

Lesson 19

John met his old friend Nicholas.

きのうは夕方から銀座へ行って、大学時代の友達ニコラスに会った。彼は今イギリスの会社で働いているが、今年の春から東京に来ている。同じカレッジだったのでいっしょに映画に行ったり、休みには旅行をしたりした。私は医学部にいて毎日毎日忙しかったが、彼は英文学を勉強していたので、私が実験をしている間に本を読んだり音楽を聞いたりしていた。私達が大学を卒業してからもう七年になる。彼は最近小説を書いてかなり有名になった。私達はまずカメラ屋へ行ってレンズを買ってからすし屋へ行った。思い出話をしたり、彼からイギリスの友達のことを聞いたりして楽しい一時を過ごした。雨が降っていたのでタクシーに乗って帰った。

19.1 More on the uses of the ～て form

You will find in later lessons that the ～て form is used widely in the creation of verbal aspects and various expressions of respect. Here we shall study its fundamental role, which is to subordinate one clause or phrase to another. In the patterns introduced here *the subject of the two parts must be the same*.

(a) Actions in sequence

きのうは夕方から銀座に行って
大学時代の友達ニコラスに会った。

Although you will see the ～て form described as indicating ‘...and...’, complete balance between the two clauses is not possible in Japanese; the first one is always to some extent subordinate to the one that follows, on the basic principle that what precedes modifies. The problem for the student of Japanese is that the degree of subordination varies.

お風呂に入ってからかみの毛を洗った。

I had a bath and washed my hair.

上着をぬいでハンガーにかけた。

I took off my jacket and put it on a hanger.

Here the balance is as close as one can get, but there is still the feeling that the jacket was taken off so that it could be hung up; certainly the actions are not fortuitously connected.

(b) Cause or reason

彼は最近小説を書いてかなり有名になった。

At the other end of the scale one has contexts where the \sim て expresses a clear causal connection.

雨にぬれてかぜをひいた。

I have got a cold because I was soaked in the rain.

かぜをひいて学校を休んだ。

I stayed away from school because I had a cold.

お風呂に入ってからさっぱりした。

Having had a bath, I felt refreshed.

(c) 'Adverbial' modification

タクシーに乗って帰った。

It is often the case that the clause ending in \sim て is best understood in an adverbial sense, modifying the action of the final verb. The sense of subordination is so strong here that English dispenses with a verb altogether: 'I returned home by taxi.' Some more examples:

犬を連れて散歩した。

I went for a walk with my dog.

その子は私の方へ走って来た。

The child came running towards me.

ヘレンは赤いセーターを着て来た。

Helen came wearing a red jersey.

19.2 Use of the verb なる

私達が大学を卒業してからもう七年になる。

We saw an instance of the idiomatic use of なる in 10.8. Here is another example. Try and pay particular attention to this manner of phrasing things because the sense of 'becoming' is not always given overt expression in English; you would not normally translate this sentence as 'It has already become seven years since...', although that is how the Japanese puts it.

あの計画はだめになりました。

That plan came to naught.

いとこが北京へ行ってから十年になります。

It is ten years since my cousin went to Beijing.

19.3 The form ～てから

私達はまずカメラ屋へ行ってレンズを買ってから
すし屋へ行った。

(a) ～てから meaning 'after...'. This is in a sense an extension of the ～て form when used in a temporal sequence and it emphasises the subordination.

きのうは夕ごはんを食べてからテレビを見ました。

Yesterday, I watched television after having had supper.

宿題をしてから出かけます。

I'll go out after I've finished my homework.

(b) ～てから meaning 'since... This is essentially the same as (a) but is listed separately here merely because the English expression is different.

この前東京であなたに会ってから、もう三ヶ月たちました。

Three months have already passed by since I last saw you in Tōkyō.

この子は小学校に入ってから体がとても丈夫になった。

This child has become very healthy since he started going to primary school.

19.4 Alternative form ～たり in multiple series

友達のことを聞いたりして楽しい一時を過ごした。

The pattern ～たり, ～たり, する that we saw in 14.3 can be subordinated to another verb by means of して as follows:

ローマでは名所をまわったり、買物をしたりして一週間で過ごしました。

In Rome, we spent one week looking around the sights and shopping.

郵便局でアルバイトをしたり、おじの農場で働いたりしてお金をためた。

I saved up money by taking a temporary job in a post office and working on my uncle's farm.

19.5 間 (pronounced あいだ)

私が実験をしている間に本を読んだり音楽を聞いたりしていた。

This word means 'period of time' and is often used with the ~ている progressive aspect.

田中さんが電話をかけている間私は車の中で待っていました。

While Mr Tanaka was telephoning I waited in the car.

日本にいた間はよくあちこち旅行した。

While I was in Japan I travelled around a lot.

When 間 is used by itself it merely means 'during the said space of time' and both activities could begin and end at the same time. If に is added the meaning changes somewhat:

五時から九時までの間に来て下さい。

Please come at some point between five and nine.

In this case, the second activity is seen to occur at a specific point within the said space of time. Compare this sentence with the following:

きのうは五時から九時までの間ずっと駅でおばを待っていました。

Yesterday I was waiting for my aunt at the station all the time from five to nine.

The use of 間に also involves a sense of taking advantage of the time allowed to do something. Observe the following sentences:

子供が昼寝をしている間私は本を読みました。

While the child was having his nap, I read my book.

子供が昼寝をしている間に私は本を読んだり手紙を書いたり
しました。

While the child was having a nap, I took the opportunity to read my
book and write some letters.

その婦人が電車の中でいねむりをしている間に男は彼女からさいふ
をぬすんだ。

While the woman was dozing off in the train, the man took the chance to
steal her purse.

Note also the following phrases, which are based on a 'prenoun + 間' pattern:

(a) この間 'the other day'

この間デパートの入口で山野さんに会いました。

The other day, I met Mrs Yamano at the entrance of the department store.

(b) その間 or あの間 'during that time'

その間にどろぼうが家に入った。

The burglar went into my house during that time.

19.6 は and が again

私は医学部にいて毎日毎日忙しかったが、彼は英文学を勉強して
いたので、私が実験をしている間に本を読んだり音楽を聞いたり
していた。

Take careful note of how the particles は and が behave here. The two はs are clearly being used to contrast 'I' and 'he'. Being also a topic marker, は often has influence over a longer stretch of the sentence than が. So it is that here 彼は controls all the verbs up to and including the 聞いたりしていた at the end, with the sole exception of 実験をしている, which is governed by 私が. A little tip,

therefore, to help you find your way in what will seem at first labyrinthine sentences: by and large が extends its influence no further than the next verb.

Key to passage

Romanisation

Kino wa yūgata kara Ginza e itte, daigaku jidai no tomodachi Nikorasu ni atta. Kare wa ima Igrisu no kaisha de hataraitte iru ga, kotoshi no haru kara Tōkyō ni kite iru. Onaji kareji datta no de issho ni eiga ni ittari, yasumi ni wa ryokō o shitari shita. Watakushi wa igakubu ni ite mainichi mainichi isogashikatta ga, kare wa eibungaku o benkyō shite ita no de, watakushi ga jikken o shite iru aida ni hon o yondari ongaku o kiitari shite ita. Watakushitachi ga daigaku o sotsugyō shite kara mō shichi nen ni naru. Kare wa saikin shōsetsu o kaite kanari yūmei ni natta. Watakushitachi wa mazu kameraya e itte renzu o katte kara sushiya e itta. Omoidebanashi o shitari, kare kara Igrisu no tomodachi no koto o kiitari shite tanoshii hitotoki o sugoshita. Ame ga futte ita no de takushi ni notte kaetta.

Translation

Yesterday evening I went to Ginza and met Nicholas, a friend from university days. He is now working for an English firm and has been in Tokyo since spring this year. We were at the same college, so we went to films and in the holidays we went on trips together. I was in the Faculty of Medicine and busy every day, but he was studying English literature and so while I was doing experiments he was reading books and listening to music. It is now seven years since we graduated from university. Recently he has written a novel and has become quite well known. First of all we went to a camera shop and bought a lens. Then we went to a sushi shop. I spent a pleasant few hours, talking about old times and hearing about friends in England. As it was raining, I came home by taxi.
