondered why Mr. Kimura had said *Ichido . . .* (One time . . .) Did he want to see Mr. Lerner just once and no more?

* * *

The word *ichido* is often used to mean "some-time in the future" when making a proposal or request in a social situation. *Ichido ome-ni kakaritai* does not mean that the speaker is determined not to see the listener more than once. Rather, saying

Zehi ichido oide-kudasai means "Please come and see me by all means" or "You must come and see me sometime."

In a similar way *hitotsu* is also used to mean "some" when offering something or making a proposal as in

Hitotsu oagari-kudasai.
(Please have some.)

This *hitotsu* is also used in a request as in

Hitotsu onegai-shimasu.

meaning "Please take care of this. Thank you." Sometimes a person who accepts a request will say

Ja, hitotsu yatte-mimashoo.

じゃ、ひとつ やってみましょう。
(Then I'll give it a try.)

These words *ichido* and *hitotsu* can be left out as far as the meaning is concerned, but they serve the function of making the intention of the following speech clear at the beginning of the sentence, so the listener can get ready. The use of this kind of word is especially recommended in social situations; it will help avoid having your Japanese sound abrupt.

Watashi-niwa muzukashii-desu

わたしには むずかしいです

(It's difficult for me)

Mr. Lerner was invited by the Takadas to a New Year's celebration yesterday evening. After dinner, they played a traditional card game called *karuta*. It was a lot of fun, but Mr. Lerner found it rather difficult to listen to a proverb read aloud and then select the card with the first syllable of that proverb on it together with an illustration. When the play was over, Mr. Lerner said

Watashi-ni muzukashii-desu.

meaning "It's difficult for me." They understood, but Mr. Takada said he should say

Watashi-niwa muzukashii-desu.
わたしには むずかしいです。

instead. Mr. Lerner wondered if there was that much difference between *watashi-ni* and *watashi-niwa*.

* * *

To mean "It is difficult for me," one should say *Watashi-niwa muzukashii-desu*; *Watashi-ni muzukashii-desu* sounds awkward. . . . *Niwa* should also be used instead of . . . *ni* to indicate whether something is advantageous or not to someone. For example, to indicate one's convenience one says

Watashi-niwa gogo-no hoo-ga tsugoo-ga ii-n-desu-ga. . .

(The afternoon is better for me.)

Or, to refer to something valuable to a person, one says

Ano-ko-niwa tomodachi-ga ichiban daiji-desu.

(To that child friends are the most important thing.)

To add the meaning of "also," . . . *nimo* is used as in

Gakusee-nimo kyooshi-nimo yasumi-wa arigatai mono-desu.

(Holidays are nice — *lit.* something one should be grateful for — for both students and teachers.)

Sometimes . . . *ni totte* is used to emphasize personal standpoint.

Watashi-ni totte nani-yori daijina mono-desu.

わたしに とつて 何より 大事な ものです。

(This is more precious than anything to me.)

Sorede...

それで……

(And so...)

Mr. Kato, who had traveled in Europe during the holidays, was telling his colleagues about his trip. When he said that he had taken a wrong train in France, Miss Yoshida asked him

Sorede doo shimashita.

それで どう しました。

(And so, what did you do?)

Mr. Lerner had also wanted to ask this question, and he wondered if he could use *soshite* instead of *sorede*.

* * *

Mr. Lerner could have said *Soshite doo shimashita-ka*, but it would have sounded like a schoolboy's question in a classroom. In usual conversation, *sorede* is used to show the speaker's interest in knowing the development or outcome of some incident. Very often its shorter form *de* is used as in

A: *Tootoo ano-hito konakatta-n-desu-yo.*

(He didn't show up at all.)

B: *De, doo narimashita.*

(And what happened?)

Sorede is also used to connect related sentences or phrases as in

Kinoo-wa atama-ga itakute, sorede kaisha-o yasumimashita.

(I had a headache so I stayed home from the

office yesterday.)

Sometimes *sorekara* (after that) is used to ask about further developments, but this emphasizes that the two incidents took place in consecutive order, as in

A: *Hajime-ni Kyooto-e itte-nee.*

(I went to Kyoto first.)

B: *Sorekara...*

(After that...?)

A: *Sorekara Nara-e itta-n-da-yo.*

(Then I went to Nara.)

(Saying *sorede* or *sorekara* alone sounds personal and familiar, and should be avoided in polite conversation.)

On the other hand *soshite* (and) is appropriately used for connecting one's own phrases or sentences in expository statements or monologues rather than in conversation, where the speaker-listener relations are important.

li-ja arimasen-ka
いいじゃ ありませんか
(Isn't it all right?)

Mr. Okada asked Mr. Lerner to have some beer after their business discussions yesterday evening. Mr. Lerner said that he had something to go over for work the next day and had to go home early, but Mr. Okada said

li-ja arimasen-ka.
いいじゃ ありませんか。
(lit. Isn't it good?)

Mr. Lerner understood that Mr. Okada was insisting on treating him, but he did not know what was left out before *li-ja arimasen-ka*. He wondered if this usage was an expression used by a host to detain a guest.

* * *

Before *ii-desu* (it's all right) or *ii-ja arimasen-ka* (isn't it all right?) various phrases can be left out. Very often this is used to mean "you don't have to do it"; in this case *shinakute-mo* is understood and left out. A host often says to a guest who is going to leave

li-ja arimasen-ka.

to mean "You don't have to go yet, do you?"

In Mr. Okada's statement, something like *sonna-ni hatarakanakute-mo* (even if you don't work so hard) is left out. By *li-ja arimasen-ka* he meant "You don't have to go home so early and work. Please be relaxed and be my guest." This phrase is said especially often to someone who is hesitat-

ing about accepting an offer. For example, a host tries to fill the sake cup of his guest, and the guest says

Guest: *Moo takusan itadakimashita.*
(I have had plenty.)

Host: *Maa, ii-ja arimasen-ka.*

Here the host means "Please don't be so reserved."

This expression is also used when comforting someone; in this case *shinpai shinakute-mo* (even if you don't worry) is left out before *ii-ja arimasen-ka*. For example, to a father who is complaining that his son doesn't study much, one may say something like

li-ja arimasen-ka. Sono-uchi yaru ki-ni nari-masu-yo.

(Don't worry. He will start to feel like studying before long.)

In any case, *ii-ja arimasen-ka* is said with a falling tone since it is not a real question, and usually *ii* is pronounced higher than *arimasen-ka*.

Otaku-de ii-desu
おたくで いいです
(Your house will do)

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida were planning a party for Mr. Kimura, who is going to get married soon. When they were discussing where to have the party, Mr. Mori, the director of the company, came in and said

Boku-no uchi-de ii-kane.
ぼくの うちで いいかね。
(Will my house do?)

Miss Yoshida looked surprised and pleased. Mr. Lerner was also very glad to hear that, so he said

Ee, otaku-de ii-desu.
ええ、おたくで いいです。
(Yes, your house will do.)

Miss Yoshida hurriedly said something like "That would be more than ideal but wouldn't it be trouble for your family?" as if to cover up Mr. Lerner's blunder.

* * *

Several expressions can be used to make a proposal. Such expressions as . . . *wa doo-desu-ka* and . . . *ga ii-deshoo* are often used, and these expressions sound more confident about the speaker's judgment than . . . *de ii-desu-ka*. The expression . . . *de ii-desu-ka* implies that the speaker is afraid that the offer may not be very good but he will be happy if it can be accepted; it therefore sounds more modest and reserved.

When . . . *de ii-desu-ka* is used in a situation where the speaker's personal interest is not involved, it can be used in the answer too, as in *Ee, . . . de ii-desu*. For instance, when two people are discussing where to meet next time, both of them can use this expression, as in

- A: *Shinjuku-de ii-desu-ka.*
(Will Shinjuku do?)
B: *Ee, Shinjuku-de ii-desu.*
(Yes, Shinjuku will be fine.)

Or, B could say *Ee, sore-de ii-desu* or *Ee, sore-de kekkoo-desu* (Yes, that will be fine.)

But when the offer involves the personal interests of the person who makes it, the person who accepts it will avoid using . . . *de ii-desu*. For instance, if someone says, while showing you a letter of introduction he has written for you,

Doo-desu-ka. Kore-de ii-desu-ka.

you should avoid using . . . *de ii-desu*. Rather, you should thank him by saying something like

Ee, honto-ni arigatoo-gozaïmashita.
(Yes, thank you very much.)

This is especially true when you want to speak politely to someone offering you something.

Naanda, kimi-ka
なあんだ、君か
(Oh, it's you!)

Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada were talking at lunchtime, when the telephone rang. Mr. Lerner answered it, and the operator told him that a Mr. Suzuki wanted to talk to Mr. Takada. Mr. Takada did not remember who Mr. Suzuki was, and said very politely

Hai, Takada-de gozaimasu.
(This is Mr. Takada speaking.)

But the next moment he completely changed his tone and said

Naanda, kimi-ka.
なあんだ、君か。
(Oh, it's you!)

and started talking in a very familiar manner. It was as if he were talking to two different persons.

* * *

It is customary to start speaking politely when you don't know to whom you are talking on the telephone. In Mr. Takada's case, since there are so many Suzukis, at first he did not know who was calling him, and he started talking politely. The expression *Naanda* is used when you are surprised and realize that you don't have to worry about something. For instance, if you mistakenly think that you have lost your wallet and then find it in an unexpected place, you will say

Naanda, konna tokoro-ni atta.
(Oh, it was here!)

Mr. Takada was surprised to find that Mr. Suzuki was an old friend of his and felt relieved from formality.

When you call a good friend or someone you can talk with in a familiar manner, and a member of his family answers the phone, you should refer to your friend politely as in

Moshi-moshi, Makoto-san irasshaimasu-ka.
もしもし、まことさん いらつしやいますか。
(Hello, is Makoto home?)

Even if you usually call him "Makoto" when talking with him, you should add *-san* when talking with his family members. In a similar way, if you call a good friend at work and someone else answers the phone, it is polite to use a term of respect as in

Yamamoto-sensee irasshaimasu-ka.
(Is Professor Yamoto there?)

or

Kawakami-san oide-ni narimasu-ka.
(Is Mr. Kawakami there?)

Shitsuree-desu-ga . . .

失礼ですが……

(Excuse me, but . . .)

Mr. Lerner was talking with Mr. Mori, the director of the company, in his office yesterday afternoon. In the course of the conversation he wanted to ask Mr. Mori what university he had graduated from, so he started by saying

Ano, shitsuree-shimasu-ga . . .

meaning "Excuse me, but . . ." (*lit.* I'm going to be rude, but . . .) Then Mr. Mori stood up from his chair and said

Ja, mata.

(Well, see you later.)

as if he were leaving. Mr. Lerner did not understand exactly, but felt that something must have been wrong with his Japanese.

* * *

Instead of *shitsuree-shimasu-ga*, Mr. Lerner should have used *shitsuree-desu-ga* and then completed his question as in

Ano, shitsuree-desu-ga, dochira-no daigaku-ode-ni narimashita-ka.

(Excuse me, but from which university did you graduate?)

When you want to ask someone a personal question, you should first say *shitsuree-desu-ga* as in

Shitsuree-desu-ga, Tanaka-san-de irasshai-

masu-ka?

(Excuse me, are you Mr. Tanaka?)

Shitsuree-desu-ga, okusan-wa Nihon-no kata-desu-ka.

(Excuse me, but is your wife a Japanese?)

To make the expression even more polite you can add *makoto-ni* as in

Makoto-ni shitsuree-desu-ga . . .

まことに 失礼ですが……

(This is a very rude question, but . . .)

On the other hand *Shitsuree-shimasu* literally means "I'm going to be rude," and is used when you are going to perform some action, such as sitting down, leaving the room, or picking up something. For instance, when the host says *Doozo okake-kudasai* (Please sit down), the visitor will say either *Hai, arigatoo-go-zaimasu* or *Shitsuree-shimasu* before sitting down. Or, when someone hands you a letter saying *Doozo goran-kudasai* (Please take a look at it), it is polite for you to say *Shitsuree-shimasu* before actually reading the letter. Therefore it is natural that Mr. Mori thought that Mr. Lerner was leaving when he said *Shitsuree-shimasu*.

Ato-de denwa-o kakemasu

あとで 電話を かけます

(I'll call him later)

Yesterday afternoon Mr. Lerner was trying to make an appointment with Mr. Okada on the phone. Mr. Okada wasn't sure of his schedule yet and said that he would call him back later. So when Miss Yoshida asked him about it, Mr. Lerner told her

Ato-de denwa-o kakemasu.
あとで 電話を かけます。

meaning "He'll call me later." But after a while Miss Yoshida came again and asked him if he had called Mr. Okada yet; it was as if she thought that Mr. Lerner was going to call Mr. Okada. Mr. Lerner wondered if he should have said *Okada-san-wa ato-de denwa-o kakemasu* without leaving out the subject of the sentence.

* * *

Some foreigners wonder if the Japanese do not sometimes misunderstand each other when they leave out the subject of a sentence, but they usually don't because the subject is left out according to rules.

One rule is that when answering a question the subject mentioned in the question is usually omitted, as in

A: *Tanaka-san-wa itsu kimasu-ka.*
(When will Mr. Tanaka come?)

B: *Ashita kimasu.*
(He'll come tomorrow.)

In B's sentence, *Tanaka-san-wa* or *Kare-wa* (he) or *Ano-hito-wa* (that person) is not mentioned unless it is particularly emphasized.

Another rule is that sometimes the subject is indicated by use of specific respectful or humble verbs as in

A: *Itsu irasshaimasu-ka.*
(When will you/he/she/they come?)

B: *Ashita mairimasu.*
(I'll come tomorrow.)

or

B: *Ashita irasshaimasu.*
(He/She/They will come tomorrow.)

One more rule is that when there is no other subject indicated either verbally or by the situation, the subject of the sentence is the speaker himself. Therefore, in Mr. Lerner's case above, when he said *Ato-de denwa-o kakemasu*, naturally Miss Yoshida took this to mean "I'll call him later."

What Mr. Lerner should have done is either (1) indicate that he was reporting what he had heard from Mr. Okada, as in:

Ato-de denwa-kakeru-to iimashita.
(He said he would call me later.)

Ato-de denwa-o kakeru soo-desu.
(I understand he will call me later.)

or (2) indicate that the action of calling is directed toward him, as in:

Ato-de denwa-o kakete-kimasu.
(He's going to call me.)

Ohikitome-shimashite. . .
おひきとめしまして……
(I'm sorry I detained you so long)

The other day Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada visited Professor Takahashi, an acquaintance of Mr. Lerner's. It was the first time that Mr. Takada had met Professor Takahashi, and he spoke to him very politely. When they were leaving, he said

Doomo ojikan-o torimashite. . .
どうも お時間を とりまして……
(I'm very sorry to have taken your time.)

and Professor Takahashi said

lie, ohikitome-shimashite. . .
いいえ、おひきとめしまして……

which literally means "I kept you too long and I'm sorry for that." The professor, however, had not tried to detain them when they expressed their desire to leave, and Mr. Lerner wondered if this were another one of the set expressions said by a host to his visitors.

* * *

In polite conversation, a visitor usually apologizes for taking the host's time when leaving, as in

Ojama-shimashita.
(I'm sorry to have disturbed you.)

or

Ojikan-o torimashite. . .

And the host will apologize for his not having entertained the visitor more, as in

Nanimo okamai-dekimasen-de. . .
(I'm sorry I couldn't do anything to entertain you.)

Or, he will sometimes apologize for taking the visitor's time by keeping him, as in *Ohikitome-shimashite. . .* whether or not he has actually verbally asked the visitor to stay longer.

Also, in polite conversation one does not express his happiness over having a good time as freely as in familiar conversation, in which one will often say something like

Kyoo-wa tanoshikatta-wane.
(We had a lovely time, didn't we?)
Jitsu-ni yukai-datta-ne.
(We had a great time, didn't we?)

Some foreigners like to express their pleasure in polite conversations too, as in

Kyoo-wa hontoo-ni tanoshikatta-desu.
(I had a very good time today.)

Although the Japanese do not usually use this expression themselves, they will understand that it is well-meant.

Joozu-desu-ne
じょうずですね
(You do it very well)

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida were invited to Professor Takahashi's last Saturday. When they came into the room, Miss Yoshida noticed that there was a new picture hanging on the wall, and said

Joozuna e-desu-ne.
じょうずな 絵ですね。
(It's a well-done picture.)

But when Professor Takahashi said that he had painted the picture himself, Miss Yoshida blushed and hurriedly said *Shitsuree-shimashita* (Excuse me). Mr. Lerner wondered why she apologized for her praise; is it against etiquette to praise a picture done by one's superior?

* * *

It is usual for people to say nice things to others in social situations; a visitor will compliment the host on his house or family members. It is common to say such things as

li osumai-desu-ne.
(You have a very nice home.)
Kawaii okosan-desu-ne.
(She is a lovely child.)

But the Japanese usually refrain from directly praising someone's ability or skill in social situations. Since the word *joozu* means "skillful," it is not appropriate to use it to refer to someone with whom you have to be polite.

In the case above, Miss Yoshida probably thought that the picture had been painted by a younger relative, possibly a niece or granddaughter, when she used the word *joozu*. It is all right for an adult to use this word to a child, or when you are talking in a familiar way, but when talking politely, you should not say things like

Joozu-desu-ne.
(You do it very well)

or

Joozu-ni dekimashita.
(You did it very well.)

If Miss Yoshida had known who had painted the picture, she would have used some other expression such as

Kiree-desu-ne.
きれいですね。
(How beautiful!)

Suteki-desu-ne.
すてきですね。
(How nice!)

Subarashii e-desu-ne.
すばらしい 絵ですね。
(It's a wonderful picture.)

Naorimashita
なおりました
(It has been repaired)

Mr. Lerner took his cassette tape recorder to an electric appliance store the other day to have it fixed. He went back to the store today and asked for it, saying

Naoshimashita-ka.
(Have you repaired it?)

Then the clerk said, while bringing his recorder

Hai, naorimashita.
はい、なおりました。
(Yes, it has been repaired.)

Mr. Lerner wondered if *Naoshimashita* was wrong. He remembered that when he had said *Kaze-o naoshimashita* (*lit.* I cured my cold) a few days before, Miss Yoshida had corrected it to *Kaze-ga naorimashita* (*lit.* My cold has been cured.)

* * *

When referring to curing some sickness, the word *naoru* (to be recovered) is usually used rather than *naosu* (to cure) whether or not one has tried to cure it. *Naosu* is used only when one wants to emphasize one's own strong will to cure a sickness, as in

Byooki-o naosu koto-ga ichiban taisetsu-desu.
(The most important thing is to try to cure your illness.)

Since *naosu* implies a strong will or effort, the clerk at the electric appliance store avoided using it; if he had said

Hai, naoshimashita.

that would have sounded boastful and inappropriate.

When one refers to a service he has performed for the listener, it is polite to describe the action as if it has been done without special effort. For instance, when serving tea, it sounds more modest to say

Ocha-ga hairimashita.
お茶が入りました。
(Tea is ready — *lit.* Tea has been poured.)

than

Ocha-o iremashita.
(I made tea.)

Sometimes the Japanese choose completely different expressions to avoid using a verb that directly describes their actions. For instance, when someone has written a letter of recommendation, he may say

Moo dekite-imasu-yo.
もうできていますよ。
(It's ready now.)

Sore-ga. . .

それが.....

(That. . .)

Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada were talking before work yesterday morning, when Miss Yoshida came in. Mr. Takada asked her *Ootoo-san, doo-datta?* (How did your brother do?), obviously referring to the results of a college entrance examination. Then Miss Yoshida just said

Sore-ga. . .

それが.....

(That. . .)

and Mr. Takada immediately said

Aa, *dame-datta-no.*

(Oh, he didn't make it.)

Mr. Lerner wondered how such a short phrase as *Sore-ga* was enough to answer a question.

* * *

Sore-ga. . . (lit. That. . .) is used to indicate that the answer is contrary to the listener's expectation, as in

A: *Ano eega omoshirokatta-deshoo.*

(You enjoyed that movie very much, didn't you?)

B: *Sore-ga-nee. . .*

(Well, that was. . .)

A: *Tsumaranakatta-no.*

(It was boring?)

B: *Ee.*

(Yes.)

You can either stop after *sore-ga* as in B's speech above, or complete the sentence as in

B: *Sore-ga zenzen omoshiroku nakatta-n-desu.*

(It was not at all interesting.)

or

B: *Sore-ga omoshiroi dokoro-ka taikutsu-de nemuku natchaimashita.*

(Far from being interesting, it was so dull that I became sleepy.)

In the case above, Mr. Takada's question sounded as if he was expecting to hear good news from Miss Yoshida, so she used this expression to indicate that she had bad news instead. If the question is asked without any expectation, some other expression will be used.

Sometimes *sore-ga. . .* is used to signify that the speaker's own expectation has been betrayed, as in

Totemo ukaranai-to omoimashita. Sore-ga ukatta-n-desu.

(I thought I could never pass the exam, but unexpectedly I passed it!)

This use of *sore-ga* sounds rather dramatic; you might use *demo* (but) or *keredomo* (but) instead if you don't want to emphasize the unexpectedness.

Kekkon-shite-imasu

結婚しています

(She's married)

Yesterday afternoon Miss Kawaguchi, one of his colleagues, came to see Mr. Lerner and asked him to attend her wedding, which was going to be held quite soon. When she was about to leave, Mr. Takada came in, so Mr. Lerner told him

Kawaguchi-san-wa kekkon-shite-imasu.

川口さんは結婚しています。

meaning "Miss Kawaguchi is getting married." To his surprise, she blushed and hurriedly denied it by saying

Sonna koto, arimasen.

そんなこと、ありません。

(That's not so, *lit.* There's no such thing!)

* * *

The . . . *te-imasu* form is used in several ways. One of the most common uses is to indicate that an action is being performed, as in

Ima ocha-o nonde-imasu.

(I'm having tea now.)

Nani-o kangaete-imasu-ka.

(What are you thinking?)

Another common use of the . . . *te-imasu* form is to indicate a state of being, as in

Kekkon-shite-imasu.

(I'm married.)

Yasuku natte-imasu.

(It has become less expensive.)

With verbs that indicate completion of an action or change of state, the . . . *te-imasu* form means that the action has been completed and a certain state of being has resulted. For instance, *kekkon-shite-imasu* means that the person has gotten married and is married now, and *yasuku natte-imasu* means a thing has become, and is now, less expensive. On the other hand, when used with verbs that describe a state or an action which usually continues for some time, the . . . *te-imasu* indicates an action that is taking place now, as in *nonde-imasu* (I'm drinking it) or *kangaete-imasu* (I'm thinking).

The . . . *te-imasu* form is not, however, used to refer to a future action unless a definite time is indicated. Namely, you can say things like

Rainen-no imagoro-wa kekkon-shite-imasu.

(I'll be married about this time next year.)

But you cannot use . . . *te-imasu* to indicate a future action at an indefinite time. If you say just *kekkon-shite-imasu*, it means that someone is married; it cannot mean that the person is getting married.

Iku-n-da-tte?
行くんだって?
(Did you say he's going?)

When Mr. Lerner came back to the office from lunch yesterday, his colleagues were talking about their plan for flower-viewing. Mr. Takada asked Miss Yoshida

Iku-n-da-tte?
行くんだって?

and she answered

Ee, iku-n-da-tte.
ええ、行くんだって。

Mr. Lerner thought this exchange meant "Did you say you're going?" "Yes, I said I'm going." But all of a sudden Miss Yoshida turned to him and said

Ne, soo-deshoo?
(Right, Mr. Lerner?)

He realized then that they had been talking about him, but couldn't help wondering how he could have known who the subject of the sentence was in such a case as this. He had learned that *-tte* stands for *-to*, but couldn't Miss Yoshida have meant "I said I am going."?

* * *

... *tte* is used in place of ... *to*, as in

Ashita-wa ame-da-tte iimashita.
(They said it will rain tomorrow.)

Iku-tte yakusoku-shimashita.
(I promised that I would go.)

But when the sentence ends with ... *tte*, it is limited to the case when the speaker conveys what someone else said. In other words, ... *tte* can mean either "you said" or "he/she/they said," but it cannot mean "I/We said." Therefore when Miss Yoshida said *Iku-n-da-tte*, she could not have meant "I said I am going"; it was obvious that she was referring to someone else.

If Mr. Takada and Miss Yoshida had been talking about her intentions, it would have been:

Mr. Takada: *Iku-n-da-tte?* (Did you say you're going?)

Miss Yoshida: *Ee, iku-wa.* (Yes, I'm going.)

or

Ee, iku-tte itta-wa. (Yes, I said I'm going.)

Thus ... *tte* used at the end of a sentence is quite similar to ... *soo-desu*, as in

Ashita-wa ame-da-soo-desu.
(I hear it will rain tomorrow.)

The difference between ... *tte* and ... *soo-desu* is that the former sounds more familiar.

Soo-desu-yone
そうですよね
(That's certainly so, isn't it?)

When Mr. Lerner was talking with his colleagues at lunchtime yesterday, Mr. Takada said something about the generation gap in Japan, and asked Mr. Lerner's opinion. Mr. Lerner completely agreed with him, so he said

Soo-desu-ne.
(That's right, isn't it?)

and then added *yo* for emphasis. But his colleagues said that *yo* sounds strange when added to *ne*. They said that they say *Soo-desu-yone* but never say *Soo-desu-neyo*.

Mr. Lerner had been trying to use *ne* and *yo* correctly; just recently he had found out that the two particles can be used together, but he had not learned that there is a fixed order for them.

As is generally explained, *ne* is used to solicit the listener's agreement and *yo* is used to emphatically express one's opinion. Thus *ne* can be paraphrased as "I hope you agree" or "don't you agree?" and *yo* as "I tell you" or "I assure you." They are usually used by themselves, but sometimes used together as in *Soo-desu-yone* or

Moo jikan-desu-yone.

もう 時間ですよね。

(lit. It's time now, I tell you — don't you agree?)

li hito-desu-yone.

(He's certainly a nice person, don't you

think?)

In such use, the order of *yo* and *ne* cannot be reversed; *ne* always comes last. When one says . . . *yone*, he is first expressing his opinion emphatically, and then turning to the listener for agreement.

In addition to *yo*, *ne* is used with other particles such as *no* or *wa*, always coming after them; sometimes it comes after two other particles as in

Sonna koto-wa nai-no-yo-ne.

そんなことはないのよね。

(lit. That's certainly not so, don't you agree?)

Mada osoku nai-wa-yo-ne.

(It's surely not too late, don't you agree?)

Compared with using just *yo*, *wa* or *no* alone, adding *ne* to such particles serves to express the speaker's concern toward the listener more precisely and more delicately.

Kekkon-suru soo-desu
結婚する そうです
(I hear she's getting married)

Mr. Lerner heard that Miss Kawaguchi, one of his colleagues, is getting married. He wondered what the Japanese expression for "She's getting married" was, and carried out a small experiment. He asked several colleagues if they had heard the news about her. Then Mr. Kobayashi, the youngest worker, said

Ee, kekkon-suru soo-desu-ne.
ええ、結婚する そうですね。
(Yes, I heard that she's getting married.)

Mr. Mori, the director of the company, said

Un, kekkon-suru-n-da-tte-ne.
うん、結婚するんだってね。
(Yes, I heard she's getting married. — more familiar than Mr. Kobayashi's expression)

And Miss Yoshida said

Ee, kekkon-nasaru-n-desu-tte-ne.
ええ、結婚なさるんですってね。
(Yes, I heard she's getting married. — more polite and feminine)

Mr. Lerner noticed that none of them used any special expression to indicate the future. He wondered if *kekkon-shimasu* or *kekkon-suru* means "she will get married" rather than "she gets married."

The dictionary form of a verb or the *-masu* form is usually used to indicate what is going to take place in the future, as in

Ashita-wa dekakeru-yo.
(I'll go out tomorrow.)
Rainen kaette-kimasu.
(I'll return next year.)

When necessary, phrases to indicate specific time in the future such as *rainen*, *ashita*, etc., are used. If one wants to emphasize that the action will take place immediately, one uses such expressions as *sugu* (immediately) and *kore-kara* (from now).

The expression . . . *te-imasu* (be . . .ing) is not, however, used to indicate a future action. *Dekakete-imasu* means "He's out"; you have to say

Dekakemasu.

to mean "I'm going out" or "I'll go out."

* * *

Osoku narimashite . . .

おそく なりまして……

(I'm sorry I'm late)

Mr. Okada came to discuss some business with Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada yesterday afternoon. When he entered the room he said

Osoku narimashite . . .

おそく なりまして……

(I'm sorry I'm late.)

as he often does, although he was just a few minutes late. Then when they started their discussion Mr. Takada said

Daitai-no an-ga dekimashite . . .

だいたいの 案が できまして……

(We have made a rough plan.)

Mr. Lerner noticed that both of these sentences were not completed; he remembered that the Japanese very often end their sentences with just . . . *mashite* rather than . . . *mashita*.

* * *

In terms of grammar, the . . . *te* form indicates continuation and corresponds to “. . . and,” as in

Asa okite kao-o aratte shokuji-o shimashita.

(I got up, washed my face, and had breakfast.)

But in actual conversation the Japanese very often end their sentences with just . . . *te* or . . . *mashite*. There are several uses of this. In one

use people often leave out what can be easily understood in set expressions of thanks or apology.

In another use, the speaker invites the listener to complete a sentence that is left unfinished. For instance, saying *Daitai-no an-ga dekimashite . . .* (lit. A rough plan has been made and . . .) invites the listener to say something like *Moo sukoshi-desu-ne* (That leaves just a little to be done, doesn't it?). It is regarded as good in Japanese conversation for two people, the speaker and listener, to participate in completing one statement. This is also related to the use of *ai-zuchi*, short reply words. You will find numerous examples of this use of the . . . *te* form in listening to how the Japanese talk. Just this morning your Japanese neighbors must have been talking like this:

A: *Kyoo-wa kaze-mo nakute . . .*

(There is no wind today, and . . .)

B: *Ii otenki-desu-ne.*

(It's a nice day, isn't it?)

Kore, tsutsunde
これ つつんで
(Wrap this, will you?)

Mr. Lerner bought a shirt at a department store near his office yesterday afternoon. The clerk took his money saying

Shooshoo omachi-kudasai.
(Would you please wait a moment?)

Then he handed the shirt to a young girl standing near him, saying

Kore, tsutsunde.
これ つつんで。
(Wrap this, will you?)

Mr. Lerner understood that this was a command and imagined that it must be the abbreviation of *Tsutsunde-kudasai*. He wondered if this form is used only to those below one in age or position.

* * *

There are various expressions used for making a request or giving an instruction. The most common expressions are:

. . . *kudasai*, as in
Kaite-kudasai. (Please write it.)
. . . *kudasaimasen-ka*, as in
Kaite-kudasaimasen-ka. (Won't you please write it?)

And in familiar conversation male speakers often use

. . . *kure*, as in *Kaite-kure.* (Write it.)

The form ending with . . . *te* as in *Kore, tsutsunde* is used very often in familiar conversation. The clerk above used it toward his subordinate, and a parent will say to a child something like

To-o shimete. (Close the door, will you?)

It is also used between equals in familiar conversation, especially by female speakers, and sometimes even toward one's superiors when there is no need to be polite.

In case of emergency one often chooses this form rather than saying . . . *te-kudasai* or . . . *te-kudasaimasen-ka*. For example, an elderly wife who usually speaks politely to her husband may say when she is holding a shelf that is about to fall,

Otoosan, chotto kite!
お父さん、ちよつと 来て!
(Come and help, dear!)

Or, when people are engaged in an activity which requires unity, politeness is often replaced by an emphasis on togetherness. For instance, when faculty members and the new students of a college sit together for a photograph, the photographer will usually say to the group

Hai, waratte!
はい、笑つて!
(Smile, everybody!)

rather than *Waratte-kudasai*, even if distinguished professors are included in the group.

Sonna koto arimasen-tara
そんな こと ありませんたら
(That's not so!)

Mr. Kato teased Miss Yoshida as usual for looking very nice and wondered if she wasn't getting married soon. Miss Yoshida said, as if tired of his teasing,

Sonna koto arimasen-tara.
そんな こと ありませんたら。

Mr. Lerner understood that she meant Mr. Kato was wrong, but wondered about the *tara* at the end of her sentence. Does this mean "If" as in *ikan-ga attara* (if there is time)?

* * *

... *arimasen-tara* is the abbreviation of ... *arimasen-to ittara* (if I say there isn't ...): Miss Yoshida's sentence above can be paraphrased as:

Sonna koto-wa arimasen-to ittara, arimasen.
(lit. If I say there is no such thing, there is no such thing.)

Actually this *tara* is added to a sentence for emphasis rather than to mean "if." It usually indicates that the speaker is irritated or bored at having to repeat what he has already said.

A mother will say to a child who will not get up even though she has called him several times,

Okinasai-ttara!
起きなさいつたら!
(Get up!)

Or, a man will say to his friend who persistently asks him to go drinking together,

Dame-da-ttara!
だめだつたら!
(No, I can't!)

... *tara*, or often ... *ttara*, is used in this way in familiar conversation by both men and women. It can be added either to polite sentences as in *arimasen-tara* or plain sentences as in *nai-ttara*; the former is used only by women. When *tara* is used in this way, it is said with a falling tone.

This is different from the use of *tara* for making a suggestion, which is said with a rising tone as in:

Moo okitara?

(Why don't you get up now?)

Nanika tabete-ittara?

(Why don't you eat something before you go?)

Sumimasen, osoku natte
すみません、おそく なって
(I'm sorry to be late)

Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada asked Miss Yoshida to go drinking with them after work last Friday. The two men left the office earlier and waited for her. She kept them waiting for several minutes, and then came out hurriedly. She said

Sumimasen, osoku natte.
すみません、おそく なって。
(I'm sorry to be late.)

and the three started walking. There was nothing strange about it, but Mr. Lerner wondered why Miss Yoshida had reversed the order of the two phrases: is there any difference between *Sumimasen, osoku natte* and *Osoku natte sumimasen*?

* * *

In Japanese textbooks several common expressions of apology are given, as in:

Osoku natte sumimasen.
Omataseshite mooshiwake arimasen.
(I'm sorry to have kept you waiting — polite.)

Machigaechatte gomen-nasai.
(I'm sorry I made a mistake — familiar.)

But in actual conversation the order is very often reversed, and saying *sumimasen* or *gomen-nasai* first is very common. Not only in expressions of apology but also in various other expressions, phrases ending with . . . *te* are very often said later when they indicate the reason or basis

for judgment. For instance,

li tokoro-desu-yo, midori-ga ookute.
(It's a nice place with lots of green leaves.)
Komarimashita-yo, okane-ga tarinakute.
(We had a difficult time because we didn't have enough money.)
Iyada-naa, mata ame-ga futte.
(How annoying, it's raining again.)

This reversed order gives the impression that the speaker is anxious to express his feelings. Saying *Sumimasen, osoku natte* is appropriate when the speaker has hurried and is out of breath. In other words, saying things in this order sounds more emotional than otherwise and it is more appropriate in familiar conversation where formality is not required.

Irasshaimase
いらっしゃいませ
(I'm glad you have come)

After business discussions the other day, Mr. Okada took Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada to a Japanese restaurant for dinner. When they entered the restaurant, several employees called out loudly

Irasshaimase!

いらっしゃいませ。

(Thank you for coming.)

Mr. Lerner answered *Konban-wa* (Good evening), but the other two men said nothing. This had happened several times before, but Mr. Lerner still felt uneasy about how he should act in such a situation.

* * *

To greet their customers, store clerks and restaurant employees say *Irasshaimase* or *Irasshai* (less formal); they do not say *Konnichi-wa* (Good day) or *Konban-wa* unless the customer is a personal acquaintance. In other words, there is a distinction between those who serve and those who are served in the style of greetings, and customers do not usually reply to *Irasshaimase* or *Irasshai*. Some customers answer by saying *Konnichi-wa* or *Konban-wa* or *Doomo* (Hi), but one is not required to do so.

The expression *Irasshaimase*, or *Irasshai*, literally means "Please come in," and actually corresponds to "I'm glad you have come." The ending *mase* indicates a very polite request; it can also be added to other expressions such as *Okaeri-*

nasai (lit. Welcome home), *Oagari-kudasai* (Please come in — lit. Please come up), and *Itte-irasshai* (lit. Please go and come home; used to see someone off). Expressions with *mase* sound very polite and nowadays people do not use them very often except for greeting customers.

The less formal version, *Irasshai*, is sometimes used between friends, especially women, and toward younger people. Women often say to their friends *Irasshai* or *Ara, irasshai* (Oh, it's you! How nice to see you). A teacher may say *Irasshai* to a student who has come to visit him at home.

Irasshai or *Irasshaimase* is different from *Irasshaimashita*, which literally means "someone has come"; you have to add *yoku* and say *Yoku irasshaimashita* (lit. It's good that you have come) to welcome someone.

Ashi-o fumare mashita
足を ふまれました
(Someone stepped on my foot)

Mr. Lerner had to take an especially crowded train to the office yesterday morning. When he arrived at the office, he was tired and was resting a while before starting his work. Miss Yoshida asked him if he was all right, so he explained that the train had been crowded, and added

Dareka-ga ashi-o fumimashita.
(Someone stepped on my foot.)

Then he remembered that the passive form is more appropriate and said

Ashi-ga fumare mashita.
(My foot was stepped on.)

Miss Yoshida immediately understood but said he should have said

Ashi-o fumare mashita.
足を ふまれました。

instead.

* * *

In conversational Japanese the passive form is used to indicate that someone has been affected by the action of someone else as in

(Watashi-wa) kachoo-ni shikarare mashita.
(I was scolded by the section chief.)
(Watashi-wa) okane-o nusumare mashita.
(I had my money stolen.)

In the above sentences, *Watashi-wa* is left out when it can be understood from the situation, but in such passive sentences the subject must be the person who suffers from the action of someone else rather than the person's belongings. Therefore you can say either

Watashi-wa ashi-o fumare mashita.
or
Ashi-o fumare mashita.

when someone has stepped on your foot, but it sounds strange to say

Ashi-ga fumare mashita.
(My foot was stepped on.)

In the same way, when you have had to pay taxes against your will, you will say

Zeekin-o torareta.
(*lit.* I had my taxes taken.)

rather than

Zeekin-ga torareta.
(*lit.* My taxes were taken.)

Sen-en-ni narimasu

千円に なります
(That will be ¥1,000)

Mr. Lerner bought a cigarette lighter at a department store the other day. When he was ready to pay, the salesgirl looked at the price tag and said

Sen-en-ni narimasu.

千円に なります。

(That will come to ¥1,000.)

Mr. Lerner paid her, took the lighter, and left the store. While doing so, he wondered why the girl had said . . . *ni narimasu* when he had bought just one lighter. If he had bought more than one article, the girl would have had to add up the sum, and in that case it would have been quite reasonable to say *Sen-en-ni narimasu*. He wondered if . . . *ni narimasu* is nothing more than a synonym for . . . *desu*.

* * *

. . . *ni narimasu* by itself means "something becomes. . ." or "something comes up to. . ." It is used to indicate change as in

Ashita-wa ame-ni narimasu-yo.

(It will rain tomorrow — *lit.* Tomorrow will become rainy.)

Or, one says when giving the total sum

Zenbu-de ichiman-en-ni narimasu.

(It comes to ¥10,000 in all.)

In actual conversation, however, . . . *ni narimasu* is often used even when there is no change or adding involved, as in Mr. Lerner's experience mentioned above. You can take this use of . . . *ni narimasu* as a synonym for . . . *desu* as far as the meaning is concerned. The difference between the two expressions is in the attitude of the speaker. The speaker usually chooses . . . *ni narimasu* when trying to be polite; . . . *desu* is more direct and consequently can sound abrupt. Saying *Sen-en-ni narimasu* can imply that the right procedure, such as adding up all costs, has been taken before deciding on a reasonable price. But in most cases the speaker uses this expression simply because it sounds more indirect and polite than . . . *desu*. This use of . . . *ni narimasu* is often preferred by clerks when talking to their customers. A clerk may say to a customer who has asked for a less expensive umbrella,

Motto oyasuino-deshitara, kochira-no aoino-ni narimasu.

もっと お安いのでしたら、こちらの 青いのに なります。

(If you would like a less expensive one, there is this blue one — *lit.* If it is a less expensive one, it comes to this blue one.)

Soo-kamo shiremasen

そうかも しれません

(That may be so)

Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada were talking with Mr. Okada after business discussions yesterday afternoon, when Mr. Okada started talking about his daughter, a college student. He said that she seemed to be suffering from an unhappy love, but she would not talk to him about it; he was afraid that a father could do very little for his daughter in such situations. Mr. Lerner felt he should not sound too ready to agree with him on this point and was wondering what to say, when Mr. Takada said

Soo-kamo shiremasen-ne.

そうかも しれませんね。

(That may be so.)

and turned the conversation to a different topic.

* * *

The expression . . . *kamo shiremasen* literally means "whether or not . . . is not known"; it is used when one does not know something for sure. For instance, when you ask someone about the weather, he may say

Ashita-wa ame-kamo shiremasen-ne.

(It may rain tomorrow.)

In social situations, however, one often uses . . . *kamo shiremasen* when one wants to express one's judgment with reserve. In a sense it can be used as an understated way of saying "yes, that's right." In Mr. Takada's case above, he

could have agreed with Mr. Okada saying

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

or

Soo-deshoo-ne. (That must be so.)

But he probably chose *Soo-kamo shiremasen* because he did not want to discourage Mr. Okada by sounding too ready to admit that a father is of little help.

In a similar way, when a woman asks her friend's opinion about a new dress she is trying on, her friend may say

Chotto hade-kamo shirenai-wane.

(It may be a little bit too bright for you.)

rather than frankly say that the dress is not becoming to her at all.

Shochuu omimai-mooshiagemasu

暑中 お見舞い申し上げます
(Summer Season Greetings)

When Mr. Takada mentioned that he had not yet made plans for the summer, Miss Yoshida said that it was about time for her to start preparing *shochuu-mimai*. Mr. Lerner didn't know the word, but when Miss Yoshida showed him several cards she had received last year, he remembered that he had received some himself. The card said

Shochuu omimai-mooshiagemasu.

暑中 お見舞い申し上げます。

(lit. I am inquiring after your health in this hot season.)

He liked the idea of sending this type of cards, but wondered why the Japanese do not send such cards in the winter; is the winter easier to cope with than the summer in Japan?

* * *

The word *mimai* or *omimai* means "visiting someone or sending a card to someone to inquire how he is." One does this most often for a sick person or a person who is suffering from a serious loss. *Shochuu-mimai*, or more correctly *Shochuu-mimaijoo* (*joo* means a "card") is sent in the middle of summer just as one sends a card of best wishes for the New Year on the first of January. You might think of it as the summer version of "season's greeting." Since the New Year's card takes care of the winter, there is no need of sending *mimai* in the winter.

Many Japanese regard highly sending cards

regularly every year, and also sending cards at each point of important change in their life. For instance, many Japanese send cards, often printed, when they change their work, address, or marital status. Many Japanese think it most important to send cards when they change their position or work. We have heard some Japanese complain that their foreign acquaintances often leave Japan without any notice, using the phrase

aisatsu-mo shinaide . . .

(without due greetings)

Dropping just a line to say that you are leaving Japan and thanking them for the kindnesses you have received during your stay will please your Japanese acquaintances more than you might think.

Moo yameru-n-da

もう やめるんだ

(Now stop it)

Mr. Lerner visited the Takadas last Saturday evening. After dinner he was talking with Mr. and Mrs. Takada when their youngest son, about five years old, came and wanted to join them. Then Mr. Takada said

Kodomo-wa moo neru-n-da.

子供は もう 寝るんだ。

(lit. Children now go to bed.)

Mr. Lerner realized that sentences ending with . . . *n-da* are a kind of command, and remembered that Mr. Mori sometimes says

Shigoto-wa moo yameru-n-da.

仕事は もう やめるんだ。

(lit. As for work, you stop now.)

when he comes around to see his men on Friday evenings.

* * *

There are several expressions of command which are used depending on the situation. The form called "plain imperative," such as *ike* (go!) or *yamero* (stop!), is used mostly by men in familiar conversation, or in an urgent situation. Women seldom use this form to end a sentence.

The form ending with . . . *nasai* is used mainly by parents or schoolteachers toward children; except in set phrases such as *okaerinasai* (welcome home), one seldom uses it in social situations.

In social situations, one chooses a form of request rather than command, and . . . *te-kudasai* is most commonly used, as in *yamete-kudasai* (please stop it).

In familiar conversation such short forms as *yamete* or *yamete-ne* are used; women use them often, and men also use them when talking to younger people.

The form ending with . . . *n-da*, which is used for explanation or emphasis, is also used for giving command; *yameru-n-da* is not as blunt as *yamero* and not as polite as *yamete-kudasai*. Sometimes *da* is replaced by *desu* or *desu-yo* to make it sound softer. A nurse may say to a patient something like

Yukkuri yasumu-n-desu-yo.

(Now, take a long rest.)

even when the patient is older. This expression has a tone of explaining what the listener should do, and can sound patronizing.

Sometimes . . . *koto* is used in written notices as in

Rooka-wa hashiranai koto.

(No running in the hall.)

This is meant for students or employees; for customers more polite expressions like *hashiranaide-kudasai* (please do not run) must be used.

Itte-kurereba yokatta-noni
言ってくれれば よかったのに
(You should have asked me)

Miss Yoshida said that her family had moved to a new house during the weekend. Mr. Lerner congratulated her and said it must have been a lot of work. He wanted to say that if she had told him about it he could have helped her, but he did not know how to say this. Then Mr. Takada said

Itte-kurereba yokatta-noni.

言ってくれれば よかったのに。

(You should have told me — *lit.* If you had kindly told me, it would have been good, but . . .)

* * *

The expression . . . *eba yokatta-noni* means “although one should have done . . .” as in

Gofun hayaku okireba yokatta-noni.

(I should have gotten up five minutes earlier.)

which implies that the speaker actually overslept and was late.

When Mr. Takada said *Itte-kurereba yokatta-noni*, he implied that Miss Yoshida should have asked them to help her. The words, . . . *kurereba yokatta-noni* (if you had been kind enough to . . . it would have been better) would appear to criticize the listener, but actually express the speaker's willingness to help; therefore this is often used in social situations. To a visitor who has found his way by himself, the host may say

Denwa-shite-kudasareba yokatta-noni.
電話してくだされば よかったのに。
(You should have called me.)

implying that he could have gone to the station or some place to meet him.

On more formal occasions, . . . *te-kurereba* (or . . . *te-kudasareba*) *yokatta-noni* is left out because it sounds as if it is criticizing the listener, even if this is not how the words are actually understood, and regret is expressed in the following way:

Omukae-ni agarimashita-noni . . . Doomo mooshiwake gozaimasen.

(I could have come to meet you. I'm very sorry I didn't.)

Maido arigatoo-gozaïmasu
毎度 ありがとうございます
(Thank you very much for your
patronage)

Mr. Lerner dined at a small restaurant near his office with Mr. Takada the other day. When they had paid and were about to leave, the clerk said,

Maido arigatoo-gozaïmasu.
毎度 ありがとうございます。

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

Mr. Lerner had never been there before, so he guessed that the clerk said *maido* (every time) because Mr. Takada often dined there. But later he found that Mr. Takada had never been there before either. Is it just customary to say *Maido arigatoo-gozaïmasu*, even to a new customer?

* * *

The expression *Maido arigatoo-gozaïmasu* literally means that the speaker is thanking someone who comes and does him a favor regularly. But even when the customer is new, the storekeeper or clerk often uses this expression; he is, whether consciously or not, trying to sound as if he is talking to someone who comes often. Many people think that it is more polite to treat someone as an old acquaintance than as a new visitor, and consequently use *maido* even to a newcomer.

The same idea is in operation when a barber or hairdresser says to a customer

Kyoo-wa donna fuu-ni shimashoo-ka.

(How would you like your hair done today?)

as if the customer had come before. Or, sometimes a barber will say

Itsumo-no yoo-de yoroshii-desu-ka.
(Will the usual style do?)

even to a customer who has come for the first time.

In the case of a haircut, the barber can see what he should do by looking at the customer's present hairstyle, but in other cases it is impossible to know the customer's taste or wishes if he has not come before. A student of ours once made a small experiment; he went into a *sushi* shop where he had never been before, sat down at the counter, and said

Itsumo-no yatsu, tanomimasu.
(Give me the usual ones, please.)

Surprisingly enough, the *sushi* cook nodded and made several pieces of *sushi*, most of which were exactly what he wanted to have.

Zuibun
ずいぶん
(Terribly)

Mr. Lerner now wants to enlarge his vocabulary in Japanese, and has started using various words to mean "very." He realized that he has been using *taihen* all the time and that the Japanese seem to use various other words. Just today Miss Yoshida said to him

Raanaa-san-no nihongo, kono-goro zuibun umaku narimashita-ne.

ラーナーさんの日本語、このごろ ずいぶん
うまく なりましたね。

(Your Japanese has been tremendously improved these days.)

He was very pleased to hear this, and replied

Zuibun arigatoo-gozaimasu.

to mean "Thank you very much." Miss Yoshida laughed and said it was a good joke, but Mr. Lerner wondered if *zuibun* can never be used with *arigatoo*.

* * *

Zuibun sounds familiar and cannot be used for formally expressing gratitude. It is an emotional expression in that it implies that the speaker is deeply impressed or affected by something. For instance, one will say

Yuube-wa zuibun furimashita-ne.

ゆうべは ずいぶん 降りましたね。

(It rained a lot last night.)

implying that one was surprised at the amount of rain or inconvenienced by it. It is easy to understand why one uses *zuibun* in

Kono-goro zuibun bukka-ga agarimashita-ne.

(Things have become very expensive these days.)

After a test students might say things like

A: *Zuibun muzukashikatta-ne.*

(It was very hard, wasn't it?)

B: *Un, sensee zuibun hidoi-yone.*

(Yes, the teacher is very hard on us, isn't he?)

Miss Yoshida could have used *taihen* or *totemo* instead of *zuibun* when she praised Mr. Lerner's Japanese, but she probably chose *zuibun* because she wanted to emphasize that she was very much impressed by his progress.

Ki-ni suru koto-wa arimasen-yo
気にすることはありませんよ
(You don't have to worry about it)

Yesterday morning Miss Yoshida came to the office with a new hair style. Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada complimented her on it, but she said that the hairdresser had made it too short, and kept touching her hair nervously. Mr. Lerner said that her hair looked fine and added

Shinpai-shinaide-kudasai.

meaning "Don't worry." Then Mr. Takada agreed with him and said

Ki-ni suru koto-wa nai-yo.
気にすることはないよ。
(You don't have to be bothered by it.)

Mr. Lerner wondered if *shinpai* was the wrong word in this situation.

* * *

Shinpai usually refers to a concern about something rather serious. One uses *shinpai* when a family member is sick or he has to take up a difficult task. In such cases others will express their sympathy or encourage him by saying things like

Sore-wa goshinpai-deshoo.
(You must be very concerned.)

Shinpai-wa irimasen. Umaku ikimasu-yo.
心配はいりません。うまくいきますよ。

(You don't have to worry. You will do it fine.)

On the other hand *ki-ni suru* means that you are aware that something is not very important but you cannot get it out of your mind, as in

Taishita machigai-ja nai-n-desu-kara, ki-ni suru koto-wa arimasen-yo.

(It isn't a serious mistake, so you don't have to feel bad about it.)

Therefore in the case of Miss Yoshida's hair, Mr. Lerner should have used *ki-ni suru* instead of *shinpai-suru*. In most cases *ki-ni suru* and *shinpai-suru* cannot be used interchangeably. Saying *kami-o ki-ni shite-imasu* describes Miss Yoshida's case, and if you said *kami-o shinpai-shite-imasu*, it would sound as if she were worrying about whether her hair will grow gray or damaged.

The form . . . *ga ki-ni naru* is also used in a similar way to . . . *o ki-ni suru* as in

Ame-no oto-ga ki-ni natte, nemuremasen-deshita.

(The sound of the rain got on my nerves and I couldn't sleep.)

Nemukute, nemukute. . .

ねむくて、ねむくて……

(I'm so sleepy)

Mr. Takada said that he had taken his family to visit his relatives in the country and had just come back the previous night. He looked very tired and while pouring coffee for himself, he said,

Kyoo-wa nemukute, nemukute. . .

今日は ねむくて、ねむくて……

Mr. Lerner said *Soo-desu-ka. Taihen-deshita-ne* (Is that right? It was tough, wasn't it?) just as an average Japanese would say to his colleague, but wondered what was left out after *nemukute. . .*

* * *

There are several expressions using a . . .te phrase for emphasizing one's feelings.

One is . . .te *tamaranai* as in

Samukute tamarimasen.

寒くて たまりません。

(It's unbearably cold—*lit.* I'm cold (and can't stand it).)

Nemukute tamaranai-kara koohii-o nondeimasu.

(I'm so sleepy that I'm drinking some coffee.—*lit.* I'm sleepy and can't stand it so I'm drinking coffee.)

Another is . . .te *shikata-ga nai* as in

Yametakute shikata-ga nai.

(I really want to quit—*lit.* I want to quit and there is nothing I can do about it.)

. . .te *shiyoo-ga nai* is also used as in

Hara-ga tatte shiyoo-ga arimasen.

(I'm just so angry—*lit.* I'm angry and I can do nothing about it.)

The last part of these expressions is added for emphasis and can be left out without making the sentence ambiguous. Mr. Takada said *Nemukute nemukute. . .* to mean that he was very sleepy, and the rest of the sentence can be any one of the phrases *tamaranai*, *shikata-ga nai* or *shiyoo-ga nai*. And to double the emphasis, he repeated the phrases *nemukute*.

The first part of the sentence takes the . . .te form, and it must be an expression of the speaker's own feelings. Usually adjectives are used as in

Ureshikute, ureshikute. . . (I'm so happy.)

Okashikute okashikute. . . (It's so funny.)

Sabishikute tamarimasen. (I'm so lonely.)

Sometimes verbs are used when they indicate the speaker's feelings.

Hara-ga tatte, hara-ga tatte. . . (I'm so angry.)

Sore-ga ki-ni natte shikata-ga arimasen.

(I'm very much bothered by that.)

Teeshoku-de ii-desu
定食で いいです
(Today's lunch will do)

Mr. Lerner had lunch at a Japanese restaurant near his office yesterday. The restaurant was crowded with office workers obviously from the neighborhood. Mr. Lerner had decided on the day's lunch and was going to say

Teeshoku-ni shimasu.

(I will take today's lunch — *lit.* I decide on the fixed lunch.)

when a young man sitting next to him said

Teeshoku-de ii-desu.

定食で いいです。

(Today's lunch will do.)

Mr. Lerner remembered that he had often heard people say . . . *de ii* when ordering a meal, and wondered if that is a fixed expression.

. . . *de ii* means “. . . will do” or “. . . is good enough although not the best” as in

Kyoo-wa ukagaemasen. Ashita-de ii-desu-ka.

(I can't come today. Will tomorrow do?)

When asking for something, many people like to use . . . *de ii* to express their reserve. They often ask someone to help them by saying

Ato-de ii-n-desu-kedo . . .

後で いいんですけど……

(You don't have to do it right away — *lit.* Later will do.)

When ordering a meal at a restaurant, too, customers will often say

Sashimi-de ii. (*Sashimi* will do.)

Nami-de ii-desu. (Regular (*sushi*) will do.)

instead of . . . *ni shimasu* or . . . *o kudasai*, implying that their order will be more convenient for those who prepare and serve the meals. By indicating that they are not demanding something just to satisfy their own need, they show consideration to the employees of the restaurant.

Sometimes . . . *de ii* is used to reflect the speaker's guilty feelings about ordering something not very lucrative for the restaurant. For instance, when five people come for lunch and order only two bottles of beer, they often say

Nihon-de ii-n-da-kedo. (Two will do.)

implying that they are sorry not to order more.

Although many people are not conscious of these feelings behind . . . *de ii*, using that expression is regarded as more appropriate in such social situations than using simple and direct expressions like *Teeshoku-o kudasai* or *Teeshoku-ni shimasu*.

Boku-mo

ぼくも

(Me, too)

Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada had some business discussions at Mr. Okada's office the other day. After the discussions, Mr. Okada took them to a nearby restaurant for lunch. Several of his colleagues went with them. When they had sat down and Mr. Lerner decided on *sashimi*, Mr. Takada said

Ja, boku-mo sashimi.

じゃ、ぼくも さしみ。

(Then, I will have *sashimi*, too.)

Then Mr. Okada and his colleagues all said

Watashi-mo.

わたしも。

(Me, too.)

Mr. Lerner had noticed that Japanese people often order the same thing when they dine together, but it was the first time that he had seen five or six people all ask for the same thing.

* * *

It is true that Japanese often have the same meal even when it is possible to ask for different things. Sometimes they do this because they just feel lazy and do not want to think about what to order, but very often they do this because they feel they should.

When the members of a group know each other well enough not to have to pay special attention to each other, they usually order what they

want. In other words, when they are in their own, well-established group, they do not have to conform to others. Family members, good friends or work colleagues usually fall into this category.

On the other hand, when they do not know each other that well and they have to try hard to establish good relations, they tend to order the same meal.

Sometimes when one of the people present wants to have something different for a special reason, he will add an explanation, as in

Watashi-wa udon-ni shimasu. Chotto i-no chooshi-ga warui-n-de.

(As for me, I will take noodles, since I am having some trouble with my stomach.)

when he feels that he should really order the same thing for the sake of better relations.

Koko-wa watashi-ga . . .

ここは わたしが……

(I will take care of this)

Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada took Mr. Okada to a restaurant near their office after business discussions yesterday. After the meal, when Mr. Okada reached for the bill placed near Mr. Takada's plate, Mr. Takada said,

Koko-wa watashi-ga . . .

ここは わたしが……

(lit. As for this place, I . . .)

obviously meaning "This is on me." Mr. Okada protested once and then accepted.

Mr. Lerner had learned the word *ogoru* (to treat) before, and wondered if one can also say

Watashi-ga ogorimasu.

(I'm going to treat you.)

in such a situation.

* * *

There are several expressions to mean that you are going to pay the bill for your guest. The word *ogoru* is informal and one can say

Kyoo-wa boku-ga ogoru.

(I'll treat you today.)

or

Watashi-no ogori-desu.

(It's my treat.)

only to good friends or to younger people.

Gochisoo-suru is also used to mean "to

treat," but this also is used by the person who pays only between good friends or when one does not have to be polite.

When you have to be polite, you should say

(Koko-wa) watashi-ga . . .

which is an abbreviation of *Koko-wa watashi-ga oharai-shimasu* (I'm going to pay this bill). In the same manner one also says

(Koko-wa) watashi-ni . . .

(ここは) わたしに……

which is an abbreviation of *Koko-wa watashi-ni harawasete-kudasai* (Please let me pay this bill). In both cases *kyoo-wa* can replace *koko-wa*.

After *Koko-wa watashi-ga . . .* or *Koko-wa watashi-ni . . .* the verb is not mentioned. Words meaning "to pay" or "to treat" are often left out because people consider it impolite to mention them when they should be polite. To be even more polite, people sometimes slip out and pay the bill before the guest notices. When the guest realizes and asks to pay, the host will say,

Ie, kekkoo-desu.

(No, that's not necessary.)

Koko-ni kissaten-ga aru-desho?

ここに 喫茶店が あるでしょ?
(There's a coffee shop here, you know?)

When Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida were talking during their break, Mr. Mori came up and asked them how to get to the restaurant that they had mentioned a few days before. Mr. Lerner drew a rough sketch of the neighborhood and started to explain. When he said, while pointing to a spot on the paper,

Koko-ni kissaten-ga aru-desho?
ここに 喫茶店が あるでしょ?
(There's a coffee shop here, you know?)

Miss Yoshida said hurriedly

Arimasu-ne?
ありますね。
(There is, isn't there?)

Mr. Lerner did not understand why she had done this as if to correct his Japanese, but asked her to finish the explanation. He listened to her as she explained; she always said *arimasu-ne* and never said *aru-desho?* although she had often used this when talking with him.

* * *

The expression . . . *deshoo* is used to indicate probability, as in

Yamada-san-nara dekiru-deshoo.
(Mr. Yamada probably can do it.)
Chikatetsu-ga ichiban hayai-deshoo.
(I think the subway will probably be the fast-

est.)

Sometimes it is used as a polite substitute for . . . *desu* as in

Donata-deshoo-da. (May I ask who you are?)
Kore-deshoo-ka. (Is this what you want?)

In informal conversation, . . . *deshoo* is sometimes used with a rising tone to confirm the listener's understanding, as in

Ashita-wa korareru-desho(o)?
(You can come tomorrow, right?)
Kore-de juubun-desho(o)?
(This is enough, don't you think?)

As it is informal, Mr. Lerner should not have used it with Mr. Mori. He should have said *Kissaten-ga arimasu* or . . . *ga arimasu-ne* instead; the former sounds more reserved.

This usage of *deshoo* is limited to conversation between good friends or speech toward younger people. Women use it more often and men often use *daroo?*, the less polite form instead. And this *deshoo* often is shortened to *desho?*

Kimura-san-desu

木村さんです
(It's Mr. Kimura)

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida were showing some pictures taken at the picnic in which several of the people from the office had participated the previous week. Mr. Mori particularly liked one of the pictures and asked them who had taken it. Miss Yoshida answered

Kimura-san-desu.
木村さんです。
(It's Mr. Kimura.)

Mr. Lerner wondered why she had said . . . *desu* when he would have said

Kimura-san-ga torimashita.
(Mr. Kimura did — *lit.* Mr. Kimura took it.)

* * *

Desu is often used when explaining or reporting what happened in the past as well as the present. In response to the question "Who took the picture?" the answer *Kimura-san-ga torimashita* is correct, but very often the answer is given with the . . . *desu* form as in

Kimura-san-desu.
or
Watashi-desu.

This type of answer will probably seem natural to a question that has been asked with the . . . *desu-ka* form as in

Kono shashin-o totta-nowa dare-desu-ka.

But an answer with . . . *desu* is also often given to a question that has not been asked with the . . . *desu-ka* form.

This is especially used when the person who answers is concerned more with a particular factor than with the fact as a whole. Even when the question is

Dare-ga kono shashin-o torimashita-ka.
(Who took this picture?)

one may say *Kimura-san-desu* rather than *Kimura-san-ga torimashita* if one's concern lies in the agent of the action rather than the fact that *Kimura-san* took a picture.

In the same way, one may answer

Hakone-desu. (*lit.* It's Hakone.)

to the question

Kinoo doko-e ikimashita-ka.
(Where did you go yesterday?)

just as to

Kinoo itta-nowa doko-desu-ka.
(What's the name of the place where you went yesterday?)

And this also applies to answers to questions in the present or in the future, as in

A: *Ginkoo-no mae-ni nani-ga arimasu-ka.*
(What's in front of the bank?)

B: *Kissaten-desu.*
(A coffee shop is.)

Kore, oishii-wane
 これ、おいしいわね
 (This is good, isn't it?)

Yesterday afternoon when Mr. Lerner and his colleagues were having tea, Miss Yoshida tasted a cookie and said

Kore, oishii-wane. これ、おいしいわね。
 (This is good, isn't it?)

And Mr. Lerner agreed, saying inadvertently

Soo. Oishii-wane.
 (Yes, it's good, isn't it?)

Then the colleagues all praised his Japanese; they obviously thought that Mr. Lerner had purposely used women's speech as a joke. He remembered then that men usually say *oishii-ne* instead of *oishii-wane*, but he was not sure how women's expressions are different from men's.

* * *

In familiar speech, men and women use sentence particles differently.

I. Verbs and adjectives:

When the sentence ends with a verb or adjective, sentence particles are used as follows.

men	women
<i>Ashita iku-yo.</i>	<i>Ashita iku-wayo.</i> (I will certainly go tomorrow.)
<i>Kore, ii-ne.</i>	<i>Kore, ii-wane.</i> (This is good, isn't it?)

Kore, ii-yo.

Kore, ii-wayo.
 (This is certainly good.)

Namely, with verbs and adjectives women use *wa* before *yo* or *ne*.

II. Nouns and *na* adjectives:

In the case of sentences ending with a noun or an adjective with the *na* ending, sentence particles are used as follows.

men	women	
<i>Ashita-dane.</i>	<i>Ashita-ne.</i>	(It's tomorrow, isn't it?)
<i>Soo-dane.</i>	<i>Soo-ne.</i>	(It's so, isn't it?)
<i>Shizuka-dayo.</i>	<i>Shizuka-yo.</i>	(It certainly is quiet.)

In women's speech, . . . *da-wayo* and . . . *da-wane* are also used as more emphatic expression. But usually women avoid using *da* preceding a sentence particle.

In addition to the use of particles, the selection of vocabulary is different to some extent. Thus Japanese usually can tell whether a conversation is between men or women just by looking at a transcript. The following dialogues all say "It's good, isn't it?" "Yes, that's right." You might see if you can tell the sex of the speakers.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. A: <i>Kore, oishii-wane.</i> | 3. A: <i>Kore, oishii-ne.</i> |
| B: <i>Un, soo-dane.</i> | B: <i>Ee, soo-ne.</i> |
| 2. A: <i>Kore, oishii-wane.</i> | 4. A: <i>Kore, umai-ne.</i> |
| B: <i>Ee, soo-ne.</i> | B: <i>Un, soo-dane.</i> |

The speakers are most likely: 1. woman and man; 2. woman and woman; 3. man and woman; 4. man and man.

Kore-wa are-deshoo-ne . . .

これは あれでしょうね……

(This case is like that, isn't it?)

When Mr. Takada was explaining a new proposal to Mr. Mori, the director of the company, the other day, Mr. Mori asked him who would be best to help him in the project. Then Mr. Takada answered

Kore-wa are-deshoo-ne . . .

これは あれでしょうね……

(lit. This should be that, shouldn't it?)

and then named one of his colleagues. Mr. Lerner was interested in this expressions *are-deshoo-ne*. It seemed to him to have no substantive meaning; he wondered what function it serves.

* * *

Many Japanese regard it as important to sound hesitant or to give some kind of signal before expressing their opinion so that they will not sound abrupt. This is why they often use such phrases as *jitsu-wa . . .* (as a matter of fact), *anoo . . .* (well), *nan-to iimashoo-ka* (how should I put it?) before giving an opinion. *Are-deshoo-ne* is one such expression.

Are-deshoo-ne literally means "it is probably that, isn't it?" Its function is to indicate that the speaker expects the listener to agree with what he is going to say next.

When asking the listener's opinion, *doo-deshoo-ne* is used in a similar way; namely, it is said to indicate that the speaker is going to ask a question, as in

Kondo-no shiai-wa, doo-deshoo-ne, Kyojin-ga yappari tsuyoi-deshoo-ne.

(This match, what do you think, it will probably end in a Giants' victory, won't it?)

Deshoo is replaced by *daroo* when a male speaker is engaged in familiar conversation, as in

Kore, are-daroo-ne, ashita-made-niwa muri-daroo-ne.

これ、あれだろうね、あしたまでには無理だろうね。

(You won't be able to finish this by tomorrow, will you?)

Gomen-kudasai

ごめんください

(Excuse me)

When Mr. Lerner was at home reading a magazine last Saturday, Mrs. Takahashi came to return a book that her husband had borrowed from him a few weeks before. She left without entering the house; when she was leaving, she said, while bowing,

Ja, gomen-kudasai.

じゃ、ごめんください。

(lit. Then, excuse me.)

Mr. Lerner understood that she meant "Good-bye," but he had thought that *Gomen-kudasai* is used only when calling someone to the door. Can the same expression be used both at the beginning and end of a visit?

* * *

Gomen-kudasai literally means "Please pardon me." It is usually used when a visitor calls out for someone to come to the door. And when the host or hostess comes to the door and asks the visitor to come in, the visitor will say

Shitsuree-shimasu.

失礼します。

while going into the house. Thus, *Gomen-kudasai* is used differently from *Shitsuree-shimasu* when used at the beginning of a visit.

When leaving, however, *Gomen-kudasai* as well as *Shitsuree-shimasu* can be used to mean "Good-bye." Both *Gomen-kudasai* and *Shitsuree-*

shimasu are more polite than *Sayoonara*. The difference between the two polite expressions is that *Gomen-kudasai* is used by older people, especially by older women.

Shitsuree-shimasu has a broader usage than *Gomen-kudasai* in that it can be used before taking any action that might be impolite. You can say *Shitsuree-shimasu* before picking up something, handing something over to someone, going into a room, temporarily leaving a person, and so on. *Gomen-kudasai* is not usually used in this way.

Desu-ne
ですね
(It is, isn't it?)

After business discussions yesterday afternoon Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada took Mr. Okada to a nearby restaurant to have some beer. When Mr. Okada said

Shigoto-no ato-wa yappari biiru . . .
仕事のあとは やっぱり ビール……
(The best thing to have after work is beer.)

Mr. Takada said

Desu-ne.
ですね。
(It is, isn't it?)

Mr. Lerner wondered if this was an abbreviation of *Soo-desu-ne*; if so, he thought he would use it often because it is so short.

* * *

In informal conversation one sometimes answers with just *Desu-ne* as Mr. Takada did. This is done usually when the speaker's sentence has not been completed. In this respect, this answer can be regarded as a kind of finishing up someone's statement. In fact, in Japanese conversation finishing up the speaker's unfinished sentence is regarded as a sign of positive participation, and it is natural for one person to leave part of his sentences unsaid and for the other person to finish them.

Several variations of *Desu-ne* are also used. For example, *Deshita-ne* is used as in:

A: *Kinoo ichiban saki-ni kita-nowa Yamamoto-san . . .*

B: *Deshita-ne.*

(A: It was Mr. Yamamoto who came first yesterday. B: It was, wasn't it?)

And *Deshoo-ne* is used as in:

A: *Kore-ja chotto tarinai . . .*

B: *Deshoo-ne.*

(A: This won't be sufficient. B: It won't, will it?)

Answering with just *Desu-ne* or the like is limited to informal conversations. In a more formal situation Mr. Takada would have said *Soo-desu-ne* or *Hai, soo-desu-ne*. If the occasion is very formal one usually avoids using *ne* and says *Hai, soo-desu* or simply *Hai*. At that time, one also refrains from completing the speaker's statements and waits for him to finish them.

Mite-itadakemasen-ka

見ていただけませんか

(Would you please take a look at this?)

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida planned a picnic for their colleagues and their families, and then conferred about it with Mr. Mori, the director of the company. After Miss Yoshida explained the plan, Mr. Lerner handed Mr. Mori the paper on which the details were written, saying

Kore, mite-kudasai.
(Please look at this.)

But Mr. Mori did not say anything for a moment. Mr. Lerner did not know what he had done to make him angry.

* * *

If Miss Yoshida had handed over the paper, she would have said

Chotto goran-itadakemasu-ka.
ちよつと ごらんいただけますか。
(Would you please take a look at it?)

or

Chotto mite-itadakemasen-ka.
ちよつと 見ていただけませんか。
(Would you please take a look at it?)

instead of saying *Mite-kudasai.*

The form . . . *te-kudasai* is appropriate in a classroom or business situation. But in situations where one has to be polite . . . *te-kudasai* is usually replaced by more polite expressions, such as . . . *te-itadakemasen-ka* or . . . *te-kudasaimasen-ka.*

The form . . . *te-itadakemasen-ka* as in

Kore, shirabete-itadakemasen-ka.
(Would you please check this?)

or

Kore, oshirabe-itadakemasen-ka.
(Would you please check this?)

is highly recommended as a polite expression for requests. A similar expression . . . *te-kudasaimasen-ka* is also polite, but it implies that the request is taken as a matter of course, which . . . *te-itadakemasen-ka* does not; therefore . . . *te-itadakemasen-ka* is more polite. Adding . . . *deshoo-ka* as in

Chotto shirabete-itadakemasen-deshoo-ka.

is very polite.

There are also some special words for showing respect such as *goran-ni naru* (see) and *meshiagaru* (eat), but if you add . . . *te-itadakemasen-deshoo-ka* or . . . *te-itadakemasen-ka* you can do without such words. You can use such expressions as

Mite-itadakemasen-deshoo-ka.
Nonde-itadakemasen-deshoo-ka.

any time you want to sound pleasant and polite.

Osokatta-desu-ne
おそかったですね
(You're late)

Mr. Lerner and several of his colleagues went on a picnic last Saturday. They met in front of a railway station in the morning, but Mr. Takada was late. When he finally showed up, Miss Yoshida said a little angrily

Osokatta-desu-ne.

おそかったですね。

(lit. You were late, weren't you?)

and Mr. Takada apologized. Mr. Lerner wondered why Miss Yoshida had used the past tense of *osoi*.

* * *

Both *osoi* and *osokatta* can be used to mean "You're late," but the speaker's attitude is different in the two cases. When one says *Osoi-desu-ne*, one is emphasizing the present state of the person being late, but when one says *Osokatta-desu-ne*, one is emphasizing the fact that a long time had elapsed before he came. In other words, the speaker is more concerned about what has preceded the present state of things than he is about the present state when he uses adjectives ending with . . . *ta*.

Sometimes both forms, the dictionary form and the . . . *ta* form, are used in similar situations. For instance, when thanking someone one sometimes says *Arigatoo-gozaimasu* and sometimes *Arigatoo-gozaimashita*. The latter is used when the speaker wants to emphasize that it has taken a considerable length of time or amount of

trouble to complete the action. Thus *Arigatoo-gozaimashita* can be translated as "Thank you for having done so much for me."

Adjectives ending with . . . *ta* can also imply the speaker's psychological involvement in the process by which a certain state comes to an end. For instance, when hearing good news, saying *Yokatta-desu-ne* usually implies that the speaker has been concerned with the matter and is now released from that worry. Thus when you want to express your joy at hearing good news such as someone's having passed an important examination, it is more appropriate to say

Yokatta-desu-ne.

よかったですね。

than to say

li-desu-ne.

Yasundara doo-desu-ka
休んだら どうですか
(Why don't you rest?)

Mr. Takada was working very hard yesterday afternoon. When Miss Yoshida voluntarily made coffee for him and took it to him, he did not even look up. Miss Yoshida came to Mr. Lerner and said

Sukoshi yasumeba ii-noni.
(He should rest a little.)

Mr. Lerner agreed saying

Soo-desu-ne. Yasunda hoo-ga ii-desu-ne.

to mean "That's right. He had better rest."

Then Miss Yoshida went to Mr. Takada again, and said

Sukoshi yasundara doo-desu-ka.
少し 休んだら どうですか。
(Why don't you rest?)

Mr. Lerner realized that there are several expressions for giving advice, and wondered which of them is most common.

* * *

The three expressions . . . *eba ii-noni*, . . . *hoo-ga ii-desu* and . . . *tara doo-desu-ka* can all be used for giving advice.

The most common expression is . . . *tara doo-desu-ka* as in

Kochira-ni shitara doo-desu-ka.

こちらに したら どうですか。
(Why don't you decide on this one?)

To make this expression more polite, you can change the wording as in

Kochira-ni nasattara ikaga-desu-ka.

And in informal speech one often says *doo?* instead of *doo-desu-ka*.

. . . *hoo-ga ii-desu* is also used for giving advice as in

Hayaku kaetta hoo-ga ii-desu-yo.
(You had better go home early.)

This is usually said to one's equals or to younger people, since it implies that the speaker knows about the matter better than the other person.

The expression . . . *eba ii-noni* literally means "If you did . . . , it would be better, but" It implies criticism of the other person for what he is doing or has done; therefore it cannot be used in polite speech unless the advice is purely for the benefit of the other person. A host sometimes says to a visitor who has brought him a present

Konna koto shinakereba ii-noni.
(You shouldn't have done this.)
or, more politely,
Konna koto nasaranakereba ii-nomi.

0

“Kono” to “Sono”
「この」と「その」
(This and that)

Mr. Lerner went to the barber yesterday evening. While waiting his turn, he listened to the conversation between the barber and his customer. The customer said, looking at his hair in the mirror,

Soko-wa moo sukoshi mijikaku.
(Make that place a little shorter, please.)

Then the barber said

A, koko-desu-ne. Kono-kurai-desu-ka.
(This part? About this much?)

and the customer answered

Un, sono kurai.
(Yes, about that much.)

Mr. Lerner was interested in the use of *koko* and *kono*, and of *soko* and *sono*. The customer used *soko* and *sono* although he was referring to his own hair, and the barber said *koko* and *kono* when referring to somebody else's hair.

* * *

The difference between *kono* and *sono* (or, between *koko* and *soko*) is that *kono* is used to refer to what is close to the speaker and *sono* is used to refer to what is close to the listener. Thus, one usually says

Kore, doozo.

(Please take this.)

when handing something to someone. And you will ask someone

Sumimasen. Soko-no hon, totte-kudasaimasen-ka.

(I'm sorry to trouble you, but could you please hand me the book there?)

The distinction of whether something is close to the speaker or to the listener is not just a matter of physical distance but also of the relationship to the person. Therefore, when the barber was cutting the customer's hair, the hair was closely related to the barber, and even the owner of the hair, namely the customer, regarded it as belonging to the barber at the moment. Thus the customer used *sono* and the barber used *kono*.

In the same way, when you ask someone to give a message to another person, you should say *Koo tsutaete-kudasaimasen-ka* (Will you tell him this?) before stating the message, and *Soo tsutaete-kudasaimasen-ka* after stating it. The idea is that the message belongs to you before you pass it on, and afterward it belongs to the listener.

When reporting someone's statement, one usually says *Tanaka-san-ga soo iimashita* (Mr. Tanaka said so). However, you can also say *Tanaka-san-ga koo iimashita* (Mr. Tanaka said this) when you feel that you are still concerned with the statement and have not yet completely handed the matter over to the listener.

Gobusata-itashimashita

ごぶさたいたしました

(I'm sorry I have been neglecting to see you and write to you)

The other day Mr. Lerner visited Professor Takahashi, whom he had not seen for several weeks. Professor Takahashi said

Hisashiburi-desu-ne.

久しぶりですね。

(I haven't seen you for a long time.)

So Mr. Lerner answered

Kochira-koso.

(I should say that.)

The fact is that Mr. Lerner had learned that one should say *Gobusata-itashimashita* when meeting someone after a long time and that the answer to this expression is *Kochira-koso*. He thought that *Hisashiburi-desu-ne* must be a synonym for *Gobusata-itashimashita*, and so said *Kochira-koso* in reply. But when he asked Miss Yoshida about it later, she said he should have said

Hontoo-desu-ne.

ほんとうですね。

(That's certainly true.)

instead.

* * *

The two expressions *Hisashiburi-desu-ne* and *Gobusata-itashimashita* are similar but not the

same. *Hisashiburi-desu-ne* simply means that the two have not met for a long time, and is usually used as an expression of joy at meeting someone. Therefore one usually replies with such expressions as *Soo-desu-ne* and *Hontoo-ni soo-desu-ne*.

On the other hand *Gobusata-itashimashita* is an expression of apology for not having written or called on the other person. The complete version is

Gobusata-itashimashite, mooshiwake arimasen.

(I'm so sorry that I have not written to you or seen you.)

but *mooshiwake arimasen* is often understood and left out. Between friends, a less polite expression, *Gobusata-shite, doomo* is used to mean the same thing.

The underlying idea in this sort of situation is that one should try to keep in contact with the other person and one should be sorry about neglecting to do so. In formal situations or in polite conversation in Japanese it is regarded as good to be ready to take blame on oneself and apologize. Therefore, to be polite *Gobusata-itashimashita* is more appropriate than *Hisashiburi-desu-ne*; *Hisashiburi-desu-ne* should be followed by *Gobusata-itashimashita* when one has to be polite.

Otoko-wa nyooboo-da

男は女房だ

(A man is a wife?)

Mr. Lerner and his colleagues were talking about Mr. Kobayashi, one of the youngest workers at the company, during lunchtime yesterday. Mr. Kobayashi recently got married and has become more enthusiastic about his work since then. Apparently his wife has had a good influence on him. Mr. Takada referred to this fact, and said, as if to give his conclusion

Otoko-wa nyooboo-dane.

男は 女房だね。

(lit. A man is a wife.)

and everybody agreed.

Mr. Lerner understood that Mr. Takada had meant that a wife is the most important factor in deciding a husband's way of living, but wondered if the use of . . . wa . . . da can be flexible to this extent.

* * *

A-wa B-desu (or -da) is often understood to mean "A is B," but actually this structure can be used in a much broader way.

A sentence which is often quoted to illustrate this aspect of the . . . wa . . . desu structure is

Boku-wa unagi-da.

(lit. I am an eel.)

which means "I will have eel" when said to a waiter taking one's order at a restaurant.

You can take this sentence to be the abbrevia-

sion of

Boku-wa unagi-o taberu-n-desu.

(I'm going to eat some eel.)

or

Boku-ga taberu-nowa unagi-desu.

(It is eel that I am going to eat.)

Here the word *taberu* is understood and left out.

In the same way, *Otoko-wa nyooboo-da* can be paraphrased as

Otoko-wa nyooboo-ni yotte kimaru.

(What a man is like is determined by his wife.)

or

Otoko-o kimeru-nowa nyooboo-da.

(It is the wife who determines the man.)

There are several other examples of this kind which can easily be understood from context.

Yakyuu-wa pitchaa-desu.

(What counts most in baseball is the pitcher.)

Otoko-wa kao-ja nai. Kokoro-da.

男は 顔じゃ ない。心だ。

(A man's worth is not determined by his looks, but by his heart.)

Moo demashita
もう 出ました
(It has already left)

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida arranged to meet at a bus stop after work yesterday evening. Miss Yoshida came five minutes late, and a bus left just before she came. Mr. Lerner told her

Basu-wa moo dekakemashita.

meaning "The bus has already left." But Miss Yoshida laughed and said that he should have said . . . *demashita* instead of . . . *dekakemashita*. He had not thought about the difference between *deru* and *dekakeru* before.

* * *

There are several verbs meaning that something or someone is leaving a place. *Shuppatsu-suru* is used when the time of departure is important, as in

Kono ressha-wa sanji-ni shuppatsu-shimasu.
(This train will leave at three.)

Deru can also be used in the above sentence, but it places the emphasis on leaving as in

Konde-kita-kara demashoo.
混んできたから 出ましょう。

(Since this place has become crowded, let's leave.)

Both *shuppatsu-suru* and *deru* can be used either with human beings or with inanimate things like trains, but the verb *dekakeru* is used only

with human beings. *Dekakeru* is usually said when a person leaves his home to go to a place for some specific purpose, as in

Sanpo-ni dekakemashoo-ka.

散歩に 出かけましょうか。

(Shall we go out for a walk?)

Nichiyoobi-niwa amari dekakemasen.

(I don't go out very much on Sundays.)

Saying *Basu-wa moo dekakemashita* sounds as if the bus were a human being going out on special business. Other Japanese verbs are also used only with human beings, and using them for inanimate things or animals will sound funny. For instance, *kurasu* (to live) is used only with human beings. Actually it means "a human being lives his life." You cannot say something like

Kono doobutsuen-niwa nitoo-no zoo-ga kura-shite-imasu.

(There are two elephants in this zoo.)

unless you want to personify the elephants.

Kiree-ni taberu

きれいに食べる

(To eat up)

Mr. Lerner and several other people from the office went out for lunch together yesterday. When they had finished eating, Mr. Takada looked at Mr. Kobayashi's plate and said

Kiree-ni tabeta-nee.

きれいに 食べたねえ。

(lit. You ate beautifully.)

While Mr. Lerner was wondering what he meant, everybody agreed and admired Mr. Kobayashi's healthy digestion. All the others had left part of their food. Mr. Lerner wondered if *kiree-ni* means "completely."

* * *

The word *kiree* has several meanings. Most foreigners learn one of the meanings, "to be pretty or beautiful," first. When a person says

Kireena sora-desu-ne.

(The sky is beautiful.)

Kanojo kiree-ni natta-ne.

(She has become beautiful.)

he uses *kiree* in this sense.

Another meaning, "to be clean," is often used in everyday conversation as in

Te-o kiree-ni arainasai.

(Wash your hands well — so that they will become clean.)

And "to be tidy or neat" is also meant by *kiree*, as in

Tsukue-no ue-ga kiree-ni natta.

(The desk has been tidied up.)

Motto kiree-ni tatande-kudasai.

(Please fold it more neatly.)

When something is perfectly done, *kiree* is used as in

Shigoto-ga kiree-ni katazuita.

仕事がきれいに かたづいた。

(The work is completely finished.)

And as in Mr. Kobayashi's case, eating something all up is described as

Kiree-ni taberu.

(To eat up.)

All in all, *kiree* describes the speaker's satisfaction at seeing something in an ideal, good state; thus the word can correspond to such English adjectives as "pretty," "clean," "tidy," "neat" and "complete."

Some foreigners make the mistake of saying *kireekatta* for *kiree-deshita* to mean "it was pretty"; *kiree* is used with *na* before a noun, as in *kireena sora*. And to make it negative you should say *kiree-ja arimasen* or *kiree-ja nai* instead of *ki-reeku nai*, which Japanese children sometimes used before they learn the correct form.

Itte-mo ii-kedo . . .
行っても いいけど……
(I don't mind going, but . . .)

When Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida were talking at lunchtime yesterday, someone called Miss Yoshida. It was obviously a friend of hers asking her to go to a movie. Miss Yoshida said

Itte-mo ii-kedo, ima nani yatteru-no.
行っても いいけど、今 何 やってるの。
(I don't mind going, but what's on now?)

Mr. Lerner had not realized that . . . *te-mo ii* can be used to refer to the action of the speaker and wondered how much interest the speaker shows in that action when he uses it.

* * *

The expression . . . *te-mo ii* is usually used for giving permission, as in

Moo kaette-mo ii-desu-yo.
(You may go home now.)

or for asking for permission as in

Moo kaette-mo ii-desu-ka.
(May I go home now?)

There are, however, several other usages of this expression. To mention one, it can also be used with the first person as in Miss Yoshida's case. This roughly corresponds to the English "I don't mind . . . ing" or "I might as well . . ." as in

A: *Kore, saki-ni yatte-kuremasen-ka.*
(Would you do this first?)
B: *Ee, saki-ni shite-mo ii-desu-yo.*
(OK. I don't mind doing it first.)

A: *Issho-ni itte-kuremasen-ka.*
(Will you go with me?)
B: *Itte-mo ii-kedo, saki-ni kaeru-kamo shirenai-yo.*
I don't mind going, but I may have to leave early.)

As seen in the examples, this expression implies that the speaker is not very positive. Therefore it cannot be used when accepting an offer or agreeing to do a favor in polite situations. To be polite, one has to choose other expressions that show more enthusiasm.

Bakari
ばかり
(About; Only)

When Mr. Takada asked Miss Yoshida how her brother was doing, she answered

Asonde-bakari-ite komaru-n-desu.
遊んでばかりいて 困るんです。

(He is just enjoying himself and does not study — so I am worried.)

just like most sisters of high school students preparing for exams to get into college. Mr. Lerner realized that *bakari* means “only” here.

Then Mr. Takada told her

Jippun-bakari rusu-ni suru-kara . . .
(I'm going out for about 10 minutes.)

He wondered how Japanese can tell whether *bakari* means “only” or “about.”

* * *

The word *bakari* is used in two meanings, “only” and “about.” When *bakari* is added to a word indicating an amount, it means “about” as in

Sen-en-bakari kashite-kuremasen-ka.
(Will you lend me about 1,000 yen?)

Nikagetsu-bakari kakarimasu.
(It will take about two months.)

When *bakari* is used with words other than those indicating an amount, it means “nothing but” or “only.” As in Miss Yoshida's remark

about her brother, it is used with verbs as in

Mainichi sake-o nonde-bakari-iru.
(He does nothing but drink every day.)

It is also added to a noun as in

Mainichi sake-bakari nonde-iru.

which means either “Every day he drinks nothing but alcoholic beverages” or “He does nothing but drink every day” depending on the context.

When *bakari* is used with the past form of a verb, it means that an action has just been completed and it is still too early to expect a certain result. For instance, saying

Sengetsu koko-e kita-bakari-desu.
(I came here only last month.)

implies such things as that the speaker does not know the geography of the neighborhood or is not settled yet. Also, if one says

Ima ohiru-o tabeta-bakari-desu.
(I have just had lunch.)

it implies either that he is not yet ready to resume his work or that he is so full that he does not care to eat anything else.

Tomarimasu-ka

とまりますか

(Are you going to stay overnight?)

Mr. Lerner and Miss Yoshida were invited to the Takadas' last Saturday. Mrs. Takada told them that she had to go to Kyushu the following day to attend the wedding of a relative. Mr. Lerner wondered if she was coming back on the same day, and asked,

Kyuushuu-e itte, soko-de nemasu-ka.

meaning "Are you going to sleep over in Kyushu?" But Mrs. Takada blushed, Mr. Takada laughed, and Miss Yoshida hurriedly said as if to cover up Mr. Lerner's blunder

Achira-de otomari-ni naru-n-desu-ka.

あちらで おとまりに なるんですか。

(Are you going to stay overnight there?)

* * *

Mr. Lerner's question was inappropriate because it sounded as if Mrs. Takada were going to Kyushu to have some love affair. He should have used the word *tomaru* instead of *neru* in this case. To say overnight at somewhere, one says *tomaru* as in

Kyooto-de hitoban tomarimashita.

(I stayed overnight in Kyoto.)

Yamada-san-no otaku-ni futaban tomarimashita.

(I stayed with the Yamadas for two nights.)

The English "sleep over" should not be translated as *neru* in Japanese. In a similar way,

there are several other expressions one should be careful about.

The expression *osewa-ni naru* means "to be treated kindly" as in

Iroiro osewa-ni narimashita.

(Thank you very much for your kind help.)

or

Kyuushuu-e itta toki Yamada-san-ni osewa-ni narimashita.

(Mr. Yamada kindly helped me when I went down to Kyushu.)

But saying *Yamada-san-no osewa-ni natte-imasu* can be misleading; especially when the speaker is a woman and Mr. Yamada is a wealthy middle-aged man, the implication can be that the speaker is Mr. Yamada's mistress.

Kankee-ga aru (to have relations) can also be misleading when it is used to refer to the relationship between two people of the opposite sex. And such simple words as *otoko* (man) and *onna* (woman) can mean one's lover depending on the context. To avoid this danger, you should say *otoko-no-hito* and *onna-no-hito* instead.

Onna-no-hito-ga kimashita means "There's a woman to see you," but saying

Onna-ga kimashita implies that she is someone's mistress.

0

Issho-ni shimashoo
いっしょに しましょう
(Let's do it together)

Mr. Lerner received a letter from his sister Margaret asking him to visit a couple named Maeda whom she had met in the United States. They were studying at an American university and had recently returned to Japan. Both of them are now working for big companies, so Mr. Lerner went to visit them in the evening. When he reached their apartment, Mr. Maeda was not yet home, and Mrs. Maeda was busily preparing dinner. She asked him to wait in the living room and served him a cup of tea. But Mr. Lerner wanted to help her, and he also wanted to have a conversation with her, so he said

Issho-ni shitaku-o shimashoo.
(Let's fix dinner together.)

Mrs. Maeda looked surprised and said no, and added that there was not much to do. Mr. Lerner repeated *Issho-ni shimashoo, soshite isscho-ni hanashimashoo* (Let's do it together and talk together). But she looked embarrassed and even a little offended. Mr. Lerner wondered if letting a man help with housework is still regarded as inappropriate in Japan.

* * *

Mrs. Maeda objected not to having a man help but to having a guest do so. *Okyakusama*, a visitor, has to be treated with special care, and if the visitor has never been there before, as in Mr. Lerner's case, a Japanese hostess does not let him help her. This is true even if the visitor is a

woman, although the hostess' reaction to the proposal of help might be different with a woman visitor.

And if Mr. Lerner's expression had been different, Mrs. Maeda would not have felt so offended. A Japanese guest would use a much more reserved expression such as

Nanika otetsudai dekiru koto-wa nai-deshoo-ka.

何か お手伝い できる ことは ないでしょうか。
(I wonder if there is anything I can do to help you.)

rather than *Issho-ni shimashoo*.

Both *isscho-ni* and . . . *mashoo* are usually taught to foreigners as basic expressions, but *isscho-ni . . . mashoo* sounds so familiar that it cannot be used in polite situations. Mr. Lerner would have used a more reserved expression in his native tongue, but when speaking a foreign language anyone is apt to use what he has learned first. Such expressions might be called "classroom Japanese" and they have to be used with care in social situations.

Uchi-no akachan
うちの あかちゃん
(Our baby)

Mr. Takada was talking with Miss Yoshida about his baby at lunchtime yesterday. When he said

Uchi-no akanboo-ga netsu-o dashite . . .
うちの あかんぼうが 熱を 出して……
(Our baby has a fever.)

Miss Yoshida looked worried and said

Akachan-ga . . . Maa kawai-soo-ni.
あかちゃんが……まあ かわいそうに。
(Your baby? Oh, the poor thing.)

While listening to them, Mr. Lerner realized that Mr. Takada always said *akanboo* while Miss Yoshida said *akachan*; he wondered if it was because the baby belonged to the Takadas or because men and women use different words.

* * *

The word *akachan* is used as a polite term to refer to someone else's baby while *akanboo* is used as a humble term to refer to one's own baby or as a general term meaning "baby."

To refer to someone else's baby, one uses *akachan* as in

Otaku-no akachan, ogenki-desu-ka.
(How's your baby?)
Yamada-san-no tokoro-ni akachan-ga umareta-soo-desu.
(I hear a baby was born to the Yamadas.)

On the other hand, when referring to one's own baby in social situations, one usually says *akanboo* as in

Sengetsu akanboo-ga umaremashita.
(A baby was born to us last month.)
Uchi-no akanboo-wa mada sankagetsu-desu.
(Our baby is only three months old.)

It is all right for a child to say *uchi-no akachan*, but it is usually regarded as childish for an adult to say this when talking with non-family members. The ending *-chan* is not added to the names of one's own family members when referring to them in social situations; therefore saying *uchi-no akachan* is just as immature as saying *Yoshiko-chan* when referring to one's daughter in public.

When one refers to babies in general, *akanboo* is used as in

Kono-goro akanboo-no kaze-ga hayatte-iru soo-da.

(I hear colds are spreading among babies now.)

But when one has a personal interest in babies, one tends to use *akachan* even when referring to babies in general; some women, for example, use *akachan* in this way.

Kanai
家内
(My wife)

Mr. Lerner wanted to invite Mr. and Mrs. Takada to his house some time and asked Mr. Takada when would be a good time for them. Mr. Takada answered,

Ja, konban soodan-shite-mimasu.

じゃ、今晚 相談してみます。

(Well, I will talk about it with her this evening.)

Mr. Lerner wondered if it is also correct to say
. . . *kanai-ni soodan-shite-mimasu.*

* * *

There are several terms used to refer to one's wife in social situations, and one has to choose the appropriate one depending on the situation. But often one does not use any term at all to refer to his wife. In the case mentioned above, Mr. Takada did not have to say . . . *kanai-ni* because it was obvious from the context that he was referring to his wife. In this kind of situation one can also say

Uchi-de soodan-shite-mimasu.

(lit. I will talk about it at home.)

because it is obvious that one is going to talk about it with one's wife.

Among the several words one uses when it is necessary to refer to one's wife in a social situation, *kanai* is the most common, as in

Kanai-ga yoroshiku-to mooshite-orimashita.

家内が よろしくと 申しておりました。

(My wife asked me to give you her best wishes.)

Needless to say, *okusan* or *uchi-no okusan* cannot be used in public because *okusan* is an honorific term.

Several foreigners say that some Japanese laugh when they use *kanai* and they wonder why. It is difficult to judge without knowing each situation precisely, but there are two possible reasons. One is that they may have used *kanai* in very informal situations; *kanai* sounds rather formal, and in informal situations Japanese men use various other terms such as *nyooboo*, *uchi-no*, *uchi-no yatsu*, etc., depending on the situation and their personal taste.

Another possible reason is that they may have used *kanai* more often than necessary. It sounds strange to say *kanai* when a Japanese would not use any term at all to refer to his wife, and if the speaker happens to be a newlywed, he might become the object of a teasing smile.

li toshi
いい年
(Good age)

When Mr. Lerner was talking with his colleagues at lunchtime yesterday, Mr. Takada started talking about retirement, explaining what plans he had for after he was retired. Miss Yoshida said that his plans seemed fine, but that it was too early for him to think about retirement. Then he answered

Iya, boku-mo ii toshi-da-kara-ne.

いや、ぼくも いい 年だからね。

(*lit.* No, because I am already at a good age.)

Mr. Lerner wondered what he meant by *ii toshi*.

* * *

The expression *ii toshi* is used to mean that one is old enough to start doing something. The implication differs depending on the context. For instance, when an adult is seen engaged in a childish pastime, someone may say

Ii toshi-o shite sonna asobi-o . . .

(You're too old for such a pastime.)

Or, one may complain about someone for his lack of consideration as in

Ii toshi-o shite bakana koto-o shita mon-da.

(He should know better at his age.)

Mr. Takada meant that he was old enough to

start thinking about retirement when he said *boku-mo ii toshi-da*. In a similar way one sometimes comments, about a young person being already at a marriageable age,

Ano-ko-mo moo ii toshi-da-ne.

(He/She is old enough to get married now.)

The word *ii* is also used with other nouns to mean "good enough." When one looks at his watch and says

Oya, moo ii jikan-da.

おや、もう いい 時間だ。

he means that it is high time he start doing something like taking his leave or going back to work. Similarly a mother will say to her child

Moo ii jikan-desu-yo.

meaning "you should get up," "you should go to bed," "you should start studying," or so on.

li-desu-ne. Demo warui-desu-ne.

いいですね。でも わるいですね。

(It's good, but it's bad)

Last Friday evening Mr. Lerner and several people from the office went to a bar and had some beer together. When they left the bar, Mr. Lerner asked them to come to his house, which happened to be rather close, and eat something. Someone said

li-desu-ne. Demo warui-desu-ne.

いいですね。でも わるいですね。

(lit. It's good, but it's bad.)

Then Mr. Takada said

Warui-kedo, sore-ga ii-yo.

わるいけど、それが いいよ。

(lit. It's bad, but it's good.)

and they decided to accept Mr. Lerner's offer.

In this case *li-desu-ne* and *Warui-desu-ne* do not have their literal meaning of "It is good" and "It is bad." The expression *li-desu-ne* is used to mean "That's a very good idea, so I will do so" when accepting someone's offer. (Saying *li-desu* can mean "No, thank you," but *li-desu-ne* indicates acceptance.) *Warui-desu-ne* is the abbreviation of "It's not good for me to trouble you" or "I shouldn't trouble you." When these two expressions are combined as *li-desu-ne, demo warui-desu-ne*, it actually means "That's good, so I will accept, although I feel bad at troubling you." Reversing the order of the two expressions

as *Warui-kedo, sore-ga ii* also means the same thing, although this sounds more positive about accepting the offer.

Warui-desu-ne is often used when one is going to accept someone's kindness, as in

A: *Watashi-no kasa, motte-ttara doo-desu-ka.*

(Why don't you take my umbrella?)

B: *Soo-desu-ka. Warui-desu-ne. Doomo.*

(May I? That's kind of you. Thanks.)

In more familiar conversation between friends, men will say *Warui-ne* and women *Warui-wane*. To be polite, one uses more reserved expressions such as *Sumimasen(-ne)* or *Mooshiwake arimasen (-ne)* as in

Kekkoo-de-gozaimasu-ne, demo mooshiwake gozaimasen.

Kekkoo-desu-kedo, mooshiwake nai yoona ki-ga itashimasu.

both meaning "I will accept your offer, although I feel I shouldn't trouble you."

Hee?
へえ?
(Really?)

When Mr. Lerner was talking with his colleagues after lunch yesterday, Mr. Takada said that he was trying to quit smoking. Since he had already tried and failed in this several times, Mr. Lerner teased him by answering

Hee?
へえ?
(Really?)

But when he said it, everybody laughed. Mr. Lerner wondered if his pronunciation was wrong.

There are several expressions that are used as replies, either at the end of a sentence or between phrases. *Hai* is very common; it is polite, and can be used in formal situations too. When trying to be very polite, sometimes *Haa* is used in place of *Hai*. Sometimes a short *Ha* is used, mostly by men and especially when replying to their boss. *Aa* is also used. This sounds similar to *Haa* but is casual and familiar; you should not use it toward someone you have to talk politely with.

Ee is less polite than *Hai*, and often used in informal conversation. *Hee*, however, is quite different from *Ee*, although there is the difference of only one consonant. When said with a falling tone as in

He

it is used as a humble, even subservient, answer toward one's superior. It often reminds one of a

peasant timidly answering a samurai or a servant in an old-fashioned rich family replying to his master. Nowadays it is rarely used in Tokyo.

On the other hand, when said with a rising tone as in

e
He

it indicates the speaker's doubt, surprise or contempt about what has been said. Mr. Lerner wanted to use *Hee* in this way, but he used a falling tone by mistake.

Fuun can also be used as a response to indicate that one is interested in what the other person has said, while the short *Fun* often indicates contempt or quick dismissal.

Hoo is also used to indicate one's interest or surprise, usually by elderly men.

The response words mentioned above — *Hai*, *Haa*, *Ee*, *Fuun*, *Fun* and *Hoo* — are sometimes repeated, as in *Hai, hai* or in *Hoo, hoo* when said with a falling tone, to emphatically express one's interest.

Wakaru dokoro-ka . . .

わかる どころか……

(Far from being able to understand . . .)

The other day Miss Yoshida introduced Mr. Lerner to her uncle, who had come to see her at the office. The uncle politely bowed to him, and then asked Miss Yoshida if he understood Japanese. She answered

Wakaru dokoro-ka . . .

わかる どころか……

(Far from being able to understand it . . .)

Then the uncle looked at Mr. Lerner with an admiring look and wondered how he had become so good at it.

This was quite puzzling to Mr. Lerner. Hadn't she denied his ability to understand Japanese?

* * *

The expressions . . . *dokoro-ka* is used to deny the appropriateness of what has been said. It can mean that what has been said is quite wrong, as in

A: *Densha, konde-imashita-ka.*
(Was the train crowded?)

B: *Konde-iru dokoro-ka garagara-deshita.*
(Far from being crowded, there were very few passengers on it.)

or,

Oishii-to iwarete katta-n-desu-ga, oishii dokoro-ka hidoi mon-deshita.

(They told me it was good, so I bought it, but far from being delicious, it was really terrible.)

This expression is also used to correct the wording that has been used to describe something. When Miss Yoshida said *Wakaru dokoro-ka*, she meant that the expression *wakaru* is not appropriate to describe Mr. Lerner's ability. If she had completed her sentence, it would have been something like

Wakaru dokoro-ka marude nihonjin-mitai-desu.

(Far from being able to just understand it, he can speak it as well as a native speaker of Japanese.)

Wakaru dokoro-ka joodan-made ieru-n-desu-yo.

(Far from being able to just understand it, he can even make jokes in Japanese.)

Her uncle understood that she was praising Mr. Lerner's ability before she completed her sentence, because it would be inconceivable to use this expression in the opposite way, namely to mean that Mr. Lerner is an extremely poor speaker of Japanese, in a social situation.

In the same way, you might answer someone who has asked you if the train was crowded

Konde-iru dokoro-ka shinu omoi-deshita.

(Crowded isn't the word. I almost died!)

Yamada-san-de irasshaimasu-ka
山田さんで いらっしやいますか
(Are you Mr. Yamada?)

Yesterday afternoon Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada went to see a Mr. Yamada at his office. When they were led to his desk, and he stood up to meet them, Mr. Takada bowed and said

Yamada-san-de irasshaimasu-ka.
山田さんで いらっしやいますか。

Mr. Lerner thought that he had said

Yamada-san irasshaimasu-ka.
(Is Mr. Yamada here?)

and was wondering why, when the man replied *Soo-desu* (That's right) and asked them to sit down.

* * *

The two expressions . . . *de irasshaimasu-ka* and . . . *irasshaimasu-ka* are quite different. The former means "Are you . . .?" and the latter means "Is . . . here?" While *irassharu* means "to exist," . . . *de irassharu* means "to be equal to . . ." Actually . . . *de irasshaimasu* is a polite version of . . . *desu* while *irasshaimasu* is the polite form of *imasu*.

Ogenki-desu-ka.
お元気ですか。

and

Ogenki-de irasshaimasu-ka.
お元気で いらっしやいますか。

both mean "Are you well?" The latter is more polite than the former. Mr. Takada said *Yamada-san-de irasshaimasu-ka* instead of . . . *desu-ka* because he wanted to speak politely.

There are several ways to refer to someone's action politely. For instance, one can say

Nanji-goro kaerimasu-ka.

to mean "What time are you (is he, is she, are they) coming back?" To make this more polite one says

Nanji-goro okaeri-ni narimasu-ka.

Instead of *o . . . ni narimasu-ka*, one often uses *o . . . desu-ka* as in

Nanji-goro okaeri-desu-ka.

This is shorter but still sounds polite and refined. To make this even more polite, one says

Nanji-goro okaeri-de irasshaimasu-ka.

In the same way, such expressions are often used in polite conversations as:

Oisogi-de irasshaimasu-ka.
(Are you in a hurry?)
Osuki-de irasshaimasu-ka.
(Do you like it?)

In the case of such adjectives as *hayai*, *wakai*, etc., . . . *kute irasshaimasu* is used as in

Owakakute irasshaimasu-ne.
(You are so young.)

Takaku nai-ja nai
たかく ないじゃ ない
(It isn't expensive, is it?)

Miss Yoshida showed her new handbag to another woman working at the office, complaining that it was rather expensive. The woman praised its quality and said

Takaku nai-ja nai.

たかく ないじゃ ない。

(lit. It isn't that it isn't expensive.)

Then Mr. Takada joined them and said

Takaku nai-ja nai-ka.

From the situation Mr. Lerner imagined that they were saying that the handbag was not too expensive, but the use of . . . *ja nai* still seemed difficult to him.

* * *

Miss Yoshida's colleagues said that the handbag was not expensive. The last part of the sentence, namely *-ja nai*, does not change the meaning. It is something like a tag question with falling intonation in English. Thus the sentence

Takaku nai-ja nai(-ka).

means "It isn't expensive, is it?"

If one wants to say that something is expensive one says

Takai-ja nai(-ka).

(It's expensive, isn't it?)

Men use either *nai* or *nai-ka*; the latter sounds more demanding. Women usually do not add *ka* to *nai*. To make the expression more polite, both men and women use . . . *ja arimasen-ka*; in this case, too, women sometimes leave out *ka*.

Using *nai* twice as in *Takaku nai-ja nai* may seem confusing to foreigners, but it actually is not. The first *nai*, which determines the meaning, is said clearly so that it gives the impression of finality, and the last *-ja nai* is felt to be an indication of the speaker's emotions. In the following sentences, the first *nai* or *nakatta* is said with a higher pitch and thus there is no ambiguity.

Ano-hito genki-ga nai-ja nai.

(He doesn't look very well, does he?)

Shibaraku awanakatta-ja nai.

(We haven't met for a long time, have we?)

Sometimes *nai* is said more than twice in the following example,

Dekinai koto-wa nai-ja nai.

できない ことは ないじゃ ない。

(It isn't impossible, is it?)

Zenbu-wa wakarimasen-deshita

ぜんぶは わかりませんでした

(I didn't understand all of it)

Mr. Lerner went to a Japanese movie with Miss Yoshida last Saturday. When they were having tea after the movie, Miss Yoshida asked him how well he had understood the movie. He answered

Zenbu wakarimasen-deshita.

but seeing the disappointed look on her face he realized his mistake and corrected himself by saying

Zenbu-wa wakarimasen-deshita.

ぜんぶは わかりませんでした。

* * *

The Japanese words meaning "all" or "every" are usually followed by affirmative verbs as in

Zenbu owarimashita.

(I finished all of it.)

Minna kowarete-imasu.

(All of them are broken.)

It sounds strange to use these words with negative verbs as in

Zenbu owarimasen-deshita.

Minna kowarete-imasen.

To mean "not all" or "not every," one adds *wa* as in

Zenbu-wa owarimasen-deshita.

(I didn't finish all of it.)

Minna-wa kowarete-imasen.

(Not all of them are broken.)

The particle *wa* is added to various words which the speaker wants to call the listener's attention to or to show a special concern with. Thus one says

Kinoo-wa uchi-ni imashita.

(I stayed home yesterday.)

when one wants to emphasize *kinoo*. One may also say

Kinoo-wa watashi-wa uchi-ni imashita.

when one wants to call the listener's attention to both *kinoo* and *watashi*. Sometimes *wa* is used more than twice as in

Kinoo-wa watashi-wa uchi-niwa imashita-ga te-rebi-wa mimasen-deshita.

(I stayed home yesterday but I didn't watch TV.)

You might think of *wa* as being something like a spotlight; you can use it to highlight any part of a person or a thing on the stage. It is usually used to highlight just one spot, but it is possible to highlight more than one — for instance, a person's face and two hands.

Yokka-kara-desu-ka

四日からですか
(From the fourth?)

While Mr. Lerner and Mr. Takada were discussing some business with Mr. Mori, the director of the company, the latter said that he was going to Europe the following Friday and would be away from the office for a week. Mr. Lerner wanted to confirm the date and asked him

Yokka-kara?
(From the fourth?)

Before Mr. Mori answered, Mr. Takada asked the same question with a slightly different wording,

Yokka-kara-desu-ka. 四日からですか。

Mr. Lerner wondered if he should have added *desu-ka* even after such a short phrase.

* * *

In polite conversation sentences usually end with *-masu* or *desu*, as in *Ashita ikimasu* (I'm going there tomorrow) or *Kinoo itta-n-desu* (I went there yesterday). Only in familiar conversation does one leave out *-masu* or *desu* as in

A: *Itsu iku-no.*
(When are you going there?)

B: *Ashita.*
(Tomorrow.)

or

A: *Itsu itta-no.*
(When did you go there?)

B: *Kinoo.*
(Yesterday.)

In English conversation it is not especially impolite to give short answers such as "Tomorrow" or "Yesterday." But in Japanese conversation, when one has been speaking with *-masu* or *desu*, it sounds strange to suddenly shift to the familiar style by leaving out *-masu* or *desu*.

Desu is added not only to nouns and pronouns but also to phrases with particles such as

Ashita-kara-desu-ka.

(From tomorrow?)

Ashita-made-desu.

(Until tomorrow.)

Sannin-dake-desu.

(Just three people.)

Sometimes it is even added to phrases ending with *ni* or *de*.

I. A: *Dare-ni tanonda-n-desu-ka.*
(Who did you ask to do it?)

B: *Tanaka-san-ni-desu.*
(Mr. Tanaka.)

II. A: *Eki-no mae-de matte-ite-kudasai.*
(Please wait in front of the station.)

B: *Eki-no mae-de-desu-ka.*
(In front of the station?)

A: *Ee, soo-desu.*
(Yes, that's right.)

When a Japanese speaker suddenly stops using *desu* in the midst of a polite conversation, he has a special reason for doing so. The reason may be a strong emotion such as surprise, joy or anger on the part of the speaker or various other things. Unless you have a special reason, it is better to add *desu* to your phrases when talking politely.

Doomo umaku dekinai
どうも うまく できない
(Somehow I can't do it well)

When Mr. Lerner was having lunch with Mr. Takada the other day, they talked about several of their colleagues. Mr. Lerner was surprised to learn that Mr. Takada had a high opinion of Mr. Kato, who did not seem very capable to him. He had often noticed Mr. Kato complain about his work saying,

Doomo umaku ikanai.
どうも うまく いかない。
(Somehow it doesn't go well.)

or

Doomo umaku dekinai.
どうも うまく できない。
(Somehow I can't do it well.)

When Mr. Lerner referred to this fact, Mr. Takada asked him if he had actually witnessed any serious mistake by Mr. Kato. Mr. Lerner could not think of any. Then why is Mr. Kato complaining all the time? Is he self-conscious or hypocritical?

* * *

As is often mentioned, the Japanese usually deny any praise from others and devalue their own ability in social situations. To accept someone's praise too readily in a social situation is regarded as childish.

And sometimes people purposely complain about their own ability. This is often seen among senior members of a group, who are trusted and looked up to by younger members. These people

often complain by saying things like

Kono-goro doomo wasureppoku natte komaru.
(These days I forget things so often.)
Doomo boku-wa atama-ga warui mon-da-kara,
nakanaka wakaranakute . . .
(I am so slow to understand things.)

The underlying idea is that an influential person should act so as to conceal his power and put the weaker members at ease. It is usually regarded as good and even considerate for an influential person to occasionally show his weaknesses. Needless to say the weakness should not be a vital one, but it is better to have some weaknesses than to be perfectly strong and consequently overly powerful or intimidating.

This idea is related to the popular liking of clumsy speech on the part of eminent statesmen in Japan. It is said that the late Masayoshi Ohira was a very fluent speaker when he was an official working for the Ministry of Finance, but when he became prime minister, he started, on someone's advice, to talk in a faltering way with frequent "er's."

**Tanaka-san-kara denwa-ga
arimashita**
田中さんから 電話が ありました
(There was a telephone call from
Mr. Tanaka)

Yesterday afternoon Mr. Lerner answered a phone call from a Mr. Tanaka for Miss Yoshida, who was not in the office at the moment. When she came back, Mr. Lerner said

Tanaka-san-ga denwa-shimashita.

meaning "Mr. Tanaka called you." She thanked him and then corrected his wording saying

"*Tanaka-san-kara denwa-ga atta*" . . . *de-shoo?*

(You mean "There was a telephone call from Mr. Tanaka'?)

* * *

Saying *Tanaka-san-ga denwa-shimashita* sounds strange in an actual conversation because it sounds as if Mr. Tanaka called someone other than the speaker and the listener. If you mean to say that Mr. Tanaka called the listener, you should say

Tanaka-san-kara denwa-ga arimashita.

田中さんから 電話が ありました。

(There was a telephone call from Mr. Tanaka.)

Or, if you use the word *denwa-suru* or *denwa-o kakeru*, you should say

Tanaka-san-ga denwa-shite-kimashita.

or

Tanaka-san-ga denwa-o kakete-kimashita.

In these two sentences, . . . *te-kimashita* indicates that the telephone call was directed to the speaker or the listener. When *kakete-kimashita* or *shite-kimashita* is pronounced in one breath, it just means that Mr. Tanaka called and it does not mean that he actually came. If one pronounces the phrase with a pause in the middle, as in

Tanaka-san-ga denwa-o kakete (or shite) . . . kimashita.

it means that he called and then came. Sometimes *kakaru* is also used as in

Tanaka-san-kara denwa-ga kakatte-kimashita.

And if you have answered the phone and it is for someone else, you should say to that person

Denwa-desu.

(It's for you; *lit.* It's the telephone.)

or, more politely,

Odenwa-desu.

You can mention the caller's name as in

Tanaka-san-kara denwa-desu.

(It's a call from Mr. Tanaka.)

If the recipient of the call is nearby and has seen you pick up the receiver, you can just say

Tanaka-san-desu.

(It's Mr. Tanaka.)

Ki-ni shinai, ki-ni shinai
気に しない、気に しない。
(Don't worry!)

Yesterday evening Mr. Lerner and several colleagues went to have some beer after work. Mr. Takada offered to pay because he had recently earned some extra money. When the others hesitated to accept his offer, he said

Ki-ni shinai, ki-ni shinai.
気に しない、気に しない。
(lit. Not to worry, not to worry.)

Mr. Lerner did not understand at first; he had learned that when the subject is not mentioned the sentence usually refers to the speaker, but this must be different.

* * *

The plain negative form is sometimes used as an imperative in familiar conversation. *Ki-ni shinai* corresponds to "You don't worry!" or "Don't worry!" in English. This form is often repeated, as in *Ki-ni shinai, ki-ni shinai*. For example, when good friends start to disagree, one will sometimes say jokingly

Okoranai, okoranai.
おこらない、おこらない。

meaning "Don't become angry!" Or a mother will sometimes say to her child

Moo nakanai, nakanai.
(Don't cry any more.)

The affirmative form can also be used as a familiar command, but then it is usually in the past form as in

Atchi-e itta, itta.
(Go away, will you?)
Saa, nonda, nonda.
(Go ahead and drink!)

Using these forms as a command is more common among men than among women. Except when a mother is talking to her child, women usually prefer . . . *te* or . . . *naide* to make a request as in *Atchi-e itte* or *Ikanaide*, although these forms are also used by men.

To make this expression softer in tone, *ne* is often added as in *Itte-ne* or *Ikanaide-ne*; if *yo* is used, it usually implies emphasis or irritation as in

Hayaku itte-yo.
(Go right now, please!)
Sore-wa iwanaide-yo, onegai-da-kara.
(Won't you please stop mentioning that?)

“Tooka?” “Deshita.”
「十日？」 「でした」
(The tenth? Yes.)

Mr. Takada was talking with someone on the phone, reporting that the director of the company had returned from Europe. While talking, he turned to Miss Yoshida, who was nearby, to make sure of the date, saying

Tooka? 十日?
(The tenth?)

and she answered briefly

Deshita. でした。
(It was.)

Mr. Lerner was interested in this short answer, and wondered if this was possible with other words too.

* * *

This way of answering a question can be used with any form ending a sentence. Besides *deshita*, such endings as *desu-ne* and *deshoo-ne* are often used as in

“Tooka?” “Deshoo-ne.” (The tenth? Probably.)

“Tooka?” “Desu-ne.” (The tenth? Yes, it is.)

The ending can be very short as well as fairly long.

“Tooka?” “Deshita.”
(The tenth? Yes, it was.)

“Tooka-datta?” “To omoimasu.”
(It was the tenth? Yes, I think so.)
“Tooka-datta?” “Kamo shiremasen.”
(It was the tenth? Maybe.)
“Tooka?” “Datta-kamo shiremasen.”
(The tenth? Yes, it may have been.)
“Tooka?” “Datta yoona ki-ga shimasu-kedo-ne.”
(The tenth? Yes, it seems to me it was the tenth.)

As is seen in the above examples, the question and the answer make up one complete sentence; in other words, the second speaker finishes the incomplete sentence started by the first speaker. And in group conversation one sentence can be split into more than two parts, as in

A: *Are-wa tashika tooka?*

B: *Datta yoona ki-ga shimasu.*

C: *Kedo-ne.*

(If my memory is correct, that was the tenth, wasn't it?)

This type of talking is common in conversation between those who share the same feelings about the topic, and it helps build up good relations between them. A typical conversation of this kind will be something like:

A: *Kore-wa moshika suru-to koj-in-no mondai-ja nakute*

B: *Mushiro shakai-no*

C: *Shakai zentai-no mondai-to shite*

D: *Toraeru beki-deshoo-ne.*

A: *Ee, soo-deshoo-ne.*

(This problem should not be regarded as one concerning individuals but as one concerning the society as a whole.)

Kaetta hoo-ga ii
帰った ほうが いい
(You had better go home)

Mr. Lerner noticed that Miss Yoshida did not look well when she was typing yesterday afternoon. When he asked her if she was all right, she said that she had caught a cold, so he said

Moo kaeru hoo-ga ii-desu-yo.

meaning "You had better go home now." Then Mr. Takada came and joined him, saying

Moo kaetta hoo-ga ii-yo.
もう 帰った ほうが いいよ。

Mr. Lerner wondered if he should have said *kaetta* instead of *kaeru*.

* * *

Both *Kaeru hoo-ga ii* and *Kaetta hoo-ga ii* are grammatically correct, but the speaker's attitude is different. When one says *Kaeru hoo-ga ii*, he states his judgment; he thinks that going home is better than not going home. On the other hand, when one says *Kaetta hoo-ga ii*, he is advising the listener to go home.

In this way, verbs in the past form are used to give advice, as in

Sugu dekaketa hoo-ga ii-deshoo.
(You had better leave right away.)
Kusuri-o nonda hoo-ga ii-desu-yo.
(You had better take some medicine.)

It is not easy to give advice politely. When

one uses this . . . *ta (da) hoo-ga ii* expression in polite situations, one has to change the verb into the *o . . . -ni naru* form as in

Sugu odekake-ni natta hoo-ga ii-deshoo.
すぐ お出かけに なった ほうが いいでしょう。
(It might be better if you left right away.)

And sometimes the last part of the sentence is also changed as in

Kusuri-o onomi-ni natta hoo-ga yoroshii-ka-to omoimasu.
(It might be better if you took some medicine.)

Or, one often avoids using . . . *ta(da) hoo-ga ii* and uses some other expression instead such as

Sugu odekake-ni nattara ikaga-deshoo.
(Wouldn't it be better if you left right away?)
Kusuri-o onomi-ni natte-wa ikaga-deshoo.
(Wouldn't it be better if you took some medicine?)

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response toward the intention or wish rather than the verbal meaning reversing word order
rikutsu-o yuu

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