

Lesson 12

John and Minoru visit a temple in Kyōto.

- ジョン 京都はいいところですね。
美しいお寺'神社がたくさんありますね。
- 実 そうですね。京都は花の季節が特にいいですね。
でも冬は寒いですよ。
- ジョン このお寺の拝観料はいくらですか。
- 実 三百五十円です。ちょっと高いですね。
このお寺はあまり大きくありませんが庭がおもしろいですよ。
- ジョン 木も花もありませんね。
- 実 そうです。白い小石と岩だけの庭です。

They arrive in front of a souvenir shop.

- 実 絵はがきを買いますか。
- ジョン うーん。でもこの絵はがきは色があまりよくありませんね。
- 実 こちらのはどうですか。
- ジョン それはいいですね。秋の京都ですね。こちらの冬のお寺の庭
の絵はがきはずいぶん大きいですね。
- 実 すみません。この絵はがきはおいくらですか。
- 店員 小さいのは一枚五十円、大きいのは一枚七十五円です。
- ジョン それではこれとそちらのを二枚ずつ下さい。
- 店員 はい、ありがとうございます。全部で二百五十円
いただきます。

12.1 Descriptive verbs as main verbs

花の季節が特にいいですね。
冬は寒いですよ。

In the light of the explanation in 11.2, it should come as no surprise to find that these words can occur as main verbs on their own without the addition of a copula. So 青い海 ‘sea which is blue’, hence ‘blue sea’, yields 海は青い ‘the sea is blue’; and 寒い冬 ‘winter which is cold’, hence ‘cold winter’, yields 冬は寒い ‘winter is cold’. Study the following:

京都はいいところです。

Kyoto is a pleasant place.

花の季節はいいですね。

Blossom time is pleasant, isn't it?

It is one special feature of these ‘descriptive verbs’ that they do not have a polite form of their own. In other words, although they often behave like other verbs, they do not have the simple ある/あります transformation that we have met in 7.2. You will often feel the need, however, to use these words in normal polite conversation; the answer is simply to append です as in some of the examples above.

It is worth noting that this is something of a grammatical anomaly because, as a rule, inflected words cannot be followed directly by the copula, namely だ, and certainly the plain citation form of the copula must *never* be used after a descriptive verb: *多いだ or *高いだ are not only unnecessary, they are also ungrammatical. Great care must be taken to understand this point. You will be tempted to produce such ungrammaticalities by analogy with the ‘noun + copula’ pattern, because both アンナ・カレニーナは長い小説です and アンナ・カレニーナは長い小説だ are grammatically correct. Remember: in the case of descriptive verbs, です is being used *purely in order to make the sentence polite*; the plain form of 冬は寒いです is merely 冬は寒い.

12.2 Stative constructions with は/が

京都は花の季節が特にいいですね。

Study the following examples:

あの女の子は 目が青い。
せが高い。
かみの毛が長い。
頭がいい。

京都は お寺が多い。
歴史が古い。
工場が少ない。
山が近い。
水がよくない。
物が高い。

Here we introduce one of the most productive structures in Japanese, where topic and subject combine. The overall sense of this structure is 'whole + part' where the part is a comment on the topic. Note again how English finds it difficult to express the concept of topic.

京都はお寺が多い。
lit: As for Kyoto, temples are many.

Kyoto has many temples.

あの女の子は頭がいい。
lit: As for that girl, her brain is good.

She is a clever girl.

What in English is expressed as a possessive relationship with a subject followed by a transitive verb of possession, 'have', is expressed in Japanese as a *stative construction* of the topic + comment variety. You will find that descriptive verbs operate in this kind of environment because they are all stative in nature.

あの女の子はかみの毛が長い。
That girl has long hair.

京都は歴史が古い。

Kyoto has a long (i.e. old) history.

象ははなが長い。

Elephants have long trunks.

This pattern is also one of the very few occasions when the verb ある can be used with animate subjects, in the sense of 'to have'. We touched on this matter in 8.1.

清子さんは妹さんがいますか。

Kiyoko, do you have a younger sister?

Given the English translation here, you might be tempted to use the verb 持つ (もつ), which means 'to have' in the sense of 'possess', 'hold' or 'own'. This is in fact possible in many contexts, but not here, where you have absolutely no control over the 'possession'. You cannot choose whether or not to have a younger sister or parents, for example, so you must use ある here.

12.3 Negative of descriptive verbs

このお寺はあまり大きくありません。
この絵はがきは色があまりよくありませんね。

To form the plain negative of these descriptive verbs, first change the final い to く and then add ない. For the polite negative replace ない with ありません.

<i>plain positive</i>	<i>meaning</i>	<i>plain negative</i>	<i>polite negative</i>
大きい	big	大きくない	大きくありません
小さい	small	小さくない	小さくありません
新しい	new	新しくない	新しくありません
古い	old	古くない	古くありません

おもしろい	interesting	おもしろくない	おもしろくありません
高い	high	高くない	高くありません
安い	cheap	安くない	安くありません
長い	long	長くない	長くありません
短かい	short	短くない	短かくありません
よい (いい)	good	よくない	よくありません

Note particularly how the polite negative of these descriptive verbs is formed, with the \sim く form of the verb plus *ありません*, *not* with the copula *ではありません*. This needs stressing, because yet again you may well be tempted at this early stage to produce a form like *古いではありません, by analogy with 古い \Rightarrow 古いです. This is *incorrect*. Remember that in this latter case *です* is not being used as a copula; it is merely a convenient way of forming politeness. There is in fact an alternate form of the polite negative, 古くないです, but learn the form listed above first to avoid any confusion. Note the alternate listed in the last line; in modifying position 'good' can be either よい or いい, although in final position いい is the more normal, especially in spoken Japanese.

12.4 Adverbial modifiers (2)

特にいいですね。
ちよっと高いですね。

The adverbial modifiers that were introduced in 11.6 were related to descriptive verbs that were themselves modifying nouns: ずいぶん長い小説. They can also be found related to descriptive verbs when those verbs are at the end of the main sentence. Study the following examples:

特に 'particularly'
たいへん 'very'

とても 'very'
だいたい 'fairly'

奈良は京都にとっても近い。
Nara is very close to Kyoto.

この子はとても頭がいい。

This child is very clever.

日本の夏はたいへん暑い。

Japanese summers are very hot.

駅から家まではだいぶ遠い。

It's quite a long way from the station to my home.

The following adverbs link to negative verb forms only:

あまり 'not very' ちっとも 'not in the least'

この小説はあまりおもしろくない。

This novel is not very interesting.

この写真はあらみよくありませんね。

This photograph is not very good, is it!

今年の冬はちっとも寒くない。

This winter is not in the least cold.

この文法の本はちっともよくない。

This grammar book is not at all satisfactory.

12.5 A note on orthography

絵はがき

This word may look a little odd to you at first because it is half in *kanji* and half in *kana*. It is read *ehagaki*. It would be possible to write it all in *kanji* but this is not common today. Although there are rules of orthography published by the Ministry of Education, such is the complexity of the writing system that you will have to be prepared for a good deal of flexibility. In a textbook such as this one,

for instance, it is inevitable that some words that are usually written in *kanji* will in fact be presented to you in *kana* first; but we have tried to reduce these oddities to a minimum.

12.6 The prefix お

この絵はがきはおいくらですか。

You have met the prefix お applied to a variety of nouns for formality or politeness (3.2 and 4.1). お is also sometimes used as here with the two interrogatives いくつ ‘how many?’ or ‘how old?’ and いくら ‘how much?’

12.7 ‘per unit’

一枚五十円

To express the idea of ‘for’ or ‘per’ there is usually no need for a particle between the unit and the price, especially with simple calculations such as here. With a more complicated situation, however, for example ‘500 yen per 100 sheets’, it is common to insert the particle で: コピーは百枚で五百円です。

12.8 いただきます

全部で二百五十円いただきます。

いただく is a verb meaning ‘receive’. Verbs of giving and receiving in Japanese need special treatment because they are intimately bound up with matters of

status and speech levels. For the moment just learn this verb as one which means 'receive from a superior'. The shopkeeper uses it here as an equivalent of the English 'that'll be 250 yen please, sir'. It is also used when accepting an offer, or when asking politely for something. The phrase *いただきます* is also what Japanese say at the beginning of a meal to express their general gratitude: 'we (are about to) partake'.

Key to conversation

Romanisation

- Jon Kyōto wa ii tokoro desu ne. Utsukushii o-tera ya jinja ga takusan arimasu ne.
Minoru Sō desu ne. Kyōto wa hana no kisetsu ga toku ni ii desu ne. Demo fuyu wa samui desu yo.
- Jon Kono o-tera no haikanryo wa ikura desu ka.
Minoru Sanbyaku gojū-en desu. Chotto takai desu ne. Kono o-tera wa amari okiku arimasen ga niwa ga omoshiroi desu yo.
- Jon Ki mo hana mo arimasen ne.
Minoru Sō desu. Shiroy koishi to iwa dake no niwa desu.
- Minoru Ehagaki o kaimasu ka.
Jon Un. Demo kono ehagaki wa iro ga amari yoku arimasen ne.
Minoru Kochira no wa dō desu ka.
Jon Sore wa ii desu ne. Aki no Kyōto desu ne. Kochira no fuyu no o-tera no niwa no ehagaki wa zuibun ōkii desu ne.
Minoru Sumimasen. Kono ehagaki wa o-ikura desu ka.
Ten'in Chiisai no wa ichimai gojū-en, okii no wa ichimai nanajūgo-en desu.
Jon Sore de wa kore to sochira no o nimai zutsu kudasai.
Ten'in Hai, arigatō gozaimasu. Zenbu de nihyaku gojū-en itadakimasu.
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Translation

- John Kyoto is a lovely place isn't it? There are so many beautiful temples and shrines.
Minoru So there are. Blossom-time in Kyoto is especially good. But winter is cold.

John How much is the entrance fee to this temple?

Minoru 350 yen. It's a bit expensive isn't it? This temple isn't very big but the garden is interesting.

John There aren't any trees or flowers, are there?

Minoru That's right. It's a garden of just rocks and white pebbles.

Minoru Will you buy some postcards?

John Hmm. But the colours on this postcard aren't very good, are they?

Minoru What about this one here?

John That's a nice one. It's Kyoto in autumn, isn't it? This postcard of the temple garden in winter is very big, isn't it?

Minoru Excuse me. How much are these postcards?

Assistant The small ones are 50 yen each and the large ones are 75 yen each.

John In that case I'll have two each of this one and that one.

Assistant Certainly. Thank you very much. That will be 250 yen altogether.
