Lesson 4

Conversation continued from lesson 3. Tadashi and Marie are talking and Marie wants to know who’s who.

マリー あの方はどなたですか。
正 私の先生です。
マリー お名前は何ですか。
正 原教授です。
マリー あちらの方は。
正 原先生の奥さまです。
マリー どの方が正さんのおとうさまですか。
正 こちらです。どうぞ。

Tadashi then introduces Marie to his father.

正 おとうさん、マリー・ペレさんです。
一 始みてまして。正の父です。
マリー 始みてまして。どうぞよろしくお願いします。
一 こちらこそ。お国はどちらですか。
マリー フランスです。
一 そうですか。フランスのどちらですか。
マリー モンペリエです。

4.1 The prefix お again

お名前は何ですか。
お国はどちらですか。

We saw this use of お in 3.2. Sometimes it is almost obligatory, as in the case of the word for ‘money’, お金 (おかね), where お has become an integral part of
the word and the formality has been neutralised, but お is often used where the formality is in fact a matter of being polite about other people and their possessions. Note here, for example, that お is placed in front of both 名前 and 国 to show politeness to the person concerned. But who is the person concerned? Only context will actually tell you. Nine times out of ten お名前 means ‘your name’, but it should be clear that in this particular context Marie is actually referring to the teacher’s name and so you would have to translate it ‘his name’ here. She is being polite not only because a teacher is due respect in any case, but also because he is closely connected to Tadashi. In the second example later on in the conversation, Tadashi’s father is clearly saying ‘your country’. This use of お is in fact one way of avoiding direct reference to the second person. The corollary is, of course, that お is not normally used when referring to one’s own possessions or to something closely connected to one.

4.2 ‘Way over there’

あなたの方は。

Another example of the kind of truncated question that we saw in 3.7. The word こちら means ‘way over there’ and, in what should now be becoming a familiar pattern to you, it forms a set together with こちら ‘over here’ and そちら ‘over there’. どちら you have already met. You will find it later on in this conversation when Tadashi’s father asks Marie フランスのどちらですか ‘where in France?’

4.3 Referring to different members of a family

原先生の奥さまです。
正の父です。

When you wish to talk about a member of someone else’s family, the person you know best becomes the main reference point and the other members of the
family will usually be identified in relation to that person. So in the first example here the person to whom Marie points is identified by Tadashi as his ‘teacher’s wife’. The word chosen for wife, by the way, 奥さま, is a polite one that should never be used about one’s own wife.

Study the following Yamakawa family chart; it includes everyone we have met so far, and some others who will appear in due course.

山川一 (はじめ) (56歳) 山川信子 (のぶこ) (50歳)
正 (ただし) (28歳) 実 (みのる) (21歳) 国子 (くにこ) (17歳)

On this basis, if you are a friend or colleague of 山川一, you will refer to

信子 as 山川さんの奥さん/おくさま
正 and/or 実 as 山川さんのむすこさん
国子 as 山川さんのおじょさん.

However if you are a friend of 実, you will refer to

一 as 山川さんのおとうさん/おとうさま
信子 as 山川さんのおかあさん/おかあさま
正 as 山川さんのおにいさん/おにいさま
国子 as 山川さんの妹さん.

Similarly, when you introduce yourself for the first time to someone who knows one of the members of your family, you will use that particular family member as the reference point. So in the second example above, Tadashi’s father introduces himself to Marie as Tadashi’s father: 正の父です.
4.4 More interrogatives

どの‘which’ is the corresponding interrogative of the pronouns この/その/あの. Here it is combining with 方 (かた) to produce a polite ‘which person?’ Note the difference between this word, which specifically refers to choosing one out of many, and the generally polite ‘who?’ どなた (2.2). Marie chooses to raise the respect language a notch higher when referring to Tadashi’s father with the phrase おとうさま. See the table in 2.5. For an explanation of the が here, see below.

4.5 The subject marker が as subject marker;

In this lesson a new particle が, the subject marker, is introduced. The use of は和が is probably the most difficult point in Japanese grammar, and the difference between subject and topic will be explained in detail in later chapters. At this stage, the first rule to be learned is that an interrogative noun is always followed by が when it is in the equivalent position to the English ‘subject’. Conversely, if the interrogative noun appears later in the sentence, the subject will become topicalised with the particle は. In the replies to these questions the particles は和が are simply repeated in the same place.
4.6 ‘Please’

こちらです。どうぞ。

どうぞ is the kind of word you use when offering things to people: ‘please accept’. Here Tadashi is offering to take Marie to meet his father, and the word might be accompanied by either a little hand gesture in the direction of the father or a small nod of the head.

4.7 Numbers

You will have noticed that in lesson 3 we gave the ages of the people concerned in the conversation, but left them without comment. The important matter of how to count objects will be introduced later. Here we can take the opportunity to introduce simple numbers. To say ‘fifty-six years old’ in Japanese you would say the number for fifty-six, as listed below, with the word 歳 (さい), which means ‘years old’. What follows is a list of basic Japanese numbers: the kind you will use for counting years, counting on your fingers, or for doing arithmetic.

units:
0 零 れい、ぜろ、まる
1 一 いち
2 二 に
3 三 さん
4 四 し、よん
5 五 ご
6 六 ろく
7 七 しち、なな
8 八 はち
9 九 き“う、く

teens:
10 十 じゅう
11 十一 じゅういち
12 十二 じゅうに
13 十三 じゅうさん
14 十四 じゅうし/よん
15 十五 じゅうご
16 十六 じゅうろく
17 十七 じゅうしち/なな
18 十八 じゅうはち
19 十九 じゅうく/きゅう
### Tens:

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<th>Kana</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>20</td>
<td>二十</td>
<td>にじゅう</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>三十</td>
<td>さんじゅう</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>四十</td>
<td>し/よんじゅう</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>五十</td>
<td>ごじゅう</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>六十</td>
<td>ろくじゅう</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
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<td>八十</td>
<td>はちじゅう</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>九十</td>
<td>きゅうじゅう</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Hundreds:

<table>
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<td>百</td>
<td>ひゃく</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>二百</td>
<td>にひゃく</td>
</tr>
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<td>ごびゃく</td>
</tr>
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<td>600</td>
<td>六百</td>
<td>ろっぴゃく</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700</td>
<td>七百</td>
<td>なのかはやく</td>
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### Thousands:

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<td>せん</td>
</tr>
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<td>にせん</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>一万</td>
<td>いちまん</td>
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The readings よん for 4 and なな for 7 are borrowed from a second set of numbers which will be introduced later. よん is used in preference to し because the latter is homophonous with a word meaning ‘death’ and なな may also be used because しち can be misheard as いち. Note that Japanese has a separate word for 10,000. This you will find rather difficult at first because ‘a hundred thousand’ is expressed in Japanese as 十万 ‘ten ten-thousands’ or 10,000.

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**Key to conversation**

**Romanisation**

Marî   Ano kata wa donata desu ka.
Tadashi: Watakushi no sensei desu.
Marie: O-namae wa nan desu ka.
Tadashi: Hara kyōju desu.
Marie: Achira no kata wa.
Tadashi: Hara sensei no okusama desu.
Marie: Dono kata ga Tadashi-san no o-tōsama desu ka.
Tadashi: Kochira desu. Dōzo.

Tadashi: O-tōsan, Marie Perret san desu.
Hajime: Hajimemashite. Tadashi no chichi desu.
Hajime: Kochira koso. O-kuni wa dochira desu ka.
Marie: Furansu desu.
Hajime: Sō desu ka. Furansu no dochira desu ka.
Marie: Monperie desu.

Translation

Marie: Who is that person over there?
Tadashi: My teacher.
Marie: What is his name?
Tadashi: Professor Hara.
Marie: And that person over there?
Tadashi: That‘Professor Hara‘s wife.
Marie: Which one is your father?
Tadashi: Here he is. I‘ll introduce you.

Tadashi: Father, this is Marie Perret.
Marie: How do you do? Delighted to meet you.
Hajime: The pleasure is mine. Where are you from?
Marie: France.
Hajime: Oh really? What part of France?
Marie: Montpellier.