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The Fun Japanese Not Found in Textbooks

きれいですね！



#25

March 2020

Jokes • Grammar • Beginner & Intermediate Readers • Culture • JLPT N5 Kanji



this month's reader

# SAKURA

さくら  
桜

# GET

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for your purchase!



Some people cannot get enough of おやじギャグ (dad jokes). Others would sooner spend the afternoon cleaning the gunk out of a clogged drain.

For the latter people, we've heard you! This issue has a new joke form to enjoy. Once you learn the format (like a knock-knock joke), you can search the internet for many other examples.

It is almost time for the beautiful sakura cherry tree blossoms and we decided to make both the beginner and intermediate readers in this issue about the quintessential Japanese tree, the sakura.

Thank you!  
Clay & Yumi

P.S. We just launched Makoto+ a new way to subscribe to this Makoto e-zine. Not only do you get the latest issue (to download), but you also can access several back issues in a new and interactive web-format, get exclusive coupons and discounts, and even the occasional freebie. Check it out and let us know what you think:

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**DOWNLOAD THE MP3s OF THE READER FOR THIS ISSUE:**

<https://www.thejapanesepage.com/makoto25>

## WHO ARE WE?

Nearly two decades ago, Clay & Yumi began **TheJapanesePage.com**, one of the Internet's oldest and largest **free** Japanese instructional sites with hundreds of free articles for beginners of Japanese.

They also maintain **TheJapanShop.com**, a webstore specializing in materials to help learners of Japanese.

Have any questions or comments?

Contact Clay directly at  
[clay@thejapanshop.com](mailto:clay@thejapanshop.com)

## In this Issue:

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- ◆ Vocabulary: Japanese Proverb
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- ◆ Japanese Readers: Japanese Cherry Blossoms (beginner) + Sakura (Intermediate)

# LAUGHS, JOKEs, RIDDLES, AND PUNS

In English, knock-knock jokes set up a question and answer situation. Let's explore a Japanese joke that also has a set formula. This riddle takes two very different things and points out (a usually convoluted) connection between them. The form is Aとかけて、Bと解く。First, look at today's riddle and then study the meaning and the form below.

くさ たまご                      じごうじとく と                      ころ  
腐った卵とかけまして、自業自得と解きます。その心は？

どちらも「きみ」が悪いでしょう。

*kusatta tamago to kakemashite, jigoujitoku to tokimasu. sono kokoro wa?*

*dochiramo "kimi" ga warui deshou.*

[HINT: きみ can be "the yellow of an egg" 卵の黄身 or "you" 君]

## About the form:

なぞかけ (posing a riddle) なぞ—riddle かけ—posing (a riddle) [probably shortened from といかける (to ask a question; to pose a question; to shoot a question)]

Aとかけて—posing question with A and ... [と (question marker) + かけて (te-form of かける (to pose); te-form conjunctive; "A" can be a word or a sentence]

Bと解く—answer as B [と as (quotation marker) + 解く (to answer; to solve)]

その心は?—what is the meaning? [その (that; the) + 心 (meaning) + は (topic marker; most likely it is shortened from その心は何でしょうか? (What would be the meaning of the answer?); 心 usually means "heart", but here it means "the true meaning of the answer" or "the true intention of the answer" which is hidden in one's heart to be revealed.)]



# VOCABULARY

Learn Useful Words, Phrases, and Sayings

## Japanese Proverb

*Look for the MP3 in the download link on the last page.*

じゅうじざい

自由自在

*jiyuu jizai*

*Free as a bird*

Notes: 自由 *jiyuu*—freedom; liberty [自由時間 *jiyuu jikan*—free time; time to do what you wish] + 自在 *jizai*—able to do as one desires [日本語を自在に話せる *nihongo o jizai ni hanaseru*—To be able to speak Japanese freely]

じゅうじざい    ほうちょう    つかう

あのシェフは、自由自在に包丁を使う。

*ano shefu wa, jiyuu jizai ni bouchou o tsukan.*

That chef uses his knife with ease.

あの *ano*—that

シェフ *shefu*—chef

自由自在に *jiyuu jizai ni*—freely

包丁 *bouchou*—knife

使う *tsukan*—use

自由自在

# PREFECTURE SPOTLIGHT

## Saga 佐賀

Japanese: 佐賀県 *saga ken*

Capital: 佐賀 Saga

Population: 815,164 (June 1, 2019)



### DID YOU KNOW?

Kyushu's smallest prefecture hosts a major annual hot air balloon festival.



### PLACES TO SEE:

- **Ogi Park**—one of the best places in Japan to see cherry blossoms.
- **Yoshinogari Site**—a large Yayoi archaeological site with ruins dating back 2,000 years. Ancient structures have been reconstructed making Yoshinogari an interesting place to visit.
- **Saga Balloon Fiesta**—every November, millions of spectators come to see hundreds of huge hot air balloons fly.
- **Surfing and Skiing.**
- **Yutoku Inari Shrine**—one of Japan's three largest Inari shrines.
- **Mochigome**—Saga is Japan's largest producer of *mochigome*, sticky rice used in special foods such as *mochi*, the traditional rice cake made on New Year's Day.

### FAMOUS FOR:

- **Ceramics and Porcelain**—Arita-yaki, Imari-yaki, and Karatsu-yaki are highly priced porcelain from the area.

ごげん  
語源

## ETYMOLOGY

言葉の語源 kotoba no gogen - The origin of words:

てき しお おく

## 敵に塩を送る

## to send salt to an enemy

せんごくじだい かい くに いま やまなしけん たけだしんげん しお た こま  
 戦国時代、甲斐の国（今の山梨県）の武田信玄は、塩が足りなくて困っていま  
 した。すると、ながねん てき えちご いま にいがたけん うえすぎけんしん しお おく  
 した。すると、長年の敵である越後（今の新潟県）の上杉謙信から塩が送られ  
 てきました。この はなし てき こま たす  
 てきました。この 話 から、たとえ敵であっても、困ったときは助けることを  
 てき しお おく い てき よわ づ こ たたか か  
 「敵に塩を送る」と言います。敵の弱みに付け込んで 戦 いに勝つのではな  
 く、あいて せいせいどうどう たたか せいしん い  
 く、相手と正々堂々と 戦 うというフェアプレイの精神とも言えます。

During Warring States Period, Takeda Shingen from Kai no Kuni (today's Yamanashi prefecture) had a problem with not having enough salt. Then, his long-time enemy Uesugi Kenshin from Echigo (today's Niigata prefecture) sent him the needed salt. From this story, helping those in need even if they are your enemies is called "sending salt to an enemy". Instead of using an enemy's weak point to win, fight your enemy with fairness in mind.

てき しお おく  
**敵に塩を送る**  
to send salt to an enemy

にほん せんしゅ じぶん せんしゅ  
**日本のフィギュアスケート選手は、自分のライバル選手がタイツを**  
わす とき じぶん か てき  
**忘れてしまった時、自分のを貸してあげたそうです。これは、敵に**  
しお おく たいど  
**塩を送る態度です。**

I've heard that a Japanese figure skater lent her tights to her rival when her rival forgot her tights.

This is the attitude of sending salt to an enemy.

日本 *nihon*—Japan

日本の *nihon no*—Japanese (figure skater) [の is a modifying particle which basically means “of”, and here it is modifying フィギュアスケート選手 (figure skater)]

フィギュアスケート選手 *figyuasuke-to senshu*—figure skater [フィギュアスケート (figure skating) + 選手 (player; athlete)]

は *wa*—(topic particle)

自分のライバル選手 *jibun no raibaru senshu*—one's rival player [自分の (one's) + ライバル (rival) + 選手 (player)]

が *ga*—(a particle that usually marks the grammatical subject of a sentence)

タイツ *taitsu*—tights

を *o*—(direct object marker)

忘れてしまった *wasurete shimatta*—forgot (accidentally) [忘れて is a *te*-form of 忘れる (to forget; to leave carelessly) + しまった (casual past tense form of しまう (to do something by accident))]

時 *toki*—when...; during...

自分の *jibun no*—one's (tights)

貸してあげた *kashite ageta*—lent for [貸して is a *te*-form of 貸す (to lend) + あげた (casual past tense form of あげる (to give); V-て form + あげる means to do (something) for (someone)]

～そうです *~sou desu*—I heard that; it is said that; people say that [V-casual form + そうです is used to express what something appears to be based on what one heard from other people]

これは *kore wa*—this

敵 *teki*—enemy; opponent; rival

に *ni*—to

塩 *shio*—salt

送る *okuru*—to send

態度 *taido*—attitude; manner; behavior

です *desu*—is; to be [polite copula]

LEVEL  
N4UPPER  
BEGINNER+

# ANIME / MANGA PHRASE

Surprise your Japanese friends with these phrases

*Here are three Secret Arts of the Ninja. Please see the sound files for the pronunciation*

ぶんしん      じゅつ

## 分身の術

*bunshin no jutsu*

Ninja clone technique



A technique used by ninja to create the optical illusion that there are several people through high-speed movement or magic (illusion); 分身 means “part of oneself” or “other self” [分 (part) + 身 (oneself)]. の is a modifier, and it also means “of” or “’s”. 術 means technique.

み   ず   ぐ   も

## 水蜘蛛

*mizugumo*

ninja water-walking shoes; ninja water walking



An ancient device that allowed a ninja to walk on water. It is a pair of flat wooden shoes made out of animal hide stretched over wood. They’re used by ninja to displace the weight of the wearer as he walks across the water, just like the legs of the *mizugumo* (水蜘蛛, “water strider bugs” [水 (water) + 蜘蛛 (spider)])

かく      み      じゅつ

## 隠れ身の術

*kakuremi no jutsu*

ninja art of camouflage



A technique used by ninja to hide from their enemy by camouflaging the body with a cloth that is the same color and pattern as buildings, trees, grass, bushes, etc. 隠れ身 means vanishing from sight (usually via magic, camouflage, etc) [隠 (conceal; hide) + 身 (person)]. の is a modifier, and it also means “of” or “’s”. 術 means technique. )



# HAIKU

Condensed Japanese Language and Culture

LEVEL  
N4

UPPER  
BEGINNER+

## よ さ ぶそん Yosa Buson 与謝 蕪村

(1716-1784)

*Yosa Buson was a Japanese poet and painter during the Edo Period. Basho, Issa, and Buson are considered to be the greatest poets of the Edo Period.*



はる うみ ひねもす かな  
春の海 終日のたりのたり哉

haru / no / umi / hinemosu / notari notari / kana  
Spring | 's | sea | all day long |'s | leisurely

春の海 spring sea; the sea in spring (season) [春 (spring); の ('s); 海 (sea)]

終日 all day long [終日 pronounced "shu-jitsu" in modern Japanese]

のたりのたり (onomatopoeia describing the slow moving of the waves) [Imagine a lazy person moving very slowly in an unwilling manner]

哉 (classical sentence ender that shows emotion or surprise; used in old style poems)

This haiku realistically expresses a very calm spring sea which contrasts with the rougher waves in the winter. Imagine rolling waves shining brilliantly while the warm wind blows against the seashore. A gentle sound and peaceful sight calms your mind and may bring a peaceful fishing village scenery into your imagination.

# KANJI SPOTLIGHT

Learning kanji by kanji parts.



LEVEL

BEGINNER  
JLPT N5

JLPT N5 Kanji

# 紙

On: シ

Kun: かみ

Meaning : paper

Hint: Paper is made up of tiny threads 糸 or fibers.

Stroke Order:

紙 紙 紙 紙 紙 紙  
紙 紙 紙 紙 紙

Examples:

てがみ  
手紙 letter (postal)

わし  
和紙 Japanese style paper

お がみ  
折り紙 origami

かみぶくろ

紙袋 をいただけますか。

May I have a paper bag?

# 文法の時間 GRAMMAR TIME

## まだ



### ABOUT:

“Not yet” or “still.” When まだ is used to describe events that have not yet occurred, it takes a negative verb. With affirmative sentences, it means, “still.”

### HOW TO USE:

■ There is some flexibility in location, but まだ usually occurs right after the subject or object whose condition *still* hasn't changed.

### EXAMPLES:

バスは、<sup>こ</sup>まだ来ない。

The bus still hasn't come.  
[bus | as for | as of yet | not come]

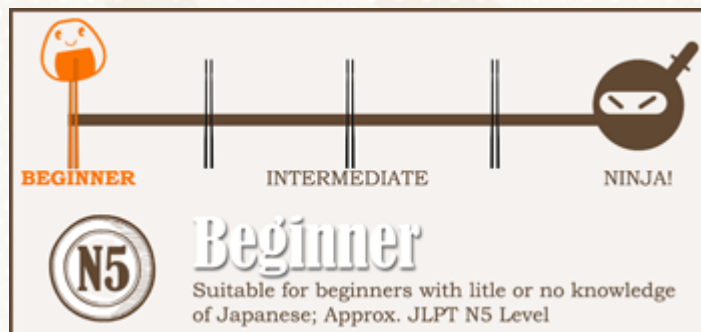
まだ、ピザはありますか？

Is there any pizza left?  
[still | pizza | exists |?]



# よんでみよう! LET'S READ!

Learn through reading for (very) beginners of Japanese



Have you only recently learned hiragana but need practice? Or perhaps, your hiragana is no problem, but you want to build your reading comprehension?

This segment is here to the rescue!

Read real Japanese—beginner level but not boring Japanese! Enjoy reading flash fiction, super short essays, and funny stories of common mistakes made by foreigners in Japan.

Best of all, the only requirement is that you can read hiragana. Vocabulary and grammar will be defined and explained.

The format is a little different from our other more advanced readers. The idea is for the reader to read the entire story three times. Each page will have a sentence or two in hiragana (with spaces between words for you to see “words” instead of syllables) at the top and that same content in full Japanese (with furigana) at the bottom. The middle will have the glossary and grammatical explanations. Lastly, the story will be presented in Japanese without furigana. See if you can read it after going through the explanations.

If you have just learned hiragana, you may want to listen to the sound file while reading the hiragana section to practice correct pronunciation. If you have studied Japanese a bit longer, you may want to start with the bottom version and take note of the glossary for understanding.

The glossary will have the word as it appears in the story but will also give the “dictionary” form so you can look the word up further.

And now...

**Let's learn about...**

にほん はなみ

日本の花見 **CHERRY BLOSSOM VIEWING IN JAPAN**

The top and bottom Japanese texts are identical in meaning. The top version is only in hiragana and includes spaces between words. The bottom version has no spaces and uses kanji with furigana. Unless you are just practicing hiragana recognition, try to work through both versions to improve reading speed, reading comprehension, listening comprehension (with the sound files), vocabulary, kanji, and grammar. If you don't feel confident in your understanding, skip to the English translation at the end.

にほん はなみ

## 日本の花見 CHERRY BLOSSOM VIEWING IN JAPAN

にほんじん は、おはなみ が すき です。 はる に なる と、  
さくら の はな が きれい に さきます。

### GLOSSARY AND NOTES

日本人 *nihonjin*—Japanese people [日本 (Japan) + 人 (people)]

は *wa*—(topic particle)

お花見 *o hanami*—cherry blossom viewing; flower viewing [the お honorific prefix makes it sound very polite]

が *ga*—(a particle that often marks the grammatical subject of a sentence)

好き *suki*—like/love something; favorite

です *desu*—is; to be [polite copula of だ]

春 *haru*—spring (season); springtime

になると *ni naru to*—in (spring) [N + になると expresses the meaning of “when it comes to this period (or this level)”]

さくら *sakura*—cherry blossom; cherry tree

の *no*—(modifying particle to show the type of flower)

花 *hana*—flower; blossom

きれい *kirei*—beautiful; pretty; fair

きれいに *kirei ni*—beautifully

咲きます *sakimasu*—will bloom

にほんじん はなみ す はる はな  
日本人は、お花見が好きです。春になると、さくらの花がきれいに  
さ  
咲きます。

# 日本の花見 CHERRY BLOSSOM VIEWING IN JAPAN

ともだち や かぞく、 みんな で おはなみ に いきます。さくら  
の した に すわって、 さくら を みて、 お弁当 を  
たべます。

## GLOSSARY AND NOTES

友達 *tomodachi*—friend

や *ya*—(such things as) ~ or/and ~ [used to list multiple items (noun) out of a non-exhaustive list (non-exhaustive connective)]; it can be used multiple times to list three or more examples]

家族 *kazoku*—family; members of a family

みんな *minna de*—together with everyone [みんな (everyone; everybody) + で (together with)]

お花見 *o hanami*—cherry blossom viewing; flower viewing [お honorific prefix]

に *ni*—to

行きます *ikimasu*—will go (to see the cherry blossoms) [ます form of the verb 行く (to go)]

桜の下に *sakura no shita ni*—under the cherry blossom trees [桜 (cherry blossom tree) + の (of) + 下 (under; below; down) + に (indicates location of existence)]

座って *suwatte*—sitting and [from the verb 座る (to sit)]

を *o*—(direct object marker)

見て *mite*—watching (cherry blossom trees) and [from the verb 見る (to see; to watch)]

お弁当 *obentou*—Japanese lunchbox

食べます *tabemasu*—to eat [ます form of the verb 食べる (to eat)]

ともだち かぞく はなみ い さくら した すわ さくら  
友達や家族、みんなでお花見に行きます。桜の下に座って、桜を  
み べんとう た  
見て、お弁当を食べます。

# 日本の花見 CHERRY BLOSSOM VIEWING IN JAPAN

おさけ も のみます。ピクニック みたい で とても たのしい  
です。でも、ときどき おさけ を のみすぎる おじさん が  
います。

## GLOSSARY AND NOTES

お酒 *osake*—alcohol [お (honorific prefix) + 酒 (alcohol; sounds nicer than 酒 (without お) which sounds sort of crude or male speech)]

も *mo*—also; too

飲みます *nomimasu*—drink [ます form of the verb 飲む (to drink)]

ピクニック *pikunikku*—picnic

みたい *mitai*—sort of; similar to; -like

で *de*—and

とても *totemo*—very; so

楽しい *tanoshii*—fun; enjoyable; pleasant

です *desu*—is; to be [polite copula of だ]

でも *demo*—however; but

ときどき *tokidoki*—sometimes; at times

を *o*—(direct object marker)

のみすぎる *nomisugiru*—drink (alcohol) excessively; drink too much [from the verb 飲む (to drink); V-ます stem + すぎる expresses excessiveness]

おじさん *ojisan*—older man; mister; middle-aged man; uncle

が *ga*—(a particle that usually marks the grammatical subject of a sentence)

います *imasu*—exist [from いる (to exist); it is used when what is present moves by himself/itself (people or animals)]

お酒も飲みます。ピクニックみたいでとても楽しいです。でも、  
ときどきお酒を飲みすぎるおじさんがいます。

# 日本の花見 CHERRY BLOSSOM VIEWING IN JAPAN

それは、 たのしくない です。 のみすぎる おじさん いがい は、  
にほん の はなみ は おすすめ です。

## GLOSSARY AND NOTES

それは *sore wa*—that is

楽しくない *tanoshikunai*—not fun; bad [using the negative suffix ～くない allows you to say what is “not”; to get the negative form, take the く form of an い adjective by removing ～い and adding ～く]

です *desu*—is; to be [polite copula of だ]

飲みすぎる *nomisugiru*—drink (alcohol) excessively; drink too much [from the verb 飲む (to drink); V-ます stem + すぎる expresses excessiveness]

おじさん *ojisan*—older man; mister; middle-aged man; uncle

以外 *igai*—with the exception of; except for

は *wa*—(topic particle)

日本の花見 *nihon no hanami*—cherry blossoms viewing in Japan [日本 (Japan) + の (modifying particle) + 花見 (cherry blossoms viewing)]

おすすめ *osusume*—recommendation; advice; suggestion [お honorific prefix which makes it sound very polite]

たの

それは、楽しくないです。

の

いがい

にほん

はなみ

飲みすぎるおじさん以外は、日本の花見はおすすめです。

# 日本の花見 CHERRY BLOSSOM VIEWING IN JAPAN

Now, let's read the story once more in natural Japanese.

Lastly, check the English translation to make sure you understand.

日本人は、お花見が好きです。春になると、さくらの花がきれいに咲きます。友達や家族、みんなでお花見に行きます。桜の下に座って、桜を見て、お弁当を食べます。お酒も飲みます。ピクニックみたいでとても楽しいです。

でも、ときどきお酒を飲みすぎるおじさんがいます。それは、楽しくないです。飲みすぎるおじさん以外は、日本の花見はおすすめです。

ENGLISH: (try to save this for last)

Japanese people love cherry blossom viewing. In the spring, the sakura (cherry blossom tree) flowers bloom beautifully. Friends and family go to see the cherry blossoms together. They sit under the cherry trees, watch the cherry blossoms, and eat a Japanese bento lunch. Many people drink alcohol too. It's like a picnic, and it's very fun.

However, at times, middle-aged men drink alcohol too much. That is not fun. I recommend cherry blossom viewing in Japan, except when there are older men who drink too much *sake*.

## CULTURAL NOTE:

80% of all cherry trees in Japan are of one kind. This type of tree is called *someiyoshino* and it is a man-made variation created during the Edo period. Sakura blossoms only last one to two weeks, but if you can find a location with many trees, it is a beautiful sight to behold.

### KEY VOCABULARY

日本人 *nihonjin*—Japanese (person)

家族 *kazoku*—family

花見 *hanami*—cherry blossoms viewing

桜 *sakura*—cherry tree; cherry blossoms

春 *haru*—spring (season)

お弁当 *obentou*—bento; lunchbox

友達 *tomodachi*—friend(s)

お酒 *osake*—sake; alcohol

# JAPANESE READER



Intermediate

Mastered basic grammar, hundreds of kanji, and conversational Japanese; Approx. JLPT N3 Level

にほん さくら

日本の桜

## JAPANESE CHERRY BLOSSOMS



Work through the story, sentence-by-sentence, referring to the vocabulary and grammar explanations below as needed.

にほん はる い さくら にほんじん さくら だいす

日本の春と言えば、桜です。日本人は、桜が大好きです。

まんかい さくら した ともだち かぞく しごと なかま あつ しょくじ

満開の桜の下で、友達や家族、仕事仲間と集まって食事を

さけ の

したり、お酒を飲んだりする

日本の春 spring in Japan [日本 (Japan) + の  
(modifying particle) + 春 (spring)]

と言えば speaking of [と (quotation marker quoting 日  
本の桜 + 言え (from 言う)) + ば (if/when); condi-  
tional ば]

Construction:

1. Change *u*-sound into *e*-sound (言う → 言え)
2. Add ば at the end (言え → 言えば); think of ~  
と言え as “speaking of”]

桜 cherry blossom

日本人 Japanese people

大好き to really like/love something [愛する (to love) is  
mostly used for “to love romantically”]

満開の桜の下で under the full bloom cherry blossom  
trees

満開の桜 cherry blossom in full bloom; cherry blossom  
at the peak [満開 (full bloom) + の (modifying parti-  
cle that connects the modifying (満開) and the  
modified (桜))]

~の下で under (cherry blossom); underneath ~ [~の of ~  
+ 下 (under; below; down) + で (indicating the loca-  
tion of action)]

友達 friend(s)

や (such things as) ~ or/and ~ [used to list multiple  
items (nouns) out of a non-exhaustive list (non-  
exhaustive connective); it can be used multiple times  
to list examples]

家族 family; family members

仕事仲間 friends from work; coworkers [仕事

(work; job) + 仲間 (comrade; companion; circle  
of friends)]

と集まって getting together with [と (with) + 集

まって (from 集まる (to gather)); *te*-form con-  
junctive]

食事をしたりお酒を飲んだりする (such things  
like) eating food or drinking alcohol

食事をし eating food or/and [食事をし from 食事を  
する]

たり and/or [a particle used for inexhaustive list of  
actions or situations; used once or nested multi-  
ple times to list examples of actions or situations:

たり **Construction** : Step 1. Conjugate a verb to  
the past tense: する → した Step 2. Add り:

した → したり Note: although this is construct-  
ed with the past tense, たり itself is tenseless.]

お酒 alcohol [お (honorific prefix) + 酒 (alcohol);  
sounds nicer than 酒 without お which would  
sound sort of crude or male speech]

飲んだり drinking [from 飲む (to drink) + だり]

する to do

Aたり, Bたりする doing such things as A and/or B  
[very often たり is used in this form]

はなみ

い

はる

さくら

さ

はじ

ことを「花見」と言います。春になって、桜が咲き始めると、

はなみ

そうだん

はじ

「いつお花見しようか？」といった相談が始まります。アメ

す

はなみ

にほんじん

わたし

すこ

リカに住んでいると、「花見」がないので、日本人の私は少し

さび

寂しいです。

ことを [こと (nominalizing particle turning the preceding sentence into a noun state so it can be the direct object of this main sentence) + を (direct object marker)]

花見 cherry blossom viewing; flower viewing

~と言います is called as ~ [と (quotation marker quoting 花見) + 言います (polite of 言う (to say; to tell))]

春になって when spring comes and [春 (spring) + に (to be) + なって (te-form of なる (to become); conjunction)]

咲き始めると when (cherry blossom) starts to bloom [咲き (masu-stem of 咲く (to bloom)) + 始める (to start~) + と (when/if (indicating a condition))]

いつ when

お花見 cherry blossom viewing [お (honorific prefix which makes it sound very polite)]

しょうか shall do [しよう (simple volitional form of する (to do)) + か (question marker); volitional form here indicates suggestion, intention or desire; polite volitional form is しましょう(か)]

お花見する to do cherry blossom viewing [short for お花見をする (を is dropped which makes it sound more casual)]

~といった相談 conversations such as

といった such as ~ [と (quotation marker) + いった (from いう); possibly shortened from と言ったような (such conversations that says ~), and といった (相談) sounds more concise and formal]

相談 (conversation; consultation; discussion)

始まります begins; (you) start hearing (conversations such as ~)

アメリカに住んでいると when living in the States [アメリカ (the United States) + に (in) + 住んでいる (continuous form of 住む (to live)) + と (when; if; while)]

~がないので because there is not~ [が (topic marker) + ない (not exist; not have) + ので (because)]

日本人の私は I, as a Japanese [日本人 (Japanese person) + の (modifier) + 私 (I) + は (as for)]

少し寂しいです am a little sad [少し (a little) + 寂しい (sad) + です (polite copula)]

さて、桜は、川のほとりや、道の両側、公園に植えられています。

がっこう      う      おお      はる      そつぎょうしき

ます。学校に植えられていることも多くて、春の卒業式や

にゅうがくしき

入学式には

さて well; now; then [conjunction or interjection]

も also; as well; too

川のほとり by the bank of river; by a river [川 (river) + の (of) + ほとり (side; usually used for a body of water like rivers, ponds, or lakes; it is not used for the ocean)]

多くて many and [te-form of 多い; te-form of an adjective acting as a conjunctive just like the verb te-form; 多く (adverbial form) can be used the same way, just less casual than the te-form conjunctive]

や (such things as) ~ or/and ~ [used to list multiple items out of a non-exhaustive list; non-exhaustive connective]

春の卒業式や入学式には for the time of graduation ceremonies or school entrance ceremonies in the spring

道の両側 both sides of the road [道 (road); 両側 (both sides; 両 (both) + 側 (side))]

春の in spring [春 (spring) + の (in (modifying both 卒業式 and 入学式))]

公園 park

卒業式 graduation ceremony [卒業 (graduation) + 式 (ceremony)]

に indicating the surface of a location where some action is done

や (such things as) and /or [used to list multiple items out of a non-exhaustive list; non-exhaustive connective]

植えられています are planted [passive of 植える (to plant); polite of 植えられている; (て)いる is the continuous form which indicates a state/condition of those places where cherry blossom trees have been planted]

入学式 (school) enrollment ceremony [入学 (school enrollment (入 (enter); 学 (school))) + 式 (ceremony)]

学校に植えられていることも多くて there are many instances of schools having cherry blossom trees planted (in their) yard

には for (the time of the graduation ceremonies or enrollment ceremonies) [に (indicates time/occasion/event) + は (contrast marker emphasizing for those time of ceremonies)]

学校に at school [学校 (school) + に (indicates the surface of a location)]

植えられている (cherry blossom trees) are planted

こと occasion; case; fact (of schools having cherry blossom trees in their yard)

ちょうど桜が咲いていることもよくあります。この桜は、

しゅるい え ど じ だ い じんこうてき う だ

「ソメイヨシノ」という種類で、江戸時代に人工的に生み出さ

は さき はな さ はな

れたものです。葉より先に花が咲き、とても華やかです。

ちょうど桜が咲いていることもよくあります there are many times cherry blossoms are in bloom just in time (for those ceremonies)

ちょうど exactly; just in time; coincidentally

咲いている is blooming; in bloom [咲いている (continuous form of 咲く (to bloom)); continuous form (て)いる indicating continuous state/condition vs. 咲く is the action of “to bloom (for flowers to open)”]

こと time; occasion; fact [nominalizing particle that turns the preceding sentence into a noun state, making it the subject of this sentence]

も also; as well, too

よくあります happens often; exists often [よく (often) + あります (polite of ある (to exist; to have; there is))]

ソメイヨシノ a name of a popular and well-known variety of cherry blossom tree

~という種類 the kind (of cherry blossom tree) called~ [という (called) + 種類 (variety; kind)]

で [particle that indicates a state/condition; で here is actually the *te*-form of the copula だ which is functioning as a conjunctive (sort of like “and”), instead of ending the sentence as ~という種類だ(です) and starting another sentence]

江戸時代に in Edo period (1603-1868) [江戸 (Edo) + 時

代 (period) + に (in (indicating time))]

人工的に artificially [人工的 (man-made; artificial) + に (making 人工的 into an adverb; sort of like the “-ly” suffix)]

生み出されたもの (artificially) created cherry blossom tree

生み出された created; brought forth; invented [passive and past of 生み出す (生む (to give birth; to bear)) + 出す (to bring out)]

もの thing; matter [used as a pronoun for この桜 (or could be 種類) to avoid repeating the same word]

葉より先に花が咲き、とても華やかです flowers open up before the leaves come out, and it is very showy

葉 leaves [葉 (leaf) + より (than) + 先 (before; ahead of)]

~より先に earlier than ~; ahead of ~ [より (than) + 先 (before; ahead) + に (indicating time)]

花 flower; blossom

咲き blooms and [masu-stem of 咲く (to bloom) which is acting as a conjunctive (masu-stem conjunctive); 咲いて (te-form conjunctive) would work too, but the *te*-form conjunctive would feel more casual]

華やか showy; brilliant; gorgeous

若い木でも花を咲かせるので日本では桜 と言えば、「ソメイヨ

シノ」と言ってもよいくらい人気があり、日本の桜 の80パーセントが「ソメイヨシノ」だそうです。

若い木でも花を咲かせるので since it blooms even when young

若い木 young tree [若い (young) + 木 (tree)]

でも even (young tree)

花 flower

咲かせる bloom [causative form of 咲く (to bloom); (若い木でも) 花が咲く would work perfectly fine; the causative form is used poetically here as if the young trees have the will to make flowers bloom; this technique is used fairly often for plants or even non-living things as a way to express characteristics or features]

ので because; since

日本では in Japan [で (in); は (as for)]

桜と言えばソメイヨシノと言ってもよい when we speak of cherry blossom it is safe to say it's almost always about someiyoshino

と言えば speaking of; when we speak about

~と言ってもよい is safe to say ~ [と (quotation marker) + 言って (te-form of 言う) + も (even) + よい (good); いい would work in place of よい which sound more formal than いい]

~くらい人気があり is popular to the point of ~ [referring the preceding sentence]

~くらい to the extent that ~; as much as ~ [FYI: strictly speaking, くらい is acting as an adverb modifying あ

り; however, the の (modifying particle) can come after くらい (くらいの人気)]

人気があり is popular and [人気 (popularity) + が + あり (masu-stem of ある (to have; to exist)); masu-stem conjunctive, which sounds like a written/spoken narration compared to あって (te-form conjunctive); 人気がある means "to be popular"]

日本の桜の80パーセントが「ソメイヨシノ」だそうです it seems 80% of cherry blossom trees in Japan are someiyoshino

日本の Japanese (cherry blossom) [の is a modifying particle and means "of"; here, it is modifying 桜 (cherry blossom of/in Japan); (日本-modifier) の (桜-modified)]

日本の桜の cherry blossom trees in Japan [the second の is modifying 80パーセント; the modifying particle の comes between the word it is modifying and the word that's being modified; (日本の桜 modifier) の (80パーセント-modified); の can be nested multiple times as in this case]

80パーセント 80 percent

~だそうです it is said that ~; I heard that ~ [だ (affirmative of simple copula) + そう (indicates second-hand information/hearsay) + です (polite copula)]

たいへん華やかなソメイヨシノですが、病気になりやすく、

じゅみよう

みじか

とくちょう

はなみ

わる

ひと

寿命が短いことが特徴です。お花見でマナーの悪い人たちが

えだ お

も

かえ

枝を折って持ち帰ろうとすることがある

たいへん very [たいへん (very; sounds more formal than とても)]

華やかな showy; gorgeous [na-adjective; 華やかな桜; 桜が華やか(だ)]

が although; however; but

病気になりやすく gets diseased easily and...

病気 illness; sickness

~になりやすく easy to become ~ and; to tend to ~ and [adverbial form of ~になりやすい; に (to (be)) + なり (masu-stem of なる (to become)) + ~やすく (adverbial form of ~やすい (easy to ~)); adverbial form of i-adjective functioning as a conjunctive (more casual version is なりやすくて (te-form conjunctive))]

寿命が短いことが特徴です the fact that (the tree's) life is short is its trait; it is characteristic that the life is short

寿命が短い life is short; short-lived [寿命 (life span); 短い (short)]

~こと the fact that ~ [nominalizing particle that makes the preceding sentence into a noun state; の nominalizing particle would work here also; but not in every case]

特徴 feature; trait; characteristic

お花見で during/at cherry blossom viewing

マナーの悪い人たち people with bad manners; bad-mannered people [マナー (manners) + の (modifying

particle) + 悪い (bad) + 人たち (people); マナーの悪い人たち and マナーが悪い人たちは exactly the same here and both can be used. Yes, の and が are interchangeable in this situation. However, this is ONLY true within a subordinate-clause, not as the main subject and main predicate. The main subject is "someiyoshino tree" (hidden), and the main predicate is 枯れてしまうこともある;

example: 今日は、気分がいい is fine. 今日は、気分が悪い is not correct. However, both 今日は、気分がいい日です and 今日は、気分の良い日です are fine]

枝を折って持ち帰ろうとすることがある there are times when (bad mannered people) break branches and take them home

枝を折って break a branch and [枝 (branch); 折って (te-form of 折る (to break; to fold)); te-form conjunctive]

持ち帰ろう wanting to bring home; trying to bring home [持ち帰ろう (simple volitional form of 持ち帰る (to bring back)); 持ち帰る (compound verb): 持ち (from 持つ (to hold)) + 帰る (to return; to go back); volitional form is used for expressing intentions, desires, suggestions, soft commands, or when making a guess. ]

Volitional + とする to try to do ~; to want to do ~ [と (quotation marker) + する (to do)]

ことがある there are times when ~; (sometimes) ~ happens [こと (occasion; time); ある (to exist; to have)]

のですが、折られたところから病原菌が入り込み、枯れてしま

えだ お

きず

うこともあるそうです。枝を折ったり、傷をつけたりすることは、

のです [の (explanatory particle used to inform the readers or audiences with things that are not known to them); ~がありますが (without の) would work also, but that would lose the subtle emphasis which the writer is wanting to convey to the readers.]

が and [this is not “but/although”]

折られたところ the place where it was broken off [折られた (passive of 折る (to break)) + ところ (place) + から (from)]

病原菌 virus; germ; pathogen [病 (illness) + 原 (source) + 菌 (germ)]

入り込み to go in and; to invade and [masu-stem of 入り込む (to go in; compound verb); 入り (from 入る to enter) + 込む (to pack in); masu-stem conjunctive; 入り込んで (te-form conjunctive) would work here as well]

枯れてしまう to end up with dying [枯れて (te-form of 枯れる (plants to die)) + しまう (indicates an unfavorable outcome)]

~こともある sometimes ~ also happens; there are also times when ~ happens [こと (occasion) + も (also) + ある (to exist); も replaces が (subject marker in ことがある)]

~そうです they say ~; it is said ~; I heard that ~

[そう indicates secondhand information/hearsay]

枝を折ったり breaking branches or [枝 (branch) + を (direct object marker) + 折ったり (from 折る (to break)) + たり (and/or); remember the たり construction ▣ <simple past form + り>]

傷をつけたりする do things like hurting (the trees) [傷をつけたり (from 傷をつける (to hurt ~; to scar ~)); 傷 (scar) + を (direct object marker) + つける (to attach); する (to do)]

~たり、~たりする do such things like ~ or, or ~

~こと [こと (nominalizing particle making the preceding sentence into a noun state); の nominalizing particle can be used here as well]

は as for; regarding [contrast marker making emphasis; the preceding sentence is actually the direct object of the main sentence, therefore grammatically, を can be used in place of は; however, は is sort of calling the reader's attention to a strong point that the author of this article is trying to make]

絶対にやめましょう。 さて、1912年にアメリカに日本の桜が

おく がわ う  
贈られて、ワシントンDCのポトマック川のほとりに植えられま

ねん いちど えら  
した。年に一度、ミスさくらを選んだり、パレードをしたりす  
る

絶対にやめましょう let's never do; absolutely don't do

絶対に absolutely; never (when used with a negative ending)

やめましょう let's not do ~ [Literally, "let's stop~"; やめる (masu-form of やめる (to stop; to end; to quit)) + ましょう (polite volitional form which is used here for a polite command/suggestion); やめましょう is used often on "don't do~" signs in public spaces]

さて now; by the way [conjunction used between sentences or paragraphs]

1912年に in 1912 [に (in)]

アメリカに to the United States [へ can be used in place of に]

贈られて were sent and [te-form of 送られる which is passive of 送る (to send); conjunctive]

ワシントンDCのポトマック川 Potomac river in Washington DC

のほとりに at the river bank of [ほとり (by the side of); used only for bodies of water except the ocean; に (indicates location)]

植えられました were planted [polite and past of 植えられる which is passive of 植える (to plant)]

年に一度 once a year [年 (year) + に (in/per) + 一 (one) + 度 (counter for occurrences/ occasions); example: 週に二度 (twice a week)]

ミスさくらを選んだりパレードをしたりする桜祭り Cherry Blossom festival that has events like selecting Miss Cherry Blossom or parades

ミスさくら Miss Cherry Blossom

(~を)選んだり selecting ~ or... [選ぶ (to choose; to select) + だり (a version of たり); たり construction ▣ <simple past form + り>; たり becomes だり depending on the past form of the verb]

パレードをしたりする doing such things like a parades [パレードをする (to have a parade) + たりする (doing things like (having a parade))]

「桜祭り」が開かれます。 次回は、ワシントンDCの桜の

れきし

しょうかい

歴史をご紹介します。

---

(が)開かれます is taken place [polite and passive of 開く (to open); often used as “to take place” for events, sort of like the **opening** of the curtain for a stage play]

次回は in the next issue [次 (next) + 回 (episode; installment (counter for occurrences)) + は (as for)]

ワシントンDCの in Washington DC

桜の歴史 the history of cherry blossom [歴史 (history)]

(~を)をご紹介します (we) will introduce ~; (we) shall introduce ~ [ご (honorific prefix) + 紹介

(introduction) + しましょう (polite volitional form of 紹介する (to introduce)); し (masu-stem of する) +

ましょう (polite volitional-derived from ます); simple volitional is 紹介しよう; in this case, the volitional form is used for expressing an intention]

# Japanese Cherry Blossoms

## English Summary

*Please try to tackle the Japanese first and use this only as needed.*

When speaking of spring in Japan, one immediately thinks of sakura cherry blossoms. Japanese people really love sakura blossoms. Gathering with friends, family members, and coworkers under a full bloom cherry blossom tree to eat food or drink alcohol is called "*hanami*" or "cherry blossom viewing." When spring comes and cherry blossom trees start to bloom, you will hear questions such as, "When shall we go cherry blossom viewing?" As a Japanese living in the United States, I am a little sad because I can't easily experience "*hanami*" here.

Cherry blossom trees are planted in places like the banks of rivers, on the sides of roads, and in parks. Many schools have cherry blossom trees planted in their schoolyard, and oftentimes, the cherry blossom trees are in bloom just in time for the school's graduation or enrollment ceremonies. This type of cherry blossom tree is called "someiyoshino." It was artificially created in the Edo period (1603-1868). The flowers bloom before the leaves come out. They're very gorgeous and it blooms even while it is still young. This type of tree is so popular that when we speak of *sakura* in general, it is safe to say we are referring to the someiyoshino tree. Some 80% of Japanese cherry blossom trees are this type.

Someiyoshino cherry trees are very gorgeous, but they can easily become diseased, and they have a short lifespan. There are times during cherry blossom viewing when people with bad manners break branches to take them home. Disease can enter the broken places and the tree ends up dying. Let's never do things like break branches or hurt the trees.

By the way, Japanese cherry trees were presented as a gift to the United States in 1912 and were planted on the banks of the Potomac River in Washington DC. Once each year, there are events like selecting Ms. Cherry Blossom and parades.

In the next issue, we will introduce to you the history of the cherry blossoms in Washington DC.

## Kanji in Focus

The following are a selection of the kanji found in this story. The underlined reading is probably the most used.

|   |                                                           |                                                                                                  |   |                                                           |                                                                                                               |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 桜 | <div>READINGS</div> <div>MEANING</div> <div>EXAMPLE</div> | <p>オウ・ヨウ・<u>さくら</u><br/>cherry</p> <p>よざくら<br/>夜桜 cherry trees at evening</p>                    | 枝 | <div>READINGS</div> <div>MEANING</div> <div>EXAMPLE</div> | <p>シ・<u>えだ</u><br/>bough; branch; twig</p> <p>えだまめ<br/>枝豆 edamame (green soybeans)</p>                        |
| 満 | <div>READINGS</div> <div>MEANING</div> <div>EXAMPLE</div> | <p><u>マン</u>・バン・みちる・みつ・みたす<br/>full; fullness</p> <p>ふまん<br/>不満 dissatisfaction; displeasure</p> | 咲 | <div>READINGS</div> <div>MEANING</div> <div>EXAMPLE</div> | <p>ショウ・<u>さく</u><br/>bloom; blossom</p> <p>かえ ざ<br/>返り咲き comeback (e.g. in business); second blooming</p>     |
| 開 | <div>READINGS</div> <div>MEANING</div> <div>EXAMPLE</div> | <p>カイ・ひらく・ひらき・ひらける・<u>あく</u>・あける<br/>open; unfold</p> <p>かいはつ<br/>開発 development</p>             | 相 | <div>READINGS</div> <div>MEANING</div> <div>EXAMPLE</div> | <p>ソウ・<u>ショウ</u>・あい~<br/>inter-; mutual- together; minister of state</p> <p>がいしょう<br/>外相 Foreign Minister</p> |
| 寿 | <div>READINGS</div> <div>MEANING</div> <div>EXAMPLE</div> | <p><u>ジュ</u>・ス・シュウ・ことぶき・ことぶく・ことほぐ<br/>longevity; one's natural life</p> <p>すし<br/>寿司 sushi</p>   | 談 | <div>READINGS</div> <div>MEANING</div> <div>EXAMPLE</div> | <p><u>ダン</u><br/>discuss; talk</p> <p>そうだん<br/>相談 consultation; discussion</p>                                |
| 命 | <div>READINGS</div> <div>MEANING</div> <div>EXAMPLE</div> | <p><u>メイ</u>・ミョウ・いのち<br/>fate; command</p> <p>かくめい<br/>革命 revolution</p>                         | 寂 | <div>READINGS</div> <div>MEANING</div> <div>EXAMPLE</div> | <p>ジャク・セキ・さび・<u>さびしい</u>・さびれる<br/>loneliness; quietly</p> <p>せいじゃく<br/>静寂 silence; stillness; quietness</p>   |

|   |                                                           |                                                                                            |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 植 | <div>READINGS</div> <div>MEANING</div> <div>EXAMPLE</div> | <u>シヨク</u> ・うえる・うわる<br>plant<br>いしょく<br>移植 transplanting (plants)                          |
| 種 | <div>READINGS</div> <div>MEANING</div> <div>EXAMPLE</div> | <u>シュ</u> ・たね・〜ぐさ<br>species; kind; class; variety; seed<br>しゅるい<br>種類 variety; kind; type |
| 類 | <div>READINGS</div> <div>MEANING</div> <div>EXAMPLE</div> | <u>ルイ</u> ・たぐい<br>sort; kind; variety<br>じんるい<br>人類 mankind; humanity                      |
| 葉 | <div>READINGS</div> <div>MEANING</div> <div>EXAMPLE</div> | ヨウ・ <u>は</u><br>leaf<br>ことば<br>言葉 language; words; phrases                                 |
| 華 | <div>READINGS</div> <div>MEANING</div> <div>EXAMPLE</div> | <u>カ</u> ・ケ・はな<br>splendor; flower; luster<br>ちゅうか<br>中華 Chinese food; China               |

# MAKOTO

JAPANESE E-ZINE

Do you have any questions? Anything confusing? Feel free to email me (Clay) at [clay@thejapanshop.com](mailto:clay@thejapanshop.com) with any questions, comments, or suggestions.

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Clay & Yumi



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