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## *Introduction*

### **General**

Learning the vocabulary of a foreign language is fascinating, not least because languages differ in unexpected ways in quite basic lexical distinctions. English *water* may be hot or cold, but Japanese distinguishes between *oyu* for the first and *mizu* for the second. While English has a single basic verb *give*, Japanese distinguishes two such verbs in terms of the direction of the act of giving, *kureru* (for ‘incoming’ giving, directed towards the speaker) and *ageru* (for other cases). Vocabulary learning is also demanding, above all because of the sheer magnitude of the task. The words and other lexical items of a language number in the tens, if not hundreds, of thousands, and the acquisition of vocabulary is truly a vast undertaking.

The aim of bilingual dictionaries of various kinds is precisely to help the learner in this task. Like other volumes in the series, *Using Japanese Synonyms* organizes Japanese vocabulary by areas of meaning: words like *mizu* and *oyu*, or *kureru* and *ageru*, are described and illustrated in the same semantic grouping, or frame, thereby bringing into focus both their similarities as a group and the distinctions between them.

In this way, the volume is designed to help English-speaking learners to improve their lexical competence in both comprehension and production by acquiring a greater awareness of the details of meaning and use of Japanese lexical items in various semantic areas. Meaning-and-use involves several dimensions. Firstly and most obviously, it includes the content of a word, in the sense of the range of phenomena it is used to refer to: if learners of Japanese overextend *mizu* in use or misunderstand it as referring to hot water (as experience indicates they often do), communication will be impaired. Secondly, in order to use a word naturally in a phrase or sentence, we also need an appreciation of how it interacts with other words that commonly accompany it: for example,

in English, *boil water* is a natural combination of words, but what is the Japanese counterpart: *oyu o wakasu*, or *mizu o wakasu*? Words combine, or collocate, with other words in this way in a variety of common patterns – as subjects and objects with verbs (in this case, as in *oyu o wakasu*), as modifiers with nouns (as in *atsui oyu*, but not *atsui mizu*) and so on – and a knowledge of the range of natural and frequent combinations in such cases is an important aspect of mastery of the vocabulary. Thirdly, for many words, natural use also calls for an awareness of the nature of the situational circumstances in which they are appropriately used. This applies to the stylistic distinction between neutral and more formal vocabulary, which is a widespread feature of Japanese. In a domestic conversation, an interruption to the hot water supply might be described as *oyu ga tomaru*, but a written public notice would use more formal vocabulary, such as *kyuutoo* ‘hot water supply’ in place of *oyu*, and *teishi suru* in place of *tomaru*. *Using Japanese Synonyms* aims to give full attention to all these factors.

As indicated, Japanese items are presented in semantic frames, labelled by a Japanese headword and an English near-equivalent. Thus *mizu* and *oyu*, as well as other semantically related items, appear together in the frame headed **mizu**, with **water** listed as the English near-equivalent. The content of each Japanese item in the frame is indicated by means of a definition in English, varying in length and format according to the requirements for the individual item, and incorporating relevant information on combinatorial behaviour. Each item is further accompanied by a number of authentic examples, ranging from phrases to full sentences, as well as complex words (compounds and derivatives) where appropriate. All examples have been selected to reflect frequent and characteristic use. Situational information is provided by means of numerical and other coding appended to each item, and the items in each frame are arranged in order of formality, facilitating a clear overall view of this aspect of use. The organization of frames and individual entries is explained in more detail below.

The overriding perspective of the present work is that of the English-speaking learner of Japanese. While the descriptions take account of existing Japanese lexicographical treatments, including Japanese dictionaries of near-synonyms designed for native speakers, the selection of areas of meaning for inclusion and of lexical items within each area has been guided primarily by their perceived usefulness to English-speaking learners, in terms of likely difficulties and frequency and

occasionally on the basis of general lexical interest. This also applies to the method of description and illustration adopted, including in particular the incorporation of corpus-based information on collocation as well as plentiful corpus-based authentic examples. Needless to say, all selections made involve a good measure of subjectivity and, in the last resort, reflect the judgement of the author, in the light of personal experience as an English-speaking teacher and learner of the language.

### Organization

#### *Semantic frames*

Frames are labelled by Japanese headwords and English near-equivalents, as with **mizu** and **water**. In some cases two Japanese headwords appear: for example **ageru** and **kureru** seem equally basic in the frame for **give**, and both are listed. The Japanese and English headings together serve to identify the area of meaning treated in the frame. This is important: in both languages many words have several meanings and uses, and not all will be covered in a given frame. Thus, in a combination like *nedan o ageru*, *ageru* has a different meaning ('raise'), and this is not treated in the above frame. For the same reason, a single lexical item may appear in different frames where it expresses several meanings: the verb *yaburu*, for example, means 'defeat' as well as 'break', and it appears under separate frames headed by **katsu** and **kowasu**. Information in a given frame thus applies to the word in the area of meaning under consideration, and not beyond. Where appropriate, English terms in headings are accompanied by word-class labels for additional clarity: **plan (n)**, **flat (adj)**, **change (vintr)**, etc. *Using Japanese Synonyms* covers approximately 300 frames, ordered alphabetically by Japanese headword.

#### *Items in frames*

Each frame brings together several Japanese synonyms, interpreted broadly as lexical items which share aspects of content and which present potential problems of differentiation for English-speaking learners. Frames contain between two and a dozen items, normally belonging to the same word class (i.e. noun, verb, etc), though with occasional exceptions. They aim at a clear presentation of the major aspects of the meaning and use of each item, thereby promoting an appreciation of the differences between them. Items are provided with English definitions, information relating to situational aspects of use, and illustrative examples, each forming an essential component of the overall picture of their meaning and use.

*Items: form*

Japanese items are listed both in modified Hepburn romanization (with long vowels spelt double, the mora nasal written as *n* (*n'* before vowels and *y*) and the verb 'say' written as *yuu* rather than as *iu*), and in their standard Japanese orthographic form (based on Takebe 1992). Within entries, romanized forms of inflected words (verbs and *i*-adjectives) additionally contain hyphens preceding the inflectional ending. These distinguish consonant-base verbs (*-u* verbs) from vowel-base verbs (*-ru* verbs) and *i*-adjectives from words of other classes: thus *shaber-u* is a consonant-base verb, *kure-ru* is a vowel-base verb and *ko-i* is an *i*-adjective (as opposed to *koi*, which is a noun). As exceptions, the irregular verbs *kuru* 'come' and *suru* 'do' are left unhyphenated. Uninflected adjectives (*na*- and *no*-adjectives: *no*-adjectives behave like *na*-adjectives but are followed by *no*, rather than *na*, before a modified noun) are listed with the adnominal particle following: *joozu na*, *pasapasa no*; items like *samazama na/no* occur with both particles. Remaining forms, with no hyphens and no following particles, are nouns or adverbs.

*Items: content*

The content of Japanese items is indicated in English definitions, ranging from single words to fuller explanations, with close attention also given to relevant information concerning combinatorial behaviour. Additional important information is added in parentheses where needed.

A characteristic feature of Japanese vocabulary is that some items convey social deference as part of their content. These are honorifics, and we use H (subject-honorific), H< (non-subject-honorific) and HR (honorific referent) as abbreviations pertaining to these. A brief summary of these notions is given below.

In general, honorific items express, as part of their content, social deference to a person who is being talked about. With subject-honorifics, this is most typically the person who functions as the subject of a verb or adjective. Thus, *kudasaru* (H) is the subject-honorific counterpart of the verb *kureru* and denotes an act of (incoming) giving performed by a person to whom deference is being shown; a stock example is the case of a teacher giving a book to me (a student). Similarly, *ogenki na* (H), the subject-honorific counterpart of the adjective *genki na* 'in good health, in good spirits', denotes the state of such a person. As well as verbs and adjectives, some nouns may also be viewed as subject-honorific: *goshuppatsu* (H) 'departure', a so-called verbal noun referring to an

action, encodes deference to the actor (i.e. the person departing) in the same way as with verbs; *okyakusama* (H) ‘guest, customer, passenger’, a human noun, encodes deference directly to the person referred to; while *onamae* (H) ‘name’ expresses deference to its possessor. Non-subject-honorifics also encode social deference, but the person concerned functions as the object, recipient, source, etc of the action concerned. *Sashiageru* (H<) is the non-subject-honorific counterpart of *ageru* ‘give’ and refers to an act of giving something to a respected recipient; it is the verb of choice when I (a student) give something to a teacher. A noun like *otegami* may refer to a letter written by a respected person, in which case it is comparable to the subject-honorifics above, but also to a letter written by someone to a respected person, in which case it resembles a non-subject-honorific; *otegami* may thus be labelled (H, H<). These labels are reinforced by the use in definitions of the abbreviation HR, standing for ‘honorific referent’, i.e. the person to whom social deference is shown: *kudasaru* is rendered as ‘(HR) gives (to me, us, etc)’, *onamae* as ‘name (of HR)’, etc. Importantly, words can be honorific to different degrees (*otoosama* ‘father’ is more deferential than *otoosan*), and this information is also included in entries where relevant.

*Items: register*

Items in frames are also coded for register, i.e. situational information relating to their appropriate use. It is a familiar property of lexical items that, in addition to conveying content, they may also reflect aspects of the communicative context in which they occur. As mentioned above, this is a pervasive feature of Japanese, where it is frequently important to choose vocabulary according to the circumstances of use. The primary coding is for formality, indicated by a numerical scale ranging from 3 (most formal) to 1 (least formal), with the items in each frame arranged in descending order. Level 2 is regarded as the neutral value on the scale and is left unmarked, and intermediate values 2-3 and 2-1 are also used. The majority of items treated fall under 2, 2-3 and, to a lesser extent, 2-1. Items ranked 2 (i.e. unmarked items) constitute the baseline: these items form the standard currency of everyday domestic conversation and in general may also be used in everyday writing. Level 2-3 terms are associated with more formal varieties of the spoken language (including, for example, NHK news broadcasts), as well as with more formal writing (as in newspaper reporting), while 2-1 indicates somewhat colloquial items which are at home in more casual conversations and typically out of place in serious writing. However, these are fluid rather than rigid divisions and, as the coding suggests, all these items may be encountered

in everyday conversation. The small number of items marked 3 or 1 are, respectively, highly formal (restricted to highly formal speech or to writing) or highly colloquial (restricted to casual speech among intimates). Additional abbreviations used are M, P and PP. Items marked M (masculine) (commonly at level 2-1 or 1) are typically used by male speakers, in informal circumstances; they are characteristic of somewhat macho speech. By contrast, items marked P (polite) are ‘softer’ in tone, and are chiefly more genteel variants of general conversational (i.e. level 2) items, commonly featuring the prefix *o-*; they are more typical of, although by no means restricted to, women’s speech. Finally, PP indicates verbs and a few other items that belong to the ‘extra-formal’ or ‘hyperpolite’ style, associated with spoken genres including speeches and public announcements and with formal written communications of various kinds.

*Items: examples*

A major feature of *Using Japanese Synonyms* is that all items are illustrated by a number of authentic examples of use, ranging from phrases to complete sentences. Complex words (compounds and derivatives) in which the item commonly occurs are also listed where appropriate. The examples are a central component of overall entries; much effort has been devoted to providing authentic examples illustrating important aspects of combination as well as representative and frequent usage. All are based on close exploration of corpora of spoken and written Japanese and on attested data, mostly of spoken language, collected by the author.

Illustrative phrases often include a series of words separated by slashes which co-occur with the item: these are generally selected on the basis of frequency information derived from the corpora consulted and can be regarded as typical collocates. Where items enter into important semantic relations with other words (such as opposites), an effort has been made to include such words in example phrases and sentences. Attention has also been paid to illustrating wider aspects of combination, including the range of typical grammatical constructions in which items occur. Sentences include some examples from informal conversation, which may include contractions and other features typical of this register. Complex words, where present, are again selected on the basis of frequency. A general caveat relating to complex words is that their register value may differ from that of the basic item: thus *toshō* (‘books’), listed under **hon/book**, is a somewhat formal word when used alone but *toshō-kan* ‘library’ and

*tosho-shitsu* ‘reading room’ are everyday conversational terms.

Examples are given both in romanized form and in Japanese orthography (again following Takebe 1992). In romanizations, capitals are used only in the initial word in sentences (terminated by full stops or question/exclamation marks) or else in initials used as abbreviations of names as in *Y-san* (‘Mr/Mrs Y’). Hyphens have occasionally been added as an aid to legibility, including in complex words listed as examples. Where considered necessary, clarifying information in English has been provided in parentheses following the examples concerned.

### **Indexes**

The work contains two indexes, which locate items under the frames in which they appear: items are listed alphabetically in the left-hand columns, headword labels for frames are given in bold type on the right. The Japanese index lists all Japanese items treated as entries, while the English index contains English items which appear in the definitions of Japanese terms. The Japanese index also serves to cross-reference Japanese items which occur in more than one frame. Frames in the dictionary are ordered alphabetically by their Japanese headword.

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## abunai 危ない

**kiken na** 危険な 2-3  
*dangerous* (action, situation,  
 place, thing etc)

**bussou na** 物騒な  
*dangerous, alarming* (place,  
 event, situation, thing etc)  
 [= making one feel at imminent  
 risk of violence or conflict]

**abuna-i** 危ない  
*dangerous* (action, situation,  
 place, thing etc)

## dangerous

kiken na jootai/jookyoo/kooi 危険な状態／状況／  
 行為  
 anzen na basho to kiken na basho 安全な場所と危険  
 な場所  
 Fugu o mizukara choori suru koto wa hijoo ni kiken  
 desu. ふぐを自ら調理することは非常に危険です。  
 Osake o nonda ato ofuro ni hairu no wa kiken desu.  
 お酒を飲んだあとお風呂に入るのは危険です。  
 kiken na me ni au 危険な目に遭う

bussou na chiiki/jiken/nyuusu 物騒な地域／事件／  
 ニュース  
 Bussou na yononaka ni natta mono desu. 物騒な世の  
 中になったものです。  
 Saikin, iroiro to bussou na koto ga hoodoo sarete  
 imasu. 最近、いろいろと物騒なことが報道されてい  
 ます。  
 bakudan no yoo na bussou na mono 爆弾のような物  
 騒なもの

Abunai! 危ない!  
 Abunai yo. Ki o tsukenasai. 危ないよ。気をつけな  
 さい。  
 Abunai kara yamenasai. 危ないからやめなさい。  
 Hamono wa abunai. 刃物は危ない。  
 Hitori de iku no wa abunai. 一人で行くのは危ない。  
 kuruma ga tootte abunai tokoro 車が通って危ない所  
 abunai shokuhin to daijoobu na shokuhin 危ない食品  
 と大丈夫な食品  
 abunai me ni au 危ない目に遭う

**agaru** 上がる

**jooshoo suru** 上昇する 2-3  
 (aircraft etc; scalar value) *rise*,  
*go up*

**kootoo suru** 高騰する 2-3  
 (price etc) *rise*, *go up*;  
 (commodity etc) *rise*, *go up* (*in price*)

**agar-u** 上がる  
 (sth) *rise*, *go up*; (sb) *go up*  
 (focus on change of location)

**go up**

Erebeetaa ga totsuzen jooshoo shita. エレベーターが突然上昇した。  
 hikooki ga jooshoo shitari kooka shitari suru 飛行機が上昇したり降下したりする  
 kawa no suii ga jooshoo suru 川の水位が上昇する  
 kion/ondo/shitsugyoo-ritsu ga jooshoo suru 気温/温度/失業率が上昇する  
 bukka/kakaku/kabuka ga jooshoo suru 物価/価格/株価が上昇する  
 kinri ga ichipaasento jooshoo suru 金利が1%上昇する  
 oohaba ni/ookiku jooshoo suru 大幅に/大きく上昇する

sekiyu-kakaku/bukka/chika ga kootoo suru 石油価格/物価/地価が高騰する  
 kabu/tochi/gen'yu ga kootoo suru 株/土地/原油が高騰する  
 Saikin no naga-ame de yasai ga kootoo shite iru. 最近の長雨で野菜が高騰している。

bukka/kabuka/kyuuryoo/shusshoo-ritsu ga agaru 物価/株価/給料/出生率が上がる  
 kion/ketsuatsu/seiseki/seika/kooka ga agaru 気温/血圧/成績/成果/効果が上がる  
 netsu ga agattari sagattari suru 熱が上がったり下がったりする  
 Moomoo to kemuri ga agatte iru. もうもうと煙が上がっている。  
 Kaidan o agatte sugu migigawa ni arimasu. 階段を上がってすぐ右側にあります。  
 nikai ni agatte yasumu 二階に上がって休む  
 butai ni agaru 舞台に上がる  
 erebeetaa de chijoo ni agaru エレベーターで地上に上がる