

Lesson 41

Mrs Yamakawa and Kuniko go shopping together.

国子 おかあさん、今日は何を買うの。
信子 おとうさんの会社の方が結婚なさるので、何かお祝いを差し上げようと思って....。
国子 何とおっしゃる方。
信子 ええと、泉谷さん。
国子 どんな方。
信子 それが、お会いしたことがないのよ。
国子 それじゃあ、どうやってお祝いを選ぶの。
信子 おとうさんが何がいかって聞いて下さったんだけど、結婚式の後すぐにアフリカへ転任することが決まっているので、短波放送の聞けるラジオがほしいっておっしゃるんですって。
国子 ふーん。ずいぶん変わった御希望ね。あまり結婚のお祝いらしくないけど、役に立つものの方がいいのかもしれないわね。
信子 おかあさんもそう思ってるの。

信子 すいませんですが、ラジオの売り場はどちらですか。
店員 六階でございます。エスカレーターはこちらのハンカチ売り場の左手になっております。
店員 いらっしゃいませ。
信子 短波放送の入るラジオを捜しているんですが。
店員 こちらのケースに入っておりますのはどれも短波がついております。
信子 こちらのをちょっと見せていただけますか。
店員 はい、お客様。どうぞ。こちらのはラジオとテープレコーダーが組み合わされておりますのでとても便利です。
国子 FMも聞けるのかしら。
店員 はい、FM、AM 両方入ります。
国子 ちょっと、聞いてみてもいいですか。
店員 今、電池をお入れします。お客さま、どうぞ。

国子 いい音がするけど、少し大き過ぎないかしら。
信子 そうね。これと同じようなのでもうちょっと小さいのは
ありませんか。
店員 こちらのはいかがですか。そちらのと同じように FM、AMそれに
短波も聞けますが、サイズはだいぶ小さくなっております。
信子 こちらのほうがいいと思うけど、国ちゃん、どう思う。
国子 初めのほど大きくなって、機能はみんなそろっているようだから、
いいんじゃないかしら。
店員 こちらはとてもよく売れているモデルですが....。
信子 それじゃあ、小さい方にしましょう。おいくらですか。
店員 三万五千円いただきます。
信子 クレジット・カードでお払いしてもいいですか。
店員 はい、お客様。どうぞ。

41.1 'How does one...?'

どうやってお祝いを選ぶの。

The verb やる is a fairly colloquial equivalent of する and means 'do'. Here we find it combined with どう to give 'doing how'. どう'って is the normal way to express the idea 'how are we going to...?' or 'how does one...?'

41.2 Reported questions

おとうさんが何がいかって聞いて下さったんだけど、

Reported questions are very simple to produce in Japanese. As here, と or って is placed between the question and the verb of questioning. Sometimes indeed the quotative particle と can be left out, but の is often added just in front of

か. Any polite ~ます forms used within the quotation are usually changed to the plain forms.

「何時に起きましたか。」
'What time did you get up?'
何時に起きたか聞いた。
I asked at what time he got up.

「いつまでに出来ますか。」 「分かりません。」
'When will this be ready by?' 'I don't know.'
いつまでに出来る(の)かと聞いたが分からないと言われた。
I asked when it would be ready by, but was told that they didn't know.

「きのうはなぜ来なかったのですか。」
'Why didn't you come yesterday?'
きのうはなぜ来なかったのかって聞かれた。
I was asked why I had not come the day before.

41.3 More on reported speech

おとうさんが何がいかって聞いて下さったんだけど、
結婚式の後すぐにアフリカへ転任することが決まっているので、
短波放送の聞けるラジオがほしいっておっしゃるんですって。

In 27.1, which dealt with と as a quotation marker, it was stated that there is often very little to distinguish direct from indirect speech. There are, however, some occasions when certain changes may obviously have to be made. Look again at what Nobuko has to say above. This is obviously reported speech, although it is made somewhat complicated because Nobuko is actually reporting two levels: what Izumitani said to her husband and then what her husband reported to her. Note how this difference is made explicit in the verbs at the end:

おっしゃる referring to Izumitani's words and ですって being her husband's words. What actually went on was something like the following:

山川: 結婚のお祝いにはどんなものがあるのかな。
泉谷: ありがとうございます。式の後すぐにアフリカへ転任することが決まっておりますので、短波放送の聞けるラジオがいただきたいのですが。

Another occasion when you may find that you will have to change something when you shift from actual speech to reported speech is when demonstratives are involved. Take, for example, the following:

川北: 「このコーヒーが京都で一番うまい。」
'The coffee here is the best in Kyōto.'

How would you report this to a third person? If you were both in the coffee shop or at the entrance of the shop at the time, then you would naturally report this as follows:

川北さんがこのコーヒーが京都で一番おいしいと言っていた。

If you were both somewhere near the coffee shop, from where you could perhaps actually point out the shop, you would say:

川北さんがあそのコーヒーが京都で一番おいしいと言っていた。

If you were both nowhere near the coffee shop, but the name of the shop or something which reminded you of Kawakita's comment came up in the conversation, then you would say:

川北さんがそのコーヒーが京都で一番おいしいと言っていた。

41.4 Adjectival use of perfective verb forms

ずいぶん変わった御希望ね。

There are quite a large number of words which, although they are usually

translated into English as simple adjectives, are in fact the perfective form of a verb used in a descriptive manner. In addition to 変わった 'odd', note:

(a) すぐれた 'distinguished' from すぐれる 'be excellent, excel'

彼はすぐれた科学者だ。

He is a distinguished scientist.

(b) 困った 'troublesome', 'inconvenient' from 困る 'be in difficulty'

和子は本当に困った子だ。何も食べない。

Kazuko is a really troublesome child. She does not eat a thing.

(c) さっぱりした 'clean', 'neat', 'simple' from さっぱりする 'be refreshed'

彼女はいつもさっぱりした洋服を着ている。

She always dressed in a simple but neat dress.

41.5 More on names within the family

おかあさんもそう思ってるの。

You may be a little surprised to see the mother referring to herself as おかあさん here, particularly since we have stressed that you should never use the polite さん about yourself. In English, when speaking to children, parents quite often refer to each other by using names that reflect the child's point of view. It is a fairly common habit in Japanese families.

41.6 Being welcomed in a shop

いらっしゃいませ。

You will probably never have need to use this word yourself, but you will hear it whenever you enter a shop, bank or restaurant. It tells you that your entry has been noticed and that you will be looked after as soon as possible.

41.7 Asking permission

聞いてみてもいいですか。
クレジット・カードでお払いしてもいいですか。

When ～て is followed by も, the meaning is 'even if'. よい/いい is, of course, the descriptive verb meaning 'is good', 'is all right'. When these are added together in the interrogative form we get literally 'even if I..., is it all right?', the usual way of asking permission to do something in Japanese. You may also find the verb かまいませんか, negative of the verb かまう 'care' or 'bother about something', being used in a similar context:

もう帰ってもいいですか。

May I go home now?

ここでたばこをすってもかまいませんか。

Do you mind me smoking here?

ええ、かまいませんよ。

No, I don't mind.

現金で払わなくてもいいですか。

Is it all right if I don't pay by cash?

41.8 同じ

これと同じようなのでうちよっと小さいはありませんか。

同じ functions like a descriptive verb meaning 'be the same as', but, apart from the form 同じく, it does not usually inflect in the modern language. You will, of course, find it meaning 'same' in normal modifying position in sentences like:

節子さんと孝子さんは同じ学校に行っています。
Setsuko and Takako go to the same school.

but the usage can be somewhat more idiomatic. Observe the following:

あの兄弟は同じぐらいの背の高さだ。
Those brothers are the same height.
セーラはジェーンと同じようにおしゃべりです。
Sarah is as talkative as Jane.

41.9 Idiomatic use of それに

FM、AM それに短波も聞けますが、

When enumerating things, it is common to slip a に or それに in before the last item. It usually means very little more than just 'and' in a series, but here with the addition of も there is a definite sense of 'and what is more...'

41.10 ほど

初めのほど大きくなって、

ほど is a noun meaning 'limit', 'extent' or 'degree'. The reason it needs special comment here is that it has a number of grammatical functions. As you will see from the example, it can occur by itself without a particle meaning 'to the extent',

and it is found in expressions of comparison. The best translation of the above would be 'It's not as large as the first one', although the Japanese is literally saying 'It's not large (to the) extent of the first (one).' Since it is a noun, you should in fact be tempted to surround this word with particles; it is unusual in that it hardly ever needs them. Study the following sentences:

仕事が山ほどたまっています。

A mountain of work has accumulated.

イギリスの春ほど美しい季節はない。

There is no season as beautiful as an English spring.

彼女ほど気の短い人はいない。

There is no-one as short-tempered as she.

これほどがっかりしたことはない。

I have never been so disappointed.

Key to conversation

Romanisation

Kuniko Okāsan, kyō wa nani o kau no.

Nobuko Otōsan no kaisha no kata ga kekkon nasaru no de, nani ka o-iwai o sashiageyō to omotte...

Kuniko Nan to ossharu kata.

Nobuko Ēto, Izumitani san.

Kuniko Donna kata.

Nobuko Sore ga, o-ai shita koto ga nai no yo.

Kuniko Sore jā, do yatte o-iwai o erabu no.

Nobuko Otōsan ga nani ga ii ka tte kiite kudasattan da kedo, kekkonshiki no ato sugu ni Afurika e tennin suru koto ga kimatte iru no de, tanpa hōsō no kikeru rajio ga hoshii tte ossharun desu tte.

Kuniko Fūn. Zuibun kawatta gokibō ne. Amari kekkon no o-iwai rashikunai kedo, yaku ni tatsu mono no hō ga ii no ka mo shirenai wa ne.

Nobuko Okāsan mo sō omotteru no.

Nobuko Suimasen ga, rajio no uriba wa dochira desu ka.
 Ten'in Rokkai de gozaimasu. Esukarētā wa kochira no hankachi uriba no hidarite ni natte orimasu.
 Ten'in Irasshaimase.
 Nobuko Tanpa hōsō no hairu rajio o sagashite irun desu ga...
 Ten'in Kochira no kēsu ni haitte orimasu no wa dore mo tanpa ga tsuite orimasu.
 Nobuko Kochira no o chotto misete itadakemasu ka.
 Ten'in Hai, o-kyaku-sama. Dōzo. Kochira no wa rajio to tēpurekōda ga kumiawasarete orimasu no de totemo benri desu.
 Kuniko FM mo kikeru no kashira.
 Ten'in Hai, FM, AM ryōhō hairimasu.
 Kuniko Chotto, kiite mite mo ii desu ka.
 Ten'in Ima, denchi o o-ire shimasu. O-kyaku-sama, dōzo.
 Kuniko Ii oto ga suru kedo, sukoshi ōki suginai kashira.
 Nobuko Sō ne. Kore to onaji yō na no de mo chotto chiisai no wa arimasen ka.
 Ten'in Kochira no wa ikaga desu ka. Sochira no to onaji yō ni FM, AM sore ni tanpa mo kikemasu ga, saizu wa daibu chiisaku natte orimasu.
 Nobuko Kochira no hō ga ii to omou kedo, Kuni-chan, dō omou.
 Kuniko Hajime no hodo ōkiku nakute, kinō wa minna sorotte iru yō da kara, iin ja nai kashira.
 Ten'in Kochira wa totemo yoku urete iru moderu desu ga...
 Nobuko Sore ja, chiisai hō ni shimashō. O-ikura desu ka.
 Ten'in Sanman gosen-en itadakimasu.
 Nobuko Kurejitto kādo de o-harai shite mo ii desu ka.
 Ten'in Hai, o-kyaku-sama. Dōzo.

Translation

Kuniko Mother, what are you going to buy today?
 Nobuko Someone in your father's company is getting married, so I thought I'd give him some sort of present.
 Kuniko What's his name?
 Nobuko Let me see now, Mr Izumitani.
 Kuniko What sort of person is he?
 Nobuko That's it you see, I've never met him.

Kuniko Well then, how are you going to choose a present?

Nobuko Your father was good enough to ask him what he'd like, and since it's been decided that he'll be transferred to Africa soon after his wedding, he apparently said he'd like a radio that will get shortwave broadcasts.

Kuniko Hm. That's a funny request isn't it? It's not the usual sort of thing one gives as a wedding present, but then again it might be better to get him something practical mightn't it?

Nobuko That's what I think too.

Nobuko Excuse me, where is the radio sales department?

Assistant On the sixth floor. The escalator is to the left of the handkerchief department here.

Assistant How can I help you?

Nobuko I'm looking for a radio that will receive shortwave broadcasts.

Assistant All of the ones in this display case have a shortwave function.

Nobuko Could you please show me this one?

Assistant Certainly madam. Here you are. This one combines a tape recorder and a radio and so it's very convenient.

Kuniko Can you listen to FM too I wonder?

Assistant Yes, it's got both FM and AM.

Kuniko May we listen to it just for a bit?

Assistant I'll just put the batteries in. Here you are madam.

Kuniko It sounds good, but I wonder if it isn't a little large.

Nobuko Yes. Do you have one just like this only a little smaller?

Assistant How about this one? As with that one, you can listen to FM, AM as well as shortwave, but it's much smaller.

Nobuko I think this one is better but, Kunichan, what do you think?

Kuniko It's not as big as the first one, and it seems to have all the functions, so I think it might do.

Assistant This one is a best-selling model/

Nobuko In that case, let's take the small one. How much is it?

Assistant 35,000 yen please.

Nobuko May I pay by credit card?

Assistant Certainly madam. By all means.