

IV. Grammar Explanation

1. 謙譲語 (humble expressions)

けんじょうご are expressions in which the speaker humbles himself/herself and lowers his/her own acts to show respect to the listener or the person being referred to. Respect is directed at a person of higher social status or ソトの ひと (an outsider). けんじょうご is also used when the speaker refers to ウチの ひと (an insider) in front of an outsider.

1) お／ご～します

(1) お V (I, II group) ます-form します

① 重そうですね。お持ちしましょうか。

It looks so heavy. Shall I carry it for you?

② 私が 社長に スケジュールを お知らせします。

I will tell the president the schedule.

③ 兄が 車で お送りします。

My elder brother will take you in his car.

In examples ① and ②, the speaker humbles himself/herself by lowering his/her acts to show his/her respect to the listener (①) or the person being referred to (②). In example ③, the action is performed by an insider, not by the speaker.

This form is not applicable to verbs in which the ます-form consists of one mora as in みます or います.

(2) ご V (III group)

④ 江戸東京博物館へ ご案内します。

I will take you to the Edo-Tokyo Museum.

⑤ きょうの 予定を ご説明します。

I will explain today's schedule.

This pattern is applicable to Group III verbs. Other than those verbs given in the examples above, only those verbs which imply some association with the listener such as しょうかいします, しょうたいします, そうだんします and れんらくします can be used. でんわします and やくそくします are exceptions in that お instead of ご precedes them.

[Note] The patterns in (1) and (2) can only be used with acts which involve another person beside the agent of the act. Therefore, they are not applicable to an act that does not involve another person such as the one in the following example.

× 私は 来月 国へ お帰りします。

2) Special humble verbs (See Main Textbook, Lesson 50, p. 204, 練習 A3.)

There are some verbs which contain humble meanings. They are used as follows.

(1) When the speaker's act involves the listener or the person to whom respect is directed:

⑥ 社長の 奥様に お目に かけました。

I met the president's wife.

⑦ あしたは だれか 手伝いに 来て くれますか。

…私が 伺います。

Who will come over to help me tomorrow?

…I will.

(2) When the speaker's act does not involve the listener or the person to whom respect is directed:

⑧ ミラーと 申します。

My name is Miller.

⑨ アメリカから 参りました。

I come from the United States.

2. 丁寧語 (polite expressions)

ていねいご are polite expressions used to show the speaker's respect to the listener.

1) ございます

ございます is the polite equivalent of あります。

⑩ 電話は 階段の 横に ございます。

The pay phone is beside the stairs.

2) ～で ございます

～で ございます is the polite equivalent of です。

⑪ はい、IMCで ございます。

…パワー電気の シュミットですが、ミラーさん、お願いします。

Hello, this is IMC.

…This is Schmidt of Power Electric. May I speak to Mr. Miller?

3) よろしいでしょうか

よろしいでしょうか is a polite equivalent of いいですか。

⑫ お飲み物は 何が よろしいでしょうか。

…コーヒーを お願いします。

What would you like to drink?

…Coffee, please.

⑬ この バンフレットを いただいても よろしいでしょうか。

May I have one of these pamphlets?