

Lesson 22

A telephone conversation between John and Tadashi.

- ジョン マリーさんが引っ越しをしたのを知っていますか。
- 正 ええ、二週間ぐらい前に杉並区へ移ったのは知っていますが、電話番号はまだ聞いていません。なぜ引っ越したんですか。
- ジョン よく知りませんが、前のアパートはとてもせまかったし、それに車の音もうるさかったからではありませんか。
- 正 そうでしたね。今度のところはどんなですか。
- ジョン 割りに広いし、静かでいいところでした。
- 正 それはよかったですね。
- ジョン 僕が行ったのは水曜日の午後だったので、となりの小学校の校庭で子供達がさわいでいるのが時々聞こえましたが....。
- 正 まあ、そのくらいは仕方がないですね。ところでジョンさん、あしたの晩はあいてますか。ちょっと話があるのですが....。
- ジョン ええと、あしたは夕方五時から七時ごろまでは会議がありますが、七時半ごろからあいています。
- 正 それじゃ、七時半から八時の間にいつものきっさ店でどうですか。
- ジョン いいですね。それじゃ又その時に。さようなら。
- 正 さようなら。
-

Comment

In Tadashi's first reply we come across the name of a district in Tōkyō called 杉並区. The centre section of the capital is divided into twenty-three such districts called 区. The larger metropolitan area of Tōkyō is known as 東京都 Tōkyō-to, and it is the only prefecture in Japan so designated. Ōsaka and Kyōto are both prefectures, known as 府 (ふ) in this case, and cities, known as 市 (し). All the other prefectures in Japan are called 県 (けん), except for 北海道. The all-inclusive term for Japan as an administrative whole is therefore 都道府県.

22.1 Nominalisation using の

マリーさんが引っ越しをしたのを知っていますか。

When の is added to the plain form of the verb the whole preceding clause is transformed into a noun clause that can then act the role of subject, object or topic with the appropriate particles:

一人で山に登るのは危険です。

Climbing alone is dangerous.

木村さんが時間通りに来ないのはめずらしい。

It is very unusual for Mr Kimura not to come on time.

言うのは易しいが行うのは難しい。

Saying is easy but doing is difficult.

This use of の nominalising a whole clause should be clearly distinguished from those occasions when の is simply substituting directly for another noun (refer back to の as a noun substitute 'the one' in 11.3). In that pattern a sentence such as フランスで買ったハンドバッグは安かった can be changed into フランスで買ったのは安かった, which means 'the one I bought' not 'the buying'. What we are dealing with here is something very different: the transformation of a whole verb phrase into its nominal equivalent.

22.2 The pattern のです/んです

なぜ引っ越したんですか。

ちょっと話があるのですが...

You will frequently come across sentences which end in のだ or んだ (informal), のです or なんです (polite), のである(formal). This addition of ので

す, the literal meaning of which is 'it's that', gives a simple statement certain overtones. It is often employed when the speaker wishes to explain reasons, causes or circumstances to the listener.

あしたは八時過ぎまで会社にいるつもりです。仕事が山ほどあるのです。

I think I shall be in my office until after eight tomorrow. I have a mountainous load of work.

顔色が悪いですね。

You look pale.

今朝からとても頭が痛いんです。

I have had a really bad headache since this morning.

テニスを楽しみますか。

Shall we have a game of tennis?

ええ、でも下手なんです。

Yes, but I'm not very good.

お仕事は何ですか。

What's your job?

まだ学生なんです。

I'm still a student.

This pattern often occurs in a question, particularly with the interrogatives なぜ and どうして, both meaning 'why?', and the assumption is that the speaker is seeking some kind of explanation. Look at the sentence なぜ引っ越したんですか again. It has a similar effect to the English 'why is it that she moved?', although it is used far more often and is somewhat less conspicuous as a result. In fact you will find that this explanatory のです used much more in Japanese than its literal English equivalent might lead you to expect. Notice how the pattern appears in both question and response in the following exchanges.

どうしてきのうは来なかったんですか。

Why didn't you come yesterday?

すみませんでした。急に用事が出来たのです。

Sorry about that. Some business turned up unexpectedly.

なぜだまって行ったんですか。

Why did you go without telling me?

なぜ and どうして are more or less interchangeable and so can be used in both formal and colloquial contexts. If there is any difference, it is that なぜ is slightly less direct and so sounds more polite.

22.3 The particle し as conjunctive;

前のアパートはとてもせまかったし、それに車の音もうるさかったからではありませんか。

し can be used as a conjunctive particle when one is listing a series of factors that lead to some sort of conclusion. し in this usage can be found after any of the following: the copula, descriptive verbs, verbs and adjectival nouns.

彼は健康だし、頭はいいし、礼儀正しいし、全く理想的な青年ですね。

He is healthy, intelligent and polite; he is really an ideal young man.

この部屋は明るいし、つくえやいすやコンピューターもそろっているし、事務所として申し分ありません。

This room is really ideal for an office because it is light, and it's well equipped with a desk, a chair and a computer.

22.4 こんな/そんな/あんな/どんな

今度のところはどんなですか。

Here is another set of pronouns. こんな 'this kind of', そんな 'that kind of', あんな 'that kind of'. The corresponding interrogative is どんな 'what kind of?', which you have already met in 11.7

どんな色が好きですか。

What kind of colour do you like?

あんな人はきらいです。

I don't like people like that.

そんな話は信じません。

I won't believe such a story.

22.5 The emphatic construction using のは...です

僕が行ったのは水曜日の午後だった

In 11.3 you were introduced to the use of の as a noun substitute. This usage of の can be effective when you wish to invert a sentence in order to emphasise something. Study the following transformations:

金子さんは去年インドへ行きました。

Mr Kaneko went to India last year.

去年インドへ行ったのは金子さんです。

It was Mr Kaneko who went to India last year.

金子さんがインドへ行ったのは去年です。

It was last year that Mr Kaneko went to India.

Similarly,

日本で初めて生の魚を食べた。

I ate raw fish for the first time in Japan.

初めて生の魚を食べたのは日本でだった。

It was in Japan that I first ate raw fish.

Take special care to understand that the の is being used as a substitute for 'person', 'year' and 'place' in these examples. It is *not* creating the kind of generalised 'going' or 'eating', for which we have reserved the term nominalisation. Note how は is being used here, acting as a kind of pivot, de-emphasising its own phrase and drawing attention to what follows.

22.6 Noun clause as the object of perception

となりの小学校の校庭で子供達がさわいでいるのが
時々聞こえました。

As an extension of its role as nominaliser, の is often used with verbs of perception, seeing and hearing, when it can often be translated as the English gerund '...ing'.

(私は)その男が部屋を出るのを見た。

I saw him going out of the room.

lit. I saw his going...

みんなが笑っているのを聞いて私も楽しくなった。

Hearing the others laughing, I also became happy.

さっき、部長が電話でどなっているのが聞こえました。

A little while ago, I could hear our head of department shouting on the telephone.

22.7 仕方がない

そのくらいは仕方がないですね。

仕方がない is a phrase meaning 'there's nothing to be done'. It is commonly used when expressing resignation of the 'well, we'll just have to put up with it' variety. Take note that in fact we have another example of the stative は...が construction here.

Key to conversation

Romanisation

Jon	Mari san ga hikkoshi o shita no o shitte imasu ka.
Tadashi	Ē, nishūkan gurai mae ni Suginami-ku e utsutta no wa shitte imasu ga, denwa bangō wa mada kiite imasen. Naze hikkoshitan desu ka.
Jon	Yoku shirimasen ga, mae no apāto wa totemo semakatta shi, sore ni kuruma no oto mo urusakatta kara de wa arimasen ka.
Tadashi	Sō deshita ne. Kondo no tokoro wa donna desu ka.
Jon	Wari ni hiroi shi, shizuka de ii tokoro deshita.
Tadashi	Sore wa yokatta desu ne.
Jon	Boku ga itta no wa suiyōbi no gogo datta no de, tonari no shōgakkō no kōtei de kodomotachi ga sawaide iru no ga tokodoki kikoemashita ga...
Tadashi	Ma, sono kurai wa shikata ga nai desu ne. Tokoro de Jon san, ashita no ban wa aitemasu ka. Chotto hanashi ga aru no desu ga...
Jon	Ēto, ashita wa yūgata goji kara shichiji goro made wa kaigi ga arimasu ga, shichijihan goro kara aite imasu.
Tadashi	Sore ja, shichijihan kara hachiji no aida ni itsumo no kissaten de dō desu ka.
Jon	Ii desu ne. Sore ja mata sono toki ni. Sayōnara.
Tadashi	Sayōnara.

Translation

John	Do you know that Marie has moved?
Tadashi	Yes, I knew she had moved to Suginami ward about two weeks ago, but I haven't got her telephone number yet. Why did she move?
John	I don't really know, but wasn't it because her previous flat was too small and also noisy from the traffic?

Tadashi So it was. What kind of a place does she have now?

John It's comparatively spacious, and it's nice and quiet.

Tadashi That is good isn't it.

John It was Wednesday afternoon when I went there, and so from time to time I could hear children making a lot of noise in the primary school playground next door /

Tadashi Well, not much you can do about that kind of thing. John, I was wondering, are you free tomorrow night? There's something I want to talk to you about /

John Let me see now, tomorrow from five until about seven I have a meeting, but I'm free after seven thirty.

Tadashi In that case, how about between seven thirty and eight in the usual coffee shop?

John That sounds's fine. I'll see you then then. Good-bye.

Tadashi Good-bye.
