

is only a minor one (however major it may be!) Expressions such as **Sō desu ne/nē** ('Is that so?'), **Naruhodo** ('Really?') or **Kangaete okimasu** ('I'll think about it') often mean 'No'.

Remember: being vague is, generally speaking, polite; being precise may be perceived as **rikutsuppoi** ('argumentative').

Thank you letter

After a visit to a Japanese organization, it is important to write a letter thanking those who showed you round. It does not need to be long and English will normally suffice. Not doing this is regarded as a major breach in etiquette, even if there is an awareness that such formalities are not treated so seriously in other countries.

It is usual to thank the people who looked after you during your visit, using such expressions as **Taihen o-sewa ni narimashita** ('Thank you for everything you did for me'), when you next phone them, even if six months have elapsed since the visit.

Solving business problems

Because of cultural differences, including the Japanese use of vagueness as an indication of politeness, misunderstandings are common. This is often the stage when business arrangements fall through. Patience will be rewarded, but a few angry words could finish a long-term relationship.

The Japanese will never say 'No'! Don't think that you've got a 'yes' because they are smiling politely and saying **hai** or **ē** frequently. Most of the time these words mean 'I am listening to you', rather than 'yes'. This also explains why **hai** and **ē** are used so frequently on the phone. A lack of such **aizuchi** ('interjections') when speaking Japanese will make the other person feel insecure.

The businesswoman in Japan

Although things are changing slowly, the world of business in Japan is still more male-dominated than in Britain. Women are often expected to stop working when they have children, and need to work harder to obtain managerial posts. Some Japanese men may feel disorientated or even threatened by a Western businesswoman.

UNIT SIX

Here we meet the other sort of Japanese adjective, the 'Na adjective', and learn how to say 'Is it all right to ...?', 'Please don't ...', and 'You mustn't ...'. Finally, the **-n da** construction is introduced.

Structure 50: Na adjectives

A', **taihen da**.

How **awful!** (Literally, 'Oh, it's awful!')

Shizuka desu ne.

It's **quiet**, isn't it?

Daijōbu datta.

It was **all right**.

Totemo kantan deshita ne.

It was **very simple**, wasn't it?

Sono repōto wa yūmei de, daredemo shitte imasu.

That report is **famous** and everybody knows (of) it.

Kare no jōdan wa hontō ni okashikatta desu.

His joke was **really funny**.

CHECKNOTES 50

- As mentioned in Structure 40, 'Na adjectives' are adjectives which end in anything except **-ai**, **-ii**, **-ui** or **-oi**.
- The endings of **Na** adjectives are the same as for **da** ('is', 'are', etc.). Hence:
 - The Plain present of **Na** adjectives ends in **da**.
 - The Polite present is made by replacing **da** with **desu**.
 - The Plain past is made by replacing **da** with **datta**.
 - The Polite past is made by replacing **da** with **deshita**.
 - The **-te** form is made by replacing **da** with **de**.
- In addition, it is possible to make adverbs by replacing **da** with **ni**. As with **I** adjectives, **naru** ('become', 'get') requires an adverb, for example: **kanō ni naru** ('become possible').

Checklist 50

shinrai suru	trust
a'	oh! (exclamation of surprise); often followed by a glottal stop, indicated here by a ' every/body
daredemo	convenient
benri da	ill
byōki da	impossible.
fu-kanō da	well; lively
genki da	necessary
hitsuyō da	true; hontō ni really
hontō da	possible
kanō da	simple
kantan da	international
kokusai-teki da	quiet
shizuka da	honest
shōjiki da	awful
taihen da	noisy
urusai	famous
yūmei da	

FLUENCY PRACTICE 50

Translate the following sentences into English:

- 1 O-genki desu ka. Hai, o kage-sama de.
- 2 Sumimasen ga, sore wa fu-kanō desu.
- 3 Sono hōteru wa shizuka desu ga, ano hōteru wa urusai desu.
- 4 Atarashii konpyūtā gā hitsuyō ni narimashita. (Ga rather than wa indicates the subject here, as new information is introduced.)
- 5 Nihon no chika-tetsu wa benri de yasui desu.

Translate the following sentences into Japanese:

- 6 My wife is ill.
- 7 I, etc. need this magazine. (This magazine is necessary.)
- 8 This product is very convenient.
- 9 He is an internationally famous architect.
- 10 He is honest and [you] can trust [him].

Structure 51: Adjectives before nouns

Hontō ni **suteki na** pūrezento desu.
It's a really lovely present.

CHECKNOTES 51

- a) When a Na adjective comes before a noun, **da** is replaced by **na**.
- b) Three I adjectives, **okii** ('big'), **chisaii** ('small') and **okashii** ('funny'), may be used as they are before a noun, but often the forms **ōki na**, **chiisa na** and **okashi na** are found. For example:
Okashi na hanashi desu ne. ('It's a funny story. [isn't it?])
Okashii hanashi desu ne is also possible.
Forms such as 'ōki da', 'ōki datta', 'ōki de wa nai', etc., do NOT occur. Use **ōkii**, **ōkikatta**, **ōkiku nai**, etc., for 'big', 'was big', 'is not big', respectively.
- c) There is a small group of adjectives, including **byōki da** ('ill'), **hontō da** ('true') and **tsugi da** ('next'), which take **no** instead of **na** when they come before a noun. They are best thought of as honorary Na adjectives, as all other forms are the same as for Na adjectives. From now on, they will be marked in the Checklists **byōki (no)**, etc.

Checklist 51

wasureru	forget
baka da	stupid
dajji da	important
iya da	unpleasant; dislike (see Structure 53)
kirei da	beautiful
nigiyaka da	lively
suteki da	lovely
joyū	actress (haiyū = actor)
keiken	experience
machi	street; town, city
niwa	garden

FLUENCY PRACTICE 51

Translate the following sentences into English:

- 1 Asoko wa kirei na niwa desu ne.
- 2 Amari kirei na biru de wa arimasen.
- 3 Rondon wa shizuka na machi de wa arimasen.
- 4 Baka na koto o shimashita.
- 5 Daiji na mono o wasuremashita.

Translate the following sentences into Japanese:

- 6 That is a big company.
- 7 This is a very convenient product.
- 8 That was an unpleasant experience.
- 9 Shibuya is a lively place (machi).
- 10 Mr Suzuki's wife is a famous actress.

Structure 52: Negative Na adjectives

Kyō amari genki de wa nai.

I, etc. am not very well today.

Koko wa zenzen shizuka de wa arimasen.

It's not at all quiet here.

Omotta hodo fukuzatsu de wa nakatta.

It wasn't as complicated as I, etc. had thought.

Nihon ryokō no shashin wa kirei de wa arimasen deshita.

The photographs from the Japan trip were not beautiful.

Kare wa amari majime de wa nakute, ichi-nichi-jū asonde iru yo.

He's not very serious and plays (around) all day long.

CHECKNOTES 52

- a) The Plain present negative is made by replacing **da** with **de wa nai**.
- b) The Polite present negative is made by replacing **da** with **de wa arimasen**. (In colloquial speech, the Polite present negative may also be formed by replacing **da** with **de wa nai desu**.)
- c) The Plain past negative is formed by replacing **da** with **de wa nakatta**.

d) The Polite past negative is formed by replacing **da** with **de wa arimasen deshita**. (Again, in colloquial speech, the Polite past negative may also be formed by replacing **da** with **de wa nakatta desu**.)

e) The negative **-te** form is made by replacing **da** with **de wa nakute**.

Checklist 52

asobu	play
ichi-nichi-jū	all day long
omotta hodo	(set phrase) as I, etc. had thought
jōzu da	good at
majime da	serious (more positive in Japanese than in English)
omotta hodo	(set phrase) as I, etc. had thought
seikaku da	accurate
taiseitsu da	important
tekitō da	suitable
basho	place; (here) location
kōen	park
ryokō	trip
sūji	figure

FLUENCY PRACTICE 52

Translate the following sentences into English:

- 1 Hitsuyō de wa arimasen deshita.
- 2 Kono sūji wa seikaku de wa arimasen.
- 3 Sono konsarutanto wa amari yūmei de wa arimasen.
- 4 Nihon-go wa sūkoshi dekimasu ga, jōzu de wa arimasen.
- 5 Nagoya no hōteru no basho wa amari benri de wa arimasen deshita.

Translate the following sentences into Japanese:

- 6 That isn't suitable.
- 7 The exam wasn't very simple.
- 8 The manual isn't complicated.
- 9 The park wasn't very quiet.
- 10 That wasn't very important.

Structure 53: Japanese adjectives → English verbs

Nihon ryōri ga suki desu.

I, etc. like Japanese cookery.

Nihon-go ga o-jōzu desu ne.

You are good at Japanese (aren't you)?

CHECKNOTES 53

a) Certain adjectives (both I adjectives like **hoshii** ['want'] and Na adjectives like **suki da** ['like'] and **kirai da** ['dislike']) translate into English as verbs.

b) Note that in such expressions, the objects take **ga** rather than **o**. (**Ga** normally indicates the subject.) For example, **Nomi-mono ga hoshii desu ne** ('I want a drink'). **Ne** is used here to soften the tone of the sentence, by seeking the agreement of the listener. Otherwise **hoshii desu** would sound rather abrupt.

c) **O-** may be used with **jōzu da** and **suki da**, when referring to other people 'being good at' and 'liking' things, respectively, in the same way as it is used with **O-genki desu ka** ('Are you well?').

Checklist 53

amai	sweet
heta da	be bad at
hoshii	want
itai	painful
kirai da	dislike
nigate da	be weak at
ōi	many
suki da	like
atama	head
firumu	film (for a camera)
ha	tooth
joggingu	jogging
nattō	fermented soya beans

musume	(my, etc.) daughter; musuko my, etc. son
o-kashi	Japanese sweets/cakes
onaka	stomach
suei	swimming
yaki-tori	Japanese-style grilled chicken

FLUENCY PRACTICE 53

Translate the following sentences into English:

- 1 ^{Watashi} Watashi wa Nihon-go ga nigate de ...
- 2 Yaki-tori wa o-suki desu ka.
- 3 Kare wa suei ga suki de, watashi wa joggingu ga suki desu.
- 4 Kare-ra wa Nihon-go ga jōzu desu ga, watashi wa heta desu.
- 5 Tōkyō wa hito ga ōi desu.

Translate the following sentences into Japanese:

- 6 Do you like Japanese cakes?
- 7 [I] don't want that.
- 8 [I] have a head-ache/tooth-ache/stomach-ache.
- 9 [I]'m not good at Japanese.
- 10 My daughter dislikes nattō.

Structure 54: (Verb)-te mo ii desu ka ('May I ...')

Haitte mo ii desu ka.

Is it all right to go in?

CHECKNOTES 54

a) (Verb)-te mo ii desu ka is often translated as 'Is it all right to ...' but the general sense it conveys equates to 'May I, etc. ...?', 'Is it O.K. if I, etc. ...?'

Checklist 54

akeru	open (something); but aku (something) opens
o-ai suru	meet (Hum.)
o-hanashi suru	speak (Hum.)
mado	window

... ni tsuite about ...; ... ni tsuite hanasu talk about ...;
yushutsu kachō export director (literally, 'export section head')

FLUENCY PRACTICE 54

Translate the following sentences into English:

- 1 Yushutsu kachō to o-hanashi shite mo ii deshō ka.
- 2 Shachō ni o-ai shite mo ii deshō ka.
- 3 Kaigi ni tsuite hanashite mo ii desu ka.
- 4 Denwa o shite/kakete mo ii desu ka.
- 5 Sūkoshi koko de yasunde mo ii deshō ka.

Translate the following sentences into Japanese:

- 6 May [I] take photos?
- 7 Do you mind if [I] smoke?
- 8 Is [it] all right to read that newspaper?
- 9 Do you mind if [I] open a window?
- 10 Is [it] all right to speak in English?

Structure 55: (Verb)-naide kudasai ('Please don't ...')

Sono dentō o tsukenaide kudasai.
Please don't switch that light on.

CHECKNOTES 55

- a) (Verb)-naide kudasai is the negative of (Verb)-te kudasai ('Please [verb]') (Structure 34). It is formed by attaching -de kudasai to the Plain present negative (Structure 44).
- b) As we saw in Structure 36, mae ni means 'before ...ing' when used after the Plain present form of the verb: for example, iku mae ni ('before going'). When expressing the idea of before a point in time, no mae ni is normally used: for example, moku-yōbi no mae ni ('before Thursday'). However, no is dropped after -ji ('o'clock'): ni-ji-mae ni ('before two o'clock').

Checklist 55

enryo suru be restrained (a virtue, in Japanese society), hold back
haku wear (of trousers, footwear)
kiru wear (of clothes); hence ki-mono literally, 'wear thing'
tsukeru switch/turn/put on
dentō (electric) light
ie house
koe voice; ōki na koe de in a loud (literally, 'big') voice
kutsu shoes
naka inside

FLUENCY PRACTICE 55

Translate the following sentences into English:

- 1 Tabako o suwanaide kudasai.
- 2 Koko de shashin o toranaide kudasai.
- 3 Enryo shinaide kudasai.
- 4 Raishū no happyō no mae ni nanimo iwanaide kudasai.
- 5 Roku-ji-mae ni denwa o kakenaide kudasai.

Translate the following sentences into Japanese:

- 6 Please don't use this [one].
- 7 Please don't push that button.
- 8 Please don't wear [your] shoes in the house (use ie no naka de).
- 9 Please don't go by taxi.
- 10 Please don't talk in a loud voice.

Structure 56: (verb)-te wa ikemasen ('mustn't')

Tabako o sutte wa ikemasen.
You/One musin't smoke.

CHECKNOTES 56

- a) The (verb)-**te wa ikemasen** structure is used most often when explaining signs and rules, rather than when telling other people what not to do!

Checklist 56

kamu	bite; but NOT in hana o kamu blow one's nose!
shigoto o suru	work
tomeru	stop (something) (takes ni , not de , to indicate place)
biza	viza
hakubutsu-kan	museum
hana	nose
hoka (no)	other
kōkyō (no)	public
meue no hito	a superior (literally, 'above', ue , 'the eyes', me)
-nashi ni	without ...
... no toki ni	during; kaigi no toki ni during the conference
yori saki ni	(do something) before (somebody) (follows noun)

FLUENCY PRACTICE 56

Translate the following sentences into English:

- 1 Hoka no kaisha no hito ni itte wa ikemasen.
- 2 Meue no hito yori saki ni kaette wa ikemasen.
- 3 Biza-nashi ni Nihon de shigoto o shite wa ikemasen.
- 4 Kōkyō no basho de hana o kande wa ikemasen.
- 5 Toshō-kan desu kara, ōki na koe de hanashite wa ikemasen.

Translate the following sentences into Japanese:

- 6 [You] mustn't take photos in the museum. (Use **hakubutsu-kan no naka de wa** – literally, 'at the museum's inside'.)
- 7 [You] mustn't stop [your] car there. (Use **ni**, not **de**, before **tomeru**.)
- 8 [You] mustn't wait there. (Use **matte iru** rather than **matsu**.)
- 9 [You] mustn't drink coffee before going to bed.
- 10 [You] mustn't speak English during the meeting.

Structure 57: (Plain verb/adjective) + n da

Jikan ga aru n desu ka.

So you've got time (on your hands), have you?

Dō shita n desu ka. Iya, daijōbu desu.

What's wrong? (Literally, 'How did you do?') I'm all right.

CHECKNOTES 57

- a) **N da** has no direct equivalent in English. It is used extremely frequently to indicate that one is giving or requesting an explanation.

For example, if you had no evidence for it, but wanted to ask somebody if he or she was going out at some point, you would say: **Dekakemasu ka**.

If, however, you noticed that somebody was putting on his or her shoes, you could say **Dekakeru n desu ka**. In this situation, the Japanese can be paraphrased as something like 'So, you're going out, are you?'

- b) When used in requests for help, **n desu ga** ... enables you to be vague (good in a Japanese context!) about the exact form of help you require:

Shinjuku ni ikitai n desu ga ... ('I'd like to go to Shinjuku, but ...').

- c) The **n da** structure can cause offence (see the first example!), if wrongly used, so it is best not to use it unless you're sure it means what you want it to.

Checklist 57

hiku	catch (of colds)
tsuzukeru	continue (something); c.f. tsuzuku (something) continues
dono kurai	how long?
gurai	about (follows noun)
iya	no (not translatable here. Women would be more likely to use ie in this sort of context.)

-kagetsu

counter for months (duration). Note: 1 month: **ikkagetsu**; 6 months: **rokkagetsu**; 8 months: **hakkagetsu**; 10 months: **jukkagetsu** (**jikkagetsu**)
 a cold; **kaze o hiku** catch a cold
 detailed **kuwashiku** in detail
 counter for years (duration). Note: 4 years: **yonen(kan)**
 how to use (from **tsukau**, 'use', and **kata**, 'way')

kaze**kuwashii****-nen(kan)****tsukai-kata****FLUENCY PRACTICE 57**

Translate the following sentences into English:

- 1 Itta n desu ka.
- 2 Wāpuro o kaitai n desu ga ...
- 3 Ōsaka Kagaku ni tsuite kuwashiku shiritai n desu ga ...
- 4 Konpyūta no tsukai-kata ga wakaranai n desu ga ...
- 5 Nihon-go ga jōzu desu ne. Dono kurai benkyō shita n desu ka. Yon-kagetsu gurai benkyō shimashita.

Translate the following sentences into Japanese:

- 6 [You]re going home then?
- 7 I'd like to reserve a room.
- 8 I'd like to meet Miss Kurita.
- 9 What's wrong? [I]ve got a head-ache.
- 10 [You]re good at golf. How long have you been playing (Honoric)? [I]ve been playing (Humble) for about four years. (Note that Japanese uses the present continuous [-te iru, etc.] when referring to actions which started in the past and continue into the present. English uses 'have been ...ing'.)

CONVERSATION 16: Nihon-go ga o-jōzu desu ne
(**'You're good at Japanese'**)

Mise no hito: Nihon-go ga o-jōzu desu ne.

Deibido Shimisu: Iya, sonna koto wa arimasen. Madamada desu ...

Person in shop: You're good at Japanese.

David Smith: No, really. I'm still learning ...

Notes on Conversation 16

- a) **Sonna koto wa arimasen** means literally 'there isn't such a thing'.
- b) In **Madamada desu** ('I'm not [good at it] yet'), **madamada** means 'still', 'yet', and **desu** is being used to replace some expression meaning that one is not good at Japanese, in order to avoid accepting the compliment.

CONVERSATION 17: Kaisha uketsuke nite
(**'At the company reception'**)

Deibido Shimisu: Roiyaru Fānichā no Shimisu desu. Eigyō-bu 3(san)-ka no Suzuki-san ni o-ai shitai n desu ga.
Uketsuke no hito: Nan-ji no o-yakusoku desu ka.
Deibido Shimisu: 10(Jū)-ji desu.

Uketsuke no hito: Shōshō o-machi kudasai. Sore de wa, go-annai itashimasu. (They walk down the corridor.) Kochira e dōzo. Suzuki wa sugu ni mairimasu node, o-kake ni natte o-machi kudasai.

Deibido Shimisu: Hai, dōmo arigatō gozaimasu.

David Smith: I'm Smith from Royal Furniture. I'd like to see Mr Suzuki in the 3rd sales section.

Receptionist: What time is your appointment?

David Smith: Ten o'clock.

Receptionist: Please wait a moment. I'll take you there ...

Please step this way. Mr Suzuki is on his way, so please take a seat and wait (here).

David Smith: Thank you.

Notes on Conversation 17

- a) **Go-annai itashimasu** ('I'll take you there') is the Humble form of **go-annai shimasu**, which, in turn, is the Humble form of **annai shimasu**. **Annai suru** means 'guide'.
- b) New words and phrases:
Kochira e dōzo. This way, please.
o-kake ni naru Honorific form of (**koshi o**) **kakeru** sit
o-yakusoku Honorific form of **yakusoku** appointment
sugu ni immediately (**ni** makes **sugu** sound more precise)

CONVERSATION 18: **Hoteru no resepsushon nite: chekku auto**

('At the hotel reception: checking out')

Deibiddo Sūmisu: 1012 (ichi zero ichi ni)-gōshitsu no Deibiddo Sūmisu desu. Chekku auto o shitai n desu ga.

Uketsuke no hito: Shōshō o-machi kudasai. ... O-matase itashimashita. O-tomari to, go-riyō ni nararemashita o-denwa, o-shokuji, o-nomi-mono o fukumemashite ¥125,000 (jū-ni-man-go-sen'en) de gozaimasu. O-shiharai wa ikaga nasaimasu ka.

Deibiddo Sūmisu: Kādo de o-negai shimasu.

Uketsuke no hito: Shōchi itashimashita. Kochira ni sain o o-negai shimasu.

Deibiddo Sūmisu: Hai.

Uketsuke no hito: Arigatō gozaimashita. Kochira ga reshīto de gozaimasu.

David Smith: I'm David Smith from room 1012. I'd like to check out, please.

Receptionist: Please wait a moment. ... Sorry to keep you waiting. It's ¥125,000 including accommodation, telephone, food and drink. How would you like to pay?

David Smith: By card, please.

Receptionist: Thank you. Please sign here.

David Smith: Yes.

Receptionist: Thank you very much. This is your receipt.

Notes on Conversation 18

- a) **O-matase itashimashita** ('Sorry to keep you waiting') is the Humble form of **O-matase shimashita**.
- b) In **go-riyō ni nararemashita o-denwa** ('the telephone which you have used'), **go-riyō ni naru** is the Honorific form of **riyō suru** ('use'), which is more formal than **tsukau**. **Narareru** is the Passive of **naru**, here used as another Honorific expression. Putting the verb before **o-denwa** creates a relative clause, 'the telephone which you have used' (see Structure 61).
- c) ... **o fukumemashite** is the Polite form of ... **o fukumete** ('including'). It is not usually necessary to use the form in **-mashite**, the Polite **-te** form, except in extremely polite speech.
- d) **O-shiharai wa ikaga nasaimasu ka** ('How will you pay?') is literally 'What will you do (Honorific) about payment?'
- e) **Kādo de o-negai shimasu** means '[I'd like to pay] by card please.'
- f) **Shōchi itashimashita** is the Humble form of **Shōchi shimashita** ('certainly'). **Shōchi suru** literally means 'know', 'understand'. It is more formal than **wakaru**.
- g) **Arigatō gozaimashita** ('thank you') is more polite than **arigatō gozaimasu**, but can only be used at the end of a conversation.
- h) In **Kochira ga reshīto de gozaimasu**, **ga** is used instead of **wa**, as there has been no previous mention of the receipt.
- i) New words:
kādo (credit) card
o-shiharai Hon. form of **shiharai** payment (from **harau**, 'pay')
o-shokuji Hon. form of **shokuji** meal
o-tomari Hon. form of **tomari** accommodation (from **tomaru**, 'stay'; 'stop')
reshīto = ryōshū-sho receipt
sain signature (from 'sign')

USEFUL PHRASES

Saying 'goodbye'

One of the most common ways for adults to say 'goodbye' is:

De wa, kore de shitsurei shimasu.

Shitsurei shimasu literally means 'to be rude', i.e. 'I'll be rude (and go)'. **Kore de** means literally 'with this', but is untranslatable here.

Sayōnara for 'goodbye' can sound a little childish. Beware: English speakers tend to mispronounce it 'Sayonāra'.

Other useful phrases for when you leave

Sorosoro ... It's time I/we ... (literally, 'slowly'!)

De wa, raishū made. See you next week.

Chikai uchi ni mata o-ai shimashō. Let's meet again soon.

Thanking somebody for their help/time

Go-shinsetsu ni dōmo arigatō gozaimashita.

That's been very kind of you.

Here, **go-shinsetsu** is the Honorific form of **shinsetsu** ('kind').

O-sewa ni narimashita.

Thank you for being so helpful to me.

At the end of a meeting or tour

O-ai dekite totemo ureshii desu.

I'm very pleased to have met you.

O-ai dekiru is 'be able to meet' (Hum.). **Suru koto ga** is omitted.

(Kore kara mo) dōzo yoroshiku o-negai shimasu/itashimasu.
I look forward to your help/working with you (in the future).

INFORMATION: Etiquette

Politeness

Harmony and agreement are greatly valued in Japan, and it is considered impolite to be assertive about one's opinions, particularly where these differ from the general consensus. Clearly there will be certain situations where it is necessary to state one's opinion, for example when discussing a joint business plan, but it is advisable to emphasize the points of agreement before noting any possible bones of contention.

Punctuality

In Japan, it is usual to arrive 5 or 10 minutes early for a business appointment, and on time or 5 minutes late for a social appointment.

Bowing (ojigi)

The Japanese do not usually shake hands among themselves, as there is a taboo on physical contact in public. However, bowing is very common. People bow when they meet or part, and when they give each other things (such as presents and business cards). They also bow on the phone! Generally, the deeper the bow, the more politely it is perceived. You will find that you acquire this custom naturally. The main thing is to avoid exaggerated and jerky bowing.

Doing your groundwork (ne-mawashi)

Originally an agricultural term (literally, 'turning the roots') **ne-mawashi** (doing the groundwork) is how the Japanese avoid the damaging confrontations which afflict business in other countries. It involves checking that all parties are in agreement before decisions are made.

Debts of gratitude (on)

Most people who have been to Japan are struck with the generosity of the Japanese, and you are likely to return home laden with gifts.

However, a word of warning: each time you receive a present or favour, you incur **on** ('a debt of gratitude'). At some time in the future, you will need to pay back this **on**. This process is known as **on-gaeshi** (literally, 'returning the debt of gratitude'). If a gift strikes you as too extravagant, give some thought as to what may be expected in return.

Food

Most Japanese restaurants have plastic models of the food on the menu outside, which can always be used as a last resort if you are unlucky enough to find a restaurant without an English menu. Japanese food causes few problems, although it is probably a good idea to make up your mind whether you are going to be a **sushi-tsū** ('raw fish aficionado') in a Japanese restaurant in the U.K., before you go. The other main items which tend to cause problems are **nattō** ('fermented soya beans'), raw eggs (**nama-tamago**) and Japanese pickles (**tsuke-mono**).

Shoes

An invitation to visit a Japanese home is unusual and quite an honour. Should you be fortunate enough to receive one, it is important to remember that shoes are not generally worn in the home. These should therefore be removed in the hall.

Nose blowing

Never blow your nose in public in Japan. Nose blowing is perceived as a private activity, virtually in the same category as going to the toilet. Should the need arise, either excuse yourself and leave the room, or if necessary, try to survive with discreet suffering.

UNIT SEVEN

We will learn how to talk about past experiences, meet the Plain equivalent of **-mashō** ('let's') and see how to say 'say that ...' and 'think that ...'. This Unit also covers relative clauses in Japanese, verbs of giving and receiving, and how to say 'it's best to ...' and 'may'.

Structure 58: (verb)-ta koto ga aru

Nihon ni itta koto ga arimasu.

I, etc. have been to Japan.

Igirisu ni itta koto ga arimasu ka.

Have you ever been to the U.K.?

CHECKNOTES 58

a) (Verb)-ta koto ga aru indicates that one has had an experience. In questions, it corresponds to 'ever' in English.

Checklist 58

keiken suru	experience
Fuji-san	Mount Fuji
gaikoku	abroad
jishin	earthquake
Nihon-shu = Nihon no sake	Japanese rice wine

FLUENCY PRACTICE 58

Translate the following sentences into English:

- 1 Fuji-san o mita koto ga arimasu. I have seen Mount Fuji.
- 2 Nihon-shu o nonda koto ga arimasu. I have drunk Japanese wine.
- 3 Sono hon o yonda koto ga arimasu ka. Have you ever read that book?
- 4 Gaikoku ni itta koto ga arimasu ka. Have you ever been to overseas countries?
- 5 Jishin o keiken shita koto ga arimasu ka. Have you ever experienced earthquakes?