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JAPANESE

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MASTERING JAPANESE

HARRY GUEST

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT
BETTY PARR

M
MACMILLAN
EDUCATION

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to **Gôshi Makoto** for all his help and advice during each stage of its construction.

to the staff of the Tôkyô Nihongo
Gakkô for their assistance and encouragement when I was a pupil there in the 1960s.

to my colleagues at Yokohama
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to all those many friends who
made our stay in Japan such a happy one – and to the land itself
which will always have a special place in our hearts as the place where
our daughter grew up and our son was born.

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SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

The first six foreign language courses in this series were concerned with West European languages, with relatively familiar cultural and linguistic systems from neighbouring countries. Our seventh course involves a journey to the East, to a country with a long and rich tradition unfamiliar to most of us and a language of new sounds, symbols and concepts to which we have no easy access, even on our radio network.

Our course in Japanese, which is designed for adult beginners with or without a teacher, seeks to provide a realistic approach to the spoken language in the context of present-day Japan and the life and thoughts of the people who live there. Our other courses have introduced all the language skills of understanding, speaking, reading and writing, but in Japanese the main objective is the spoken language, and the student wishing to acquire an accurate grasp of the sounds of the language will need the accompanying cassette, on which native speakers have recorded all the relevant material contained in the book.

As in our other books, each chapter begins with a series of dialogues on everyday topics; all the subsequent teaching – explanation of words and structures, background information, and exercises – is based on the content of these dialogues, so that the language is studied in a real context, and practice always precedes theory. Exercises are pitched at two levels, **A** easier than **B**, to enable the student to devise a suitable learning strategy. A key to the exercises and to the self-assessment tests provided after every five chapters will help the learner to take stock of progress achieved. An attractive feature of the book is the background information about Japan and the Japanese, which reveals the author's own knowledge of the country and his sympathetic understanding of the language and those who speak it.

Throughout the book, Japanese words are printed in *rômaji*, the system of representing sounds in terms of our own alphabet. Some elements of written Japanese are introduced towards the end of the book, which will offer help in identifying certain useful words and give a basis for further study of the language.

The author's preface contains more information about the course and guidance in ways of using it effectively. It is to be hoped that the

SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

student will capture some of the author's own enthusiasm and will find enjoyment and satisfaction in mastering spoken Japanese.

BETTY PARR
Editorial Consultant

AUTHOR'S PREFACE:

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

LEARNING AIMS

This book is intended for complete beginners who are interested in mastering spoken Japanese. For anyone planning to go to Japan as a tourist or on a business trip, an ability to communicate in Japanese will not only be useful but will add immeasurably to the pleasure of the visit. Although English is compulsory in all Japanese schools from the age of eleven, a visitor to Japan must be prepared to find very few people who have more than the merest smattering of English.

This course, which can be used *without* a teacher, sets out to provide visitors or temporary residents with an everyday 'survival-kit' of language, so that they can cope with the normal situations of travel, shopping, going to restaurants, banks and the post-office, as well as the – we hope – unusual problems of sickness and visits to the doctor. It also introduces the reader to Japanese society – so very different from any other – and gives a background of information about day-to-day life in that endlessly fascinating country.

Each chapter begins with a 'real-life' dialogue. There is a cassette accompanying this book. Sections of the book included on the cassette are indicated by the symbol . All the dialogues and many of the exercises are recorded by native speakers to enable students to hear the language spoken first-hand so that, right from the start, they can imitate the correct sounds. In fact, as they will soon discover, speaking Japanese presents fewer problems for the native English speaker than many other languages.

In the second section of each chapter, the vocabulary used for the first time is listed. In the third section, the grammar that has been introduced in the dialogues is explained, and any relevant background information given. The final section consists of exercises – more straightforward exercises grouped under A; and somewhat

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

more complicated ones under **B**; these should not be tackled until the student feels entirely confident. It is recommended that each chapter should be thoroughly mastered before the next is attempted, as every one builds on what has gone before. After every five chapters, there is a self-assessment test, which gives useful revision and helps the student to gauge progress achieved.

DIALOGUES

These should be studied with the cassette. Each phrase should be repeated and the pronunciation and intonation checked against the native speaker's. When the exercises in each chapter have been completed, the dialogues should be played again and what may have seemed baffling at first will become surprisingly clear.

VOCABULARY

There is no vocabulary-list at the end of this book. Students should make their *own* list, because the act of writing a word down helps to commit it to memory. What is more, the words may be grouped under various headings – food, leisure, etc. – bringing together the necessary words for every situation. The best way to experiment is to conceal the Japanese column. When a mistake is made, it is important to unlearn it by seeing *why* it happened – was it the 'shape' of the word? was it confused with a very similar word? did it seem to resemble a word in English or some other familiar language?

EXPLANATIONS

After the introductory chapters, the third section of most chapters begins with some information about life in Japan which is intended to fill out the situation given in the dialogues. Then grammatical explanations are provided, which should assist the student with the exercises that follow. Japanese grammar is utterly different from English – in some ways simpler, in others rather more complicated – and very often reflects the *way* that the Japanese look at life.

At the end of the book is a complete Grammar Summary containing all the material introduced in the book.

As far as possible, important lists – days of the week, verb-forms, etc. – are given in the explanations as they crop up in the dialogues, but there are several sections of reference material at the end of the book where checking can easily be made.

EXERCISES

Some of these are on the cassette, so that listening and speaking may be associated with the printed word. Past exercises – even the easy ones! – should be repeated again and again until the response is automatic. In one's own language, this tends to be instinctive; in a foreign language, the mind must realise that there is a new sound or set of sounds expressing familiar ideas or objects until, when a question is asked, 'translation' is unnecessary and the right reply comes at once.

Instructions about each exercise are usually given in English but, occasionally, in order to help the reader feel that he or she is involved in a conversation with a native speaker, the opening question is given in Japanese.

The translations of each exercise in the Reference Material section (p. 229) are meant to be equivalents (in so far as that is possible) rather than exact versions. In the explanations for each chapter, literal renderings will be given of thorny problems, but the translated dialogues try to be as believably colloquial as are their Japanese originals.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

This section contains a Note on Written Japanese (p. 227), the translation of all the dialogues (pp. 229–51), a key to all the exercises (except the very few that deal with facts only the student can know, such as birthdays!) (pp. 252–88) answers to the four self-assessment tests (pp. 289–96), the grammatical appendices and the Grammar Summary and a list of books and addresses that may be useful in further studies of Japanese.

TYPOGRAPHY

In this book words in Japanese are set in a different type-face so that they can be easily distinguished from the English text. Thus: *Ogenki desu ka?* but, How are you?

GUIDE TO PRONUNCIATION

VOWEL SOUNDS

There are *five basic vowel-sounds* in Japanese: a, i, u, e, and o. These correspond, roughly, to:

car key cool cage coat

though it must be stressed that the Japanese sounds are much ‘purer’ than English ones.

Pronounce the following words which are made up entirely of vowels, and ensure that *each separate vowel* is clearly pronounced – and does not ‘run in’ to its neighbour:

aoi ie ue

(Say: a–o–i; i–e; u–e).

ONE CONSONANT

There is *one single consonant*, final -n or -m. When saying it as n, try not to let your tongue touch the roof of your mouth:

san hon pan

It is pronounced as m before b, p and m:

sembei sampo nammai

CONSONANT AND VOWEL

All other Japanese sounds consist of a *consonant and a vowel*:

ka	ki	ku	ke	ko	k as in <i>khaki</i>
sa	shi	su	se	so	s as in <i>sow</i>
					shi as in <i>sheet</i>
ta	chi	tsu	te	to	t as in <i>tea</i>
					chi as in <i>cheese</i>
					tsu as in the middle of <i>catsup</i>
na	ni	nu	ne	no	n as in <i>nice</i>
ha	hi	fu	he	ho	h as in <i>high</i>

To say fu get your mouth ready to pronounce *fool*, but do not let your lower lip actually touch your top teeth.

ma	mi	mu	me	mo	m as in <i>meet</i>
ya		yu		yo	y as in <i>yes</i>
ra	ri	ru	re	ro	

The Japanese r is more ‘liquid’ than the English. If you put your tongue halfway between where you place it for the English ‘r’ and the English ‘l’, you will make the Japanese r sound. There is no ‘l’ sound in Japanese, though, as you can now tell, their r has a bit of an ‘l’ in it.

wa					w as in <i>watch</i>
ga	gi	gu	ge	go	g as in <i>give</i>
za	ji	zu	ze	zo	z as in <i>zoo</i>
					ji as in <i>jeans</i>

(sometimes the ‘3’-sound is nearer d₃)

da			de	do	d as in <i>done</i>
ba	bi	bu	be	bo	b as in <i>big</i>
pa	pi	pu	pe	po	p as in <i>pot</i>

As you have seen you cannot say *see, tea, too, who, ye, yea, wee, woo, way* or *whoa*. There is no v, l, or f sound (with the exception of fu above).

PRONUNCIATION

DOUBLE VOWELS

There are a number of *double vowel-sounds*:

kya	kyu	kyo
sha	shu	sho
cha	chu	cho
nya	nyu	nyo
hya	hyu	hyo
mya	myu	myo
rya	ryu	ryo
gya	gyu	gyo
ja	ju	jo
bya	byu	byo
pya	pyu	pyo

These are two sounds said so quickly that they *become one*: **kya** is only **ki** and **ya** run together; **ju** is **ji** and **yu** run together, and so on.

When a final -n is involved, a *break between the two components of a word* is shown thus:

hon'ya bookshop (from **hon**, a book and **ya**, a shop) as opposed to gyûniku, beef (from **gyû**, a cow and **niku**, meat)

Japanese is therefore made up of *five vowels, one separate consonant* and various *combinations of a consonant followed by vowel-sounds*:

Yokohama	Yo/ko/ha/ma
Nihongo	Ni/ho/n/go
sambyaku	sa/m/bya/ku
ikitai	i/ki/ta/i

SYLLABLE STRESS

Unlike English, each syllable carries an *even stress*. Not Yókoháma but Yo–ko–ha–ma.

LONG VOWELS

Sometimes vowels are *long*. When this happens, they carry a *circumflex* accent: ô, â or û, or are *written twice*, eeto, iie. All this

means is that the syllable takes exactly *twice as long to pronounce*:

Tôkyô	To/o/kyo/o
yûbin	yu/u/bi/n
ôkii	o/o/ki/i
eeto	e/e/to
iie	i/i/e

DOUBLE CONSONANTS

There are *doubled consonants*, too. It is very important to distinguish between *kite* and *kitte*, for example. When these occur, merely ‘hold up’ the succeeding vowel for a beat, as if you were saying in English:

He'll bat tenth
Sip Pernod
Ask Keith
This shoe

Practise these sounds:

gakkô	ga/ /kk/o
kippu	ki/ /pu
issho	i/ /sho
atte	a/ /te

shi and su

The sounds *shi* and *su* are exceptions. Especially in verbs, the vowel sound is *hardly pronounced at all*:

desu	de/s(u)
arimasu	a/ri/ma/s(u)
mimashita	mi/ma/sh(i)/ta

This is why the famous Japanese musician Yamashita Tsutomu prefers to write his name in *rômaji*, or Western script, as *Yamash'ta S'tomu* or (since he puts his name European-style with the surname last) *S'tomu Yamash'ta*.

When the syllables *-su* and *-shi* are structurally important they are *fully pronounced*:

PRONUNCIATION

suru	su/ru
sumimasen	su/mi/ma/se/n
suzushii	su/zu/shi/i
shimasen	shi/ma/se/n

Some of this may seem a little complicated at the moment. Listen to your cassette and, after the first few exercises, return to this section. All should then (ideally) become clear.

PITCH

Japanese words and phrases are pronounced very evenly, and stress is used only to *emphasise meaning*. However, the spoken language tends to vary in pitch. A normal sentence will begin on a 'high' note and finish on a 'low' one:

Kore wa /
kanai desu

Questions usually have an interrogative 'lift' towards the end, much like English:

ka?
Kaban wa /
ôkii desu /

As in any language, the best way to acquire the correct intonation is to imitate native speakers. It is easier to theorise *after* practice than *before*!

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE

JAPANESE LANGUAGE

VERBS

Every Japanese sentence ends with a verb which, most of the time, has a sound after it to give *emphasis* or *doubt* or *agreement*, because the Japanese are not very keen on making a definite statement! Japanese communication is really a series of *hints* and *shades of meaning* – which may well be why Japanese poetry is so beautifully enigmatic and why it seems so difficult for Western businessmen in Japan to reach hard and fast agreements!

‘POSTPOSITIONS’

Japanese has been called the ‘mirror-language’ to English and, certainly, where we have *prepositions* – ‘to’ Yokohama – the Japanese have *postpositions*: Yokohama e.

PRONOUNS

There are pronouns in Japanese, but in practice they are very rarely used. Once it is established who it is one is talking about, pronouns are dispensed with. The sentence *Tôkyô e ikimashita* means ‘I, you, he, she, we or they went to Tokyo’, and we would know who in fact went to Tokyo because of the *preceding sentence or sentences*. In the exercises after the following chapters, the assumption most of the time is that it is *you* who are being questioned, so the pronouns are mostly *omitted*. Similarly, in your responses, you can usually leave out the ‘I’. In other words, use pronouns only to *avoid confusion*.

INTRODUCTION

LOOKING AT THE WORLD

Each language is a different way of looking at the world. Accept – and relish – the differences that abound in Japanese, and treat the language on its own terms without comparing it with English or any other language.

It is hoped that *Mastering Japanese* will represent a ‘first stage’, and that the reader will wish to go on experimenting with the language – especially to go on to read and write. On pp. 227–8 there is an introduction to the written language which is intended to whet the student’s appetite for further study.