

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #9

Asking a Japanese Question

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#9

DIALOGUE - JAPANESE

KANJI

1. テイラー : これは…おかしですか。
2. まさと : はい、そうです。にほんのおかしです。
3. かおり : そうです。ようかんです。
4. テイラー : よ・う・か・ん？

ENGLISH

1. Taylor : Are these sweets?
2. Masato : Yes, that's right. They're Japanese sweets.
3. Kaori : Right. They're "yokan."
4. Taylor : Yo-ka-n?

RŌMAJI

1. Teirā : Kore wa... o-kashi desu ka.
2. Masato : Hai, sō desu. Nihon no o-kashi desu.
3. Kaori : Sō desu. Yōkan desu.
4. Teirā : Yo, u, ka, n?

HIRAGANA

1. テイラー : これは…おかしですか。
2. まさと : はい、そうです。にほんのおかしです。
3. かおり : そうです。ようかんです。
4. テイラー : よ・う・か・ん？

VOCABULARY

Kanji	Kana	Romaji	English	Class
はい、そうです。	はい、そうです。	Hai, sō desu.	Yes, that's right.	
野菜	やさい	yasai	vegetables	noun
日本の	にほんの	Nihon no	Japanese (item, thing)	
お菓子	おかし	o-kashi	sweets, snacks, candy	noun phrase
これ	これ	kore	this	noun
魚	さかな	sakana	fish	noun
ようかん	ようかん	yōkan	soft sweet red bean jelly	
日本	にほん	Nihon	Japan	proper noun
肉	にく	niku	meat	noun

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>たなかさんですか。 - はい、そうです。 <i>Tanaka-san desu ka. - Hai, sou desu.</i> Are you Mr. Tanaka? - Yes, I am.</p>	<p>それは野菜です。 <i>Sore wa yasai desu.</i> That's a vegetable.</p>
<p>これは日本のおかしです。 <i>Kore wa nihon no okashi desu.</i> These are Japanese sweets.</p>	<p>アメリカのお菓子です。 <i>Amerika no o-kashi desu.</i> These are American snacks.</p>
<p>これは何ですか。 <i>Kore wa nan desu ka.</i> What is this?</p>	<p>それは魚です。 <i>Sore wa sakana desu.</i> That's fish.</p>
<p>これは、ようかんです。 <i>Kore wa yōkan desu.</i> This is soft sweet red bean jelly.</p>	<p>日本には、四つの主な島と多くの小さな島々がある。 <i>Nihon ni wa, yottsu no omo na shima to ōku no chiisa na shimajima ga aru.</i> Japan has four main islands and many smaller ones.</p>
<p>日本の島々 <i>Nihon no shimajima</i> islands of Japan</p>	<p>日本の県 <i>Nihon no ken</i> prefectures of Japan</p>
<p>日本の首相 <i>Nihon no shushō</i> Prime Minister of Japan</p>	<p>これは日本の車です。 <i>Kore wa Nihon no kuruma desu.</i> This is a Japanese car.</p>

肉の品揃え <i>niku no shinazoroe</i> selection of meat	肉をバーベキューする <i>niku o bābekyū suru</i> barbecue meat
肉を挽いて、スープに入れなさい。 <i>Niku o hiite, sūpu ni irenasai.</i> Mince the meat, and put it in the soup.	これは肉です。 <i>Kore wa niku desu.</i> This is meat.

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

★ *okashi* (おかし)

A general word for "sweets" or "snacks" (includes cookies, candies, crackers, and the like).

★ *nihon no* (日本の)

In the dialogue, we had the phrase *nihon no okashi*, which translates to "Japanese sweets." *Nihon no* means "Japanese," and it can come before the name of any item to describe it as Japanese.

For Example:

1. *Nihon no okashi*
"Japanese sweets"
2. *Nihon no furūtsu*
"Japanese fruit" (*furūtsu* = "fruit")

★ *sō desu*

When Taylor asked whether the snacks he received were sweets, Masato responded with *hai, sō desu*. As we learned before, *hai* means "yes." We also use the phrase *sō desu* to affirm something, and so it is similar to the phrase "that's right" in English. You will find that this is very common way to respond to questions!

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is Asking Questions.

Kore wa... o-kashi desu ka.

これは・・・おかしですか。

"Are these sweets?"

In Lessons 7 and 8, you learned how to say what something is with the sentence pattern **[A] wa [B] desu** ("A is B," for example "This is water"). In this lesson, you'll learn how to turn that very sentence into a question: "Is A B?" ("Is this water?") In English, turning a statement into a question requires changing the sentence order all around, but not in Japanese! We'll show you how easy it is.

Lesson Focus: Making Questions

Let's take a sentence that uses our "A is B" sentence pattern that we learned in Lesson 7.

For Example:

1. *Kore wa okashi desu.*
これはおかしです。
"These are sweets."

Let's say you have a plate of snacks in front of you that look sweet...but you can't really tell! To turn the sentence above into a question ("These are sweets" → "Are these sweets?"), we simply add **ka** to the end of the sentence.

So now you can ask:

1. *Kore wa okashi desu ka.*
これはおかしですか。
"Are these sweets?"

Let's try it with some other sentences:

Sentence	"English"	→	Question	"English"
<i>Kore wa mizu desu.</i> (これはみずです。)	"This is water."	→	<i>Kore wa mizu desu ka?</i> (これはみずですか?)	"Is this water?"
<i>Kore wa niku desu.</i> (これはにくです。)	"This is meat."	→	<i>Kore wa niku desu ka?</i> (これはにくですか?)	"Is this meat?"
<i>Kore wa sakana desu.</i> (これはさかなです。)	"This is fish."	→	<i>Kore wa sakana desu ka?</i> (これはさかなですか?)	"Is this fish?"
<i>Kore wa yasai desu.</i> (これはやさいです。)	"This is a vegetable."	→	<i>Kore wa yasai desu ka?</i> (これはやさいですか?)	"Is this a vegetable?"
<i>Kore wa furūtsu desu.</i> (これはフルーツです。)	"This is a fruit."	→	<i>Kore wa furūtsu desu ka?</i> (これはフルーツですか?)	"Is this a fruit?"

Examples from This Dialogue

1. *Kore wa.. o-kashi desu ka.*
これは・・・おかしですか。
"Are these sweets?"

Language Tips: Saying "Yes" or "No"

We have touched on how to say "yes" (*hai*) in previous lessons and also learned the phrase *sō desu*, which we also use to affirm something. Let's take a look at how to say "no" as well:

1. "Yes" → */Hai./Hai, so desu.*
はい。/はい、そうです。

2. "No" → / *lie./lie, chigaimasu.*
いいえ。 / いいえ、ちがいます。

CULTURAL INSIGHT

What's *Yōkan*?

In the dialogue, Kaori gave Taylor a gift of *yōkan*, which is sweet, jellied, red-bean paste. It is sold in block form, and we often eat it in slices. There are many different varieties of *yōkan*. Definitely try some if you get a chance!