

## Lesson 5

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Mr Brown is on his way to a meeting at the Tōzai Bank.

歩行者 すみませんが、今 何時ですか。  
ブラウン 十時十五分すぎです。  
歩行者 どうもすいません。  
ブラウン いいえ。あのう、ここは大手町駅の北口ですか。  
歩行者 そうですよ。  
ブラウン 東西銀行はどこですか。  
歩行者 ええと、東西銀行はあのビルです。  
ブラウン どうもありがとうございます。  
歩行者 いいえ、どういたしまして。

Mr Brown arrives at the Tōzai Bank.

ブラウン ブリティッシュエンジニアリングのブラウンです。  
長谷川 始めまして、東西銀行の長谷川です。どうぞよろしく。  
ブラウン こちらこそ、どうぞよろしく。

They exchange name cards.

ブラウン こちらが長谷川さんの銀行の電話番号ですか。  
長谷川 そうです。3335-9871、内線 402 番です。  
ブラウン ありがとうございます。  
長谷川 二階の方へどうぞ。  
ブラウン どうも、失礼します。

They reach the first floor.

長谷川 どうぞ、こちらへ。  
ブラウン ミーティングは十時半からですね。  
長谷川 ええそうです。十時半から十二時までです。

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### Comment

This conversation is designed to introduce you to time and to explore numbers a little further. It should be contrasted with the two previous conversations, in that it involves two businessmen; the style will therefore be somewhat more formal.

#### 5.1 'Excuse me'

すみませんが

The grammar of this expression will be explained in a later lesson. Learn this as a phrase meaning 'Excuse me, but...'. It is very useful as a way of catching someone's attention. The passer-by uses it in this way first. However, it reappears in the next thing he says: どうもすみません. (The terms すいません and すみません are interchangeable.) The second example means 'sorry to have troubled you'.

#### 5.2 Time

今 何時ですか。  
十時十五分すぎです。

今 (いま) is a noun meaning 'now'. Note that it should be considered as belonging to a special subset of nouns because it can occur in this adverbial role without a particle. O'clock is expressed by adding the nominal suffix 時 (じ) to the numbers that you have already learned in the previous lesson.

*o'clock*

一時	いちじ	七時	しちじ
二時	にじ	八時	はちじ
三時	さんじ	九時	くじ
四時	よじ	十時	じゅうじ
五時	ごじ	十一時	じゅういちじ
六時	ろくじ	十二時	じゅうにじ

Minutes are expressed by adding the suffix 分 (ふん、ぶん).

一分	いっぶん	六分	ろっぶん
二分	にぶん	七分	ななぶん
三分	さんぶん	八分	はちぶん/はっぶん
四分	よんぶん	九分	きゅうぶん
五分	ごぶん	十分	じっぶん

As in English, there is a way to express a.m./p.m.: 午前 (ごぜん) and 午後 (ごご) respectively. 7 a.m. is 午前七時 (ごぜん しちじ), 6 p.m. would be 午後六時 (ごご ろくじ). There is no word for 'quarter', but 半 (はん) means 'half': 三時半 (さんじはん) 'half past three'. 'Noon' is expressed by the word 正午 (しょうご). すぎ is 'past' and 前 (まえ) is 'before'. As in English, すぎ can be, and often is, omitted. 'A quarter to; ten' would be 十時十五分前 (じゅうじじゅうごぶん まえ) and 'twenty past eight' would be 八時二十分 (はちじにじっぶん). The twenty-four hour clock is used in Japan as much as it is used in England, for timetables, etc.

### 5.3 Asking directions

あのう、ここは大手町駅の北口ですか。

あのう, here, is another way of catching someone's attention, just as in English we would either say 'er' or cough. ここ is part of another set of nouns, in this case nouns that refer not to 'this thing' これ and 'that thing' それ but to place:

ここ 'this place', そこ 'that place' and あそこ 'that place over there'. 'Where?' is どこ.

#### 5.4 The particle よ

そうですよ。

There are a number of particles that come at the end of phrases or sentences and that give statements a particular rhetorical force. よ is one of them. It has the effect of exerting slight pressure and so can sound pushy if overused. It should not be used in formal situations. Here the passer-by is saying something like 'Indeed it is!' or 'Yes, that's right!'

#### 5.5 Hesitation

ええと、

One sure-fire way to sound better in Japanese than you really are is to learn the proper hesitation sounds as soon as possible and to force yourself to use them whenever you need to hesitate. Only in this way can you 'become' Japanese in your speech. ええと is a true hesitation sound, the Japanese equivalent of 'um' or 'er'. Here the passer-by is presumably looking around, trying to get his bearings and remember where the bank is.

#### 5.6 Saying 'thank you'

どうもありがとうございます。  
どういたしまして。

The grammar of common phrases is often quite complex. Full explanation will

therefore be left until later. Just learn them as they are for the present. The first phrase is the normal way of saying 'thank you'. You will also find it as どうもありがとうございました (see conversation lesson 6), どうもありがとう, ありがとう or simply どうも. The second is the traditional response: 'not at all'.

## 5.7 Identifying yourself

始めまして、東西銀行の長谷川です。

When you identify yourself to someone in Japan, you should get in the habit of giving more than just your name. If you work for a company you would preface your name with the name of the company to which you belong, because it is an integral part of the role that you are playing. As a student you would normally say that you were from such-and-such a country or university. When people are sought for on the public address systems at Japanese railway stations for example, it is normal for either a company name or the name of the city where they live to be added as part of the information. It is almost as if one is slightly naked without this addition. In this case Mr Hasegawa identifies himself as an employee of the Tōzai Bank and Mr Brown responds in kind.

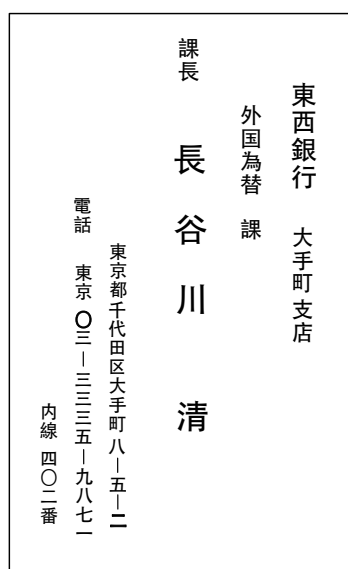
## 5.8 Name cards

こちらが長谷川さんの銀行の電話番号ですか。

The exchange of name cards is a vital part of business life in Japan. It is a very good example of how the Japanese will quickly adopt and adapt a foreign custom (in this case a Victorian English one) if it suits their social structures and adds something useful. A person's name card (名刺 *meishi*) should always be handled with respect. It is normal, for instance, to accept a name card with both

hands. To give a card is to initiate a relationship, be it friendly or purely business. There is also an implicit acceptance that the card may be used by the other person as proof that this relationship now exists. It is for this reason that eminent people distribute their cards with care. But a card is not merely something with a name and an address that can be filed away for future reference; the information that it holds is of immediate use. Its shape and the typeface will tell you a lot about the owner. A businessman will have a simple card, perhaps with the company's logo. It will measure exactly 55 x 90 mm, so that it can fit into a standard card holder, and the printing will probably be vertical. A professional woman's card will be considerably smaller with rounded edges, a smaller elegant typeface, and the printing may well be horizontal. An artist or a politician may well have something more individualized, with a florid typeface and high-quality paper. For the businessman, perhaps the most important piece of information is the rank of the holder, which will be written in the top right-hand portion of the card. This will tell him the other's status and rough age, and so allow him to gauge the correct level or register of language to employ.

When Mr Brown says *こちらが* here he is pointing to the card and to the telephone number *電話番号* that will be printed bottom left.



## 5.9 Telephone numbers

そうです。3335-9871、内線 402 番です。

Telephone numbers are read out as a series of single numbers, just as in English we say 'three, three, five', not 'three hundred and thirty-five'. You can, if you wish, insert a の in between the number of the local exchange and the actual phone number, and if you were being a little formal, or simply trying to make yourself clear over a bad line, you might also add the word 番 (ばん): 3335-9871 will therefore be さんさんさんご (の) きゅうはちなないち (ばん). Internal extension numbers 内線 (ないせん) are as in English: 'extension; 402' being 内線 よんれいに.

#### 5.10 Floors in a building

二階の方へどうぞ。

The word 二階 here is best understood as a compound noun. Japanese number floors on the American model and so there is no 'ground floor'. 二階 (にかい) will therefore have to be translated as 'first floor' in the UK. The 'second floor' will be 三階 (pronounced さんがい rather than さんかい) and the 'third floor' 四階 (pronounced よんかい, *not* しかい). Room numbers are expressed with the word 番: 二階の 254 番.

The particle へ, pronounced *e*, indicates direction 'to' or 'towards'. It occurs again in Hasegawa's next statement: どうぞ、こちらへ, 'This way please.'

### 5.11 Further excuses

どうも、失礼します。

Note how the words どうも and どうぞ are paired here, どうも being an almost automatic response. The grammatical details of the second part of this expression, 失礼します, will come a little later in the course. For the time being, learn it as a set phrase. It literally means 'I am going to be rude' and can be used in many situations: when disturbing someone, when finishing a telephone call or when leaving a room. Having met and exchanged cards, Mr Hasegawa now lets Mr Brown go upstairs ahead of him to his office, and Mr Brown apologises for going in front of him.

### 5.12 'From' and 'to'

ミーティングは十時半からですね。  
ええそうです。十時半から十二時までです。

から and まで are temporal particles meaning 'from'; and 'up to;' or 'until'; respectively.

朝から晩まで	from morning till evening
五時から六時十五分まで	from five to quarter past six
これから	from now (from this point)
それから	after that
あれから	after that



### 5.13 は as topic marker

東西銀行はどこですか。  
東西銀行はあのビルです。  
ミーティングは十時半からですね。

Anything in a sentence can become the topic but here we investigate cases where the subject becomes the topic, i.e. where the subject marker が is replaced by は. The normal rule is that は de-emphasizes the noun that it follows, mainly because that word usually refers to something which is 'old information'. By subduing what precedes it, は throws attention onto what follows. As we saw in 3.4, it is only natural that when the subject is an interrogative it can never be made into a topic with は, because an interrogative will always draw maximum attention.

どちらが木下さんのかさですか。

Which is Kinoshita's umbrella?

When the interrogative is *not* the subject, then the subject is usually transformed into the topic in order to allow the attention to shift to the interrogative, as in 東西銀行はどこですか. Note how English finds such topicalization somewhat unnatural.

木下さんのかさはどちらですか。

*lit.* Kinoshita's umbrella is which one?

The same rule of emphasis versus de-emphasis applies to sentences without an interrogative.

(a) この本は山川さんのですか。

(b) この本が山川さんのですか。

As は de-emphasizes the noun it follows, (a) could be translated 'Is this book Yamakawa's?' が, on the contrary, draws attention to the noun it follows, hence (b) could be translated 'Is *this* book Yamakawa's?'

One more example to see how this works: if you are walking around London with a Japanese friend and you find yourself facing an imposing building, you might say:

あれはナショナル・ギャラリーです。

That's the National Gallery.

You have both just seen the building and so know to what あれ refers; it is old information. The new information you are providing is the name of the building. But now suppose that you have already been talking about the National Gallery or are on your way to the Gallery and suddenly arrive in front of it, you would then be more likely to say:

あれがナショナル・ギャラリーです。

Your mind or your conversation has been on the Gallery and the new information is therefore 'that', あれ, rather than the name.

#### 5.14 The particle ね

ミーティングは十時半からですね。

ね is another sentence final particle that gives a statement a particular rhetorical push. It has a similar effect to the English tag phrase 'isn't it?', operating as a gesture of recognition drawing in the listener. Some people tend to overuse this particle, but it is very useful when you wish to build up a rapport.

## Key to conversation

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### *Romanisation*

Hokosha	Sumimasen ga, ima nanji desu ka.
Buraun	Jūji jūgofun sugi desu.
Hokosha	Dōmo suimasen.
Buraun	Iie. Ano, koko wa Ōtemachi-eki no kitaguchi desu ka.
Hokosha	Sō desu yo.
Buraun	Tōzai ginkō wa doko desu ka.
Hokosha	Ēto, Tōzai ginkō wa ano biru desu.
Buraun	Dōmo arigato gozaimasu.
Hokosha	Iie, dō itashimashite.
Buraun	Buritishu Enjiniaringu no Buraun desu.
Hasegawa	Hajimemashite, Tōzai ginkō no Hasegawa desu. Dōzo yoroshiku.
Buraun	Kochira koso, dōzo yoroshiku.
Buraun	Kochira ga Hasegawa san no ginkō no denwa bangō desu ka.
Hasegawa	Sō desu. San-san-san-go no kyū-hachi-nana-ichi, naisen yon-zero-ni ban desu.
Buraun	Arigatō gozaimasu.
Hasegawa	Nikai no hō e dōzo.
Buraun	Dōmo, shitsurei shimasu.
Hasegawa	Dōzo, kochira e.
Buraun	Mītingu wa jūjihan kara desu ne.
Hasegawa	Ē sō desu. Jūjihan kara jūnji made desu.

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### *Translation*

Pedestrian	Excuse me, do you have the time?
Brown	It's just after ten fifteen.
Pedestrian	Thank you (for your trouble).
Brown	Not at all. Ah, is this the north exit of Ōtemachi station?
Pedestrian	It is indeed.
Brown	Where is the Tōzai bank?

Pedestrian Let me see now, the Tōzai bank is that building over there.

Brown Thank you very much.

Pedestrian Don't mention it.

Brown I'm Brown from British Engineering.

Hasegawa How do you do? Hasegawa of the Tōzai Bank. Delighted to meet you.

Brown The pleasure is mine. Delighted to meet you.

Brown Is this your telephone number at the bank?

Hasegawa Yes. 3335-9871, extension 402.

Brown Thank you very much.

Hasegawa Please go up to the first floor.

Brown Thank you. Do excuse me.

Hasegawa This way please.

Brown The meeting is from ten thirty isn't it?

Hasegawa That's right. From ten thirty to twelve o'clock.

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