

Lesson 3

At an autumn festival in Tadashi's university

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| 山川 一 | (やまかわ はじめ) | 日本人 | 男 | 56歳 |
| 山川 正 | (やまかわ ただし) | 日本人 | 男 | 28歳 |
| 山川 実 | (やまかわ みのる) | 日本人 | 男 | 21歳 |
| 木下 明子 | (きのした あきこ) | 日本人 | 女 | 22歳 |
| ジョン・スミス | | イギリス人 | 男 | 27歳 |
| マリー・ペレ | | フランス人 | 女 | 25歳 |

Tadashi introduces Akiko to his father.

正 おとうさん、こちらは実のお友達の木下明子さんです。
一 ああ、そうですか。始めまして。
木下 始めまして。木下明子です。どうぞよろしくお願いします。
一 こちらこそ、よろしく。

Tadashi then introduces Akiko to John and Marie.

ジョン 正さん、今日は。
正 'あ、今日は。木下さん、こちらはジョン・スミスさんとマリー・ペレさんです。
木下 始めまして。木下明子です。どうぞよろしく。
ジョン こちらこそどうぞよろしく。木下さんは学生さんですか。
木下 ええ。
正 木下さんは弟のお友達です。
マリー そうですか。大学はどちらですか。
木下 京都です。マリーさんも学生さんですか。
マリー ええ、私も学生です。
木下 ジョンさんは。
ジョン 私は医者です。

Comment

Not everyone listed here is actually present, but they will all play a major part in the conversations that follow. From now on the lessons will consist largely of such conversations. Take care to look up all the vocabulary before going on to tackle the grammar explanations that follow. The situation in which this particular conversation occurs is a fairly informal one but, even so, introductions demand certain formalities to be observed. We have here a typical exchange of introductory formulae that you will be able to use on most occasions. Learn these by heart as soon as possible. Take note of when the polite *さん* is used.

3.1 Names

おとうさん、こちらは実のお友達の木下明子さんです。

Family names always come first, given names next. By and large it is by their family name, *not* their given name, that people identify themselves in public. 山川 and 木下 are family names. If you were called 山川正, you would normally introduce yourself or identify yourself as 山川です or 山川正です. Given names are used only within the family or with small children. Note here how the son Tadashi addresses his father with the respectful おとうさん. The word he then uses to indicate Akiko, こちら, means 'this side/direction/person' and is polite precisely because it is a little vague. The use of the word here implies general politeness both to the father and to Akiko. He then refers to his younger brother by simply using his brother's given name, Minoru, only to swing back again immediately to refer politely to Akiko.

3.2 The polite prefix お

お友達

Not only does Tadashi give Akiko her full name and add *さん*, but he also calls her Minoru's *お友達*. This formal prefix *お* can be applied to a variety of nouns but by no means all, so you should not try to use it indiscriminately. Tadashi uses it here because he wishes to be polite about Akiko, particularly in her presence.

3.3 Initial greetings

ああ、そうですか。始めまして。
始めまして。木下明子です。

The father shows polite interest with the equivalent of 'Ah, indeed. How do you do?' *そうですか* is very often used in conversation as a response to new information. Although it takes an interrogative form, ending with the particle *か*, it does not really signify a question; it shows polite but uncommitted interest, somewhat like the English 'really?' or 'is that so?' You will find that Japanese conversations, especially telephone conversations, demand somewhat more of these fillers than English. *始めまして* means something like 'we begin our relationship' and is used when meeting someone for the first time. The grammar of the introductory formulae that follow is quite complex and will be explained at a later stage. You should therefore learn them as set phrases and use them as such. They are extremely useful. You will find that Japanese is full of set phrases that are expected to be produced almost automatically in various social situations.

Akiko responds with a further *始めまして* and then introduces herself. Note that *さん* is missing here. *Never* use it when referring to yourself.

3.4 Further greetings

どうぞよろしくお願いします。
こちらこそ、よろしく。

どうぞよろしくお願ひします literally means 'Please, I desire your favour'. It can be used together with 始めまして or in isolation, and the general effect is the equivalent of an English 'How do you do?' or 'Pleased to meet you'. The commonest reply to this will be こちらこそ、よろしく literally meaning 'It is I who desire your favour', and you should train yourself to use it as an automatic response on being introduced. The father could have simply echoed Akiko with a どうぞよろしく, but being an older man he prefers to leave off the 'please' at this juncture as a very slight sign of condescension. Note how the word こちら 'this side' that Tadashi previously used to refer to Akiko is now being used by Hajime to refer to *himself*. At first sight this may seem odd, but it can and does happen because the word refers primarily to a direction and is therefore highly sensitive to context.こそ is a particle which puts special emphasis on the noun it follows.

3.5 Talking to foreigners

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| 正さん、今日は。 やあ、今日は。 |
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John, who is about the same age as Tadashi, greets him with the correct さん ending, and then follows this immediately with the simple greeting 今日 (こんにち) は, which just means 'today' and signifies 'hello'. But John has broken the rule about family names only, and in a purely Japanese context this would be somewhat familiar. This relaxation of the rules happens quite often when foreigners are involved and it is not really John's 'fault'. As the conversation proceeds you will notice that once Akiko has been introduced, she herself breaks the rule, although she also takes care to retain the polite さん. From this you can infer that the conversation is informal and that the relationship is not a professional one. The people concerned, especially the two foreigners, are probably under thirty. The use of given names in this way represents a commonly encountered gesture in the direction of foreign norms of language and behaviour, particularly American-style informality. John has

picked up on this and uses the given name. This would be unlikely to occur if the conversation were between two Japanese. Tadashi goes on to emphasise the relaxed nature of the exchange by coming out with the brusque male greeting やあ 'hey!'

3.6 Linking nouns

木下さん、こちらはジョン・スミスさんと
マリー・ペレさんです。

The particle と links nouns together in simple addition. Note that と *cannot and must not* be used to link two sentences or phrases. Pay particular attention to this point, because you may well be tempted to use と in this way in the early stages by simple analogy with the English 'and'.

3.7 'And which is...?'

大学はどちらですか。

Note how the question 'And which is your university?' is phrased in the Japanese. 大学 is topicalised with は and this is then followed by the word どちら, a polite interrogative noun meaning 'which direction?', or 'which one?'

3.8 Inclusive も

マリーさんも学生さんですか。

The inclusive particle も highlights the noun it follows: 'Marie too' or 'John too'. Note how も, by drawing the word it follows *into* the sentence, has in a sense

the opposite effect to は, which marks the topic *off* from the rest of the sentence.

3.9 'How about you?'

ジョンさんは。

In the course of a conversation in English one can often omit the verb in an interrogative sentence because it is so obvious: 'How about you?' The same thing applies in Japanese. This is achieved by breaking off at the particle は and pronouncing it with a slight rise in pitch so as to indicate that a question is being asked: ジョンさんは↗ 'And how about John?'

Key to conversation

Romanisation

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| Yamakawa Hajime | Nihonjin | otoko | gojūrokusai |
| Yamakawa Tadashi | Nihonjin | otoko | nijūhassai |
| Yamakawa Minoru | Nihonjin | otoko | nijūissai |
| Kinoshita Akiko | Nihonjin | onna | nijūnisai |
| Jon Sumisu | Igirisujin | otoko | nijūnanasai |
| Mari Pere | Furansujin | onna | nijūgosai |

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| Tadashi | O-tōsan, kochira wa Minoru no o-tomodachi no Kinoshita Akiko san desu. |
| Hajime | A, so desu ka. Hajimemashite. |
| Kinoshita | Hajimemashite. Kinoshita Akiko desu. Dōzo yoroshiku o-negai shimasu. |
| Hajime | Kochira koso, yoroshiku. |
| Jon | Tadashi san, konnichi wa. |
| Tadashi | Ya, konnichi wa. Kinoshita-san, kochira wa Jon Sumisu san to Mari Pere san desu. |
| Kinoshita | Hajimemashite. Kinoshita Akiko desu. Dōzo yoroshiku. |
| Jon | Kochira koso, dōzo yoroshiku. Kinoshita-san wa gakusei san desu ka. |

Kinoshita Ē.
Tadashi Kinoshita-san wa otōto no o-tomodachi desu.
Mari Sō desu ka. Daigaku wa dochira desu ka.
Kinoshita Kyōto desu. Mari-san mo gakusei-san desu ka.
Mari Ē, watakushi mo gakusei desu.
Kinoshita Jon-san wa.
Jon Watakushi wa isha desu.

Translation

Tadashi Father, this is Miss Kinoshita Akiko, a friend of Minoru's.
Hajime Ah, indeed. How do you do?
Kinoshita How do you do? I'm Kinoshita Akiko. Delighted to meet you.
Hajime The pleasure is mine.
John Tadashi, hello!
Tadashi Hey! Hello! Miss Kinoshita, this is John Smith and Marie Perret.
Kinoshita How do you do? I'm Kinoshita Akiko. Delighted to meet you.
John The pleasure is mine. Delighted to meet you. Are you a student?
Kinoshita Yes.
Tadashi Miss Kinoshita is a friend of my younger brother.
Marie Oh really? Which university?
Kinoshita Kyoto. Are you a student too?
Marie Yes, I am too.
Kinoshita What about John?
John I'm a doctor.
