

Lesson 35

John goes to the police station by Ueno Station to report a robbery.

- ジョン あのうち、ほんの数分前に駅のホームで若い男に手さげかばんをひったくられたんですけど...
- 巡査 何が入ってたんですか。
- ジョン お金はズボンのポケットに入れていたので大丈夫だったんですが、パスポート、外人登録証明書、銀行の通帳それに仕事関係の書類をとられました。
- 巡査 すりやひったくりは残念ながらほとんどの場合犯人はつかまらないんですが、一応正式の届けを出して下さい。
- ジョン はい、分かりました。
- 巡査 まず、名前、年齢、住所、電話番号、勤務先をここに記入して下さい。

John starts filling in the form.

- 巡査 ひったくりにあった時間と場所は。
- ジョン 場所は JR 線上野駅の三番線ホームです。時間は今から二十分ぐらい前ですから、五時半ごろですね。
- 巡査 どんな男だったか覚えていますか。
- ジョン だれかに背中をおされて、アッと思った瞬間にやられたのであまりよく覚えてませんが中肉中背の黒いセーターを着た男でした。
- 巡査 そうですか。年は。
- ジョン 多分、二十四、五歳だと思います。
- 巡査 分かりました。それでは届けのコピーを一枚お渡ししますからこれを持って行って、パスポートと外人登録証明書の再発行を受けて下さい。
- ジョン はい。
- 巡査 このごろはすり、ひったくりが多いのでよく気を付けてください。
-

Comment

The first place to go if you get into trouble is the police. They will not be difficult to find, as there are probably more police per population in Japan than in any other country. Apart from the main stations, there is a network of small neighbourhood kiosks known as 交番. You will often find them at major intersections. A 交番 is a useful place to go if you have lost your way because it is the job of these local police to know what is going on in their area. You should not be surprised, however, if they in turn seem inquisitive. Japanese police are permitted to carry firearms.

35.1 The passive form

若い男に手さげかばんをひったくられた
書類をとられました。

The passive form is created as follows:

	<i>plain citation</i>	<i>passive form</i>
<i>Group I</i>	ending in <i>-u</i>	ends in <i>-wareru</i>
	会う meet	会われる
	言う say	言われる
	買う buy	買われる
	ending in <i>-ru</i>	ends in <i>-rareru</i>
	入る enter	入られる
	乗る ride	乗られる
	ある exist	***
	ending in <i>-tsu</i>	ends in <i>-tareru</i>
	待つ wait	待たれる

ending in *-ku*

書く	write
聞く	listen, ask
行く	go

ends in *-kareru*

書かれる
聞かれる
行かれる

ending in *-mu*

読む	read
飲む	drink

ends in *-mareru*

読まれる
飲まれる

ending in *-nu*

死ぬ	die
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ends in *-nareru*

死なれる

ending in *-su*

話す	talk
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ends in *-sareru*

話される

Group II
plain citation
ending in *-ru*

いる	exist
出る	go out
かける	hang
見る	look, see
食べる	eat
寝る	go to bed
起きる	get up

passive form
ends in *-rareru*

いられる
出られる
かけられる
見られる
食べられる
寝られる
起きられる

irregular
plain citation
来る come
する do

passive form
来られる (こられる)
される

The polite form of the passive is obtained by replacing る with ~ます, and all passives become Group II verbs for the purposes of further inflection.

35.2 Uses of the passive

In general it is fair to say that Japanese use the passive far less than we do in English. We often use the passive to avoid mentioning the subject of an active verb but, as you have seen, in Japanese the subject is in any case left out wherever possible. Another way of avoiding the passive in Japanese is to use one of the many transitive/intransitive pairs that will be introduced in lesson 42.

Note that, as a rule, Japanese passives are only used when the agent is animate, or at least has animate connotations. Exceptions will be found, but you should be wary of producing such sentences yourself. When a sentence with an active verb is changed into the passive form, observe the changes of particle as subject becomes agent:

(a) When the subject or topic of the passive sentence is animate, the particle marking the agent should be **に**. The passive of the sentence 親は (が) 子を育てる 'parents bring up children' is 子は親に育てられる.

(b) When the subject or topic of the passive sentence is inanimate, **によって** marks the agent in preference to **に**, especially in written Japanese. The passive of コロンブスが (は) アメリカ大陸を発見した 'Columbus discovered the American continent' is アメリカ大陸はコロンブスによって発見された.

(c) You will also find **から** being used to mark the source. The sentence 国民は天皇を尊敬していますか 'Do the people have respect for the emperor?' when put into the passive, 'Is the emperor respected by the people?', can become either 天皇は国民に尊敬されていますか or 天皇は国民から尊敬されていますか.

35.3 Passive with direct and indirect objects

The use of the particle **に** can give rise to some confusion on occasion, in particular when the sentence to be put into the passive contains both a direct and an indirect object, which also takes **に**. Take, for instance, the sentence:

(私は) 林さんに和子さんを紹介した。

I introduced Kazuko to Mr Hayashi.

This can be transformed into the passive as

和子さんは林さんに紹介された。

Kazuko was introduced to Mr Hayashi.

but take note that this is highly ambiguous in Japanese and might also mean 'Kazuko was introduced to me (or to some third party) by Mr Hayashi.'

35.4 The 'adversative' passive

As in English, the passive can mark an action which is an intrusion rather than a pleasure. The active sentence

すりはその婦人からさいふをすった。

The pickpocket stole the purse from that woman.

would give

その婦人はすりにさいふをすられた。

That woman had her purse stolen by the pickpocket.

Note that in Japanese, as in English, the agent can be omitted if so desired:

その婦人はさいふをすられた。

That woman had her purse stolen.

and given the Japanese propensity for omitting topics when they are readily understandable from context, this sentence might be further reduced to

さいふをすられた。

(She) had her purse stolen.

Now this sentence will probably strike you as a little unusual because if the information had been reduced this far in English, in other words if we only had the words 'purse' and 'steal' to play with, the natural reaction would be to say:

さいふがすられた。

The purse was stolen.

In Japanese both sentences are in fact possible: *さいふがすられた* is a neutral statement and *さいふをすられた*, as the English translation suggests, carries with it a sense of annoyance. This use of *を* with a passive normally indicates that someone has been inconvenienced by an action. Compare the following:

となりに家が建てられた。

A house was built next to mine.

となりに家を建てられた。

(I am inconvenienced because) a house was built next to mine.

This form of the verb is known as the *adversative passive*. It can also be used with intransitive verbs, but that will be dealt with in the next lesson.

Key to conversation

Romanisation

- Jon Ano, hon no sūfun mae ni eki no hōmu de wakai otoko ni tesage-kaban o hittakuraretan desu kedo...
- Junsa Nani ga haítettan desu ka.
- Jon O-kane wa zubon no poketto ni irete ita no de daijōbu dattan desu ga, pasupōto, gajintōroku shōmeisho, ginkō no tsūchō sore ni shigoto kankei no shorui o toraremashita.
- Junsa Suri ya hittakuri wa zannen nagara hotondo no baai hannin wa tsukamaranain desu ga, ichiō seishiki no todoke o dashite kudasai.
- Jon Hai, wakarimashita.
- Junsa Mazu, namae, nenrei, jūsho, denwa bangō, kinmusaki o koko ni ki'nyū shite kudasai.
- Junsa Hittakuri ni atta jikan to basho wa.
- Jon Basho wa JR sen Ueno eki no sanbansen hōmu desu. Jikan wa ima kara nijuppun gurai mae desu kara, gojihan goro desu ne.
- Junsa Donna otoko datta ka oboete imasu ka.
- Jon Dare ka ni senaka o osarete, atto to omotta shunkan ni yarareta no de amari yoku oboetemasen ga chūniku chūzei no kuroi seta o kita otoko deshita.
- Junsa Sō desu ka. Toshi wa.

Jon Tabun, nijūshi-go sai da to omoimasu.
Junsa Wakarimashita. Sore de wa todoke no kopī o ichimai o-watashi shimasu kara kore o motte itte, pasupōto to gajintōroku shōmeisho no saihakko ukete kudasai.
Jon Hai.
Junsa Kono goro wa suri, hittakuri ga ōi no de yoku ki o tsukete kudasai.

Translation

John Excuse me, just a few minutes ago my briefcase was snatched by a young man on the platform.
Policeman What was in it?
John I had my money in my trouser pocket so that was all right, but my passport, my alien registration card, my bank passbook and papers to do with my work were taken.
Policeman Unfortunately in the case of pickpockets or bag snatchers we almost never catch the culprit, but for the record please submit an official notification form.
John Yes, right.
Policeman First, fill in your name, age, address, telephone number and place of work here.
Policeman When and where was it snatched?
John It was on platform 3 of the JR line at Ueno station. About twenty minutes ago, so that would make it about half-past five.
Policeman Do you remember what sort of man he was?
John It all happened very suddenly, just as someone pushed me in the back, so I don't remember very clearly, but he was a man of medium build and medium height wearing a black sweater.
Policeman I see. How old was he?
John Probably about twenty-four or five I think.
Policeman Right. I'll give you a copy of the form so take it with you and arrange for the reissue of your passport and alien registration card.
John Thank you.
Policeman Pickpockets and bag snatchers are everywhere these days. Please take care.
