Preface

This is a dictionary of basic Japanese grammar designed primarily for first and second year Japanese students and for teachers of Japanese. After having examined major textbooks being used in Japan and the United States we have chosen what we believe to be basic grammatical items. Our descriptions and explanations have incorporated the recent findings in Japanese linguistics which we felt were of practical significance.

We have spent three years and a half preparing this dictionary. Each of us initially prepared half of the original draft: approximately 200 entries. Upon completion of the first draft of the dictionary (i.e., Entries, Appendices, Characteristics of Japanese Grammar, and Grammatical Terms), we closely examined, discussed and improved our individual drafts. Therefore, every part of this dictionary has virtually been written by both of us.

Naturally we owe a great deal to our predecessors whose works are listed in the references. Our heart-felt thanks go to them, although we could not acknowledge them individually in each entry where we used their insightful explanations. We would also like to acknowledge many profitable discussions with our colleagues at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and at the Summer Japanese School of Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont. For fear of omission, we would rather not attempt a comprehensive listing of names. Even so we would like to mention four individuals whose technical assistance has made it possible to publish this dictionary: First, Mr. Burr Nelson of the University of Illinois and Mrs. Sharon Tsutsui, who have edited our English and provided us with valuable comments and suggestions from the user's viewpoint; also, Mr. Mamoru Yoshizawa, who has patiently and conscientiously assisted with the proofreading; and, last but not least Mr. Masayuki Ishida of The Japan Times, who has done such conscientious editing; he has been a perfect midwife for the birth of our progeny and our special thanks go to him.

Spring 1986

Seiichi Makino
Michio Tsutsui
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To the Reader

This dictionary consists of the following parts:
A. **Grammatical Terms** contains brief explanations or informal definitions of the grammatical terms frequently used in this book. If the reader finds that he is not familiar with these terms, we suggest he read this section carefully. 
B. **Characteristics of Japanese Grammar** introduces the reader to the major characteristics of Japanese grammar and the important concepts involved. The reader should read through this section before he starts to consult the dictionary. Some entries from the *Main Entries* section refer the reader to topics in this section which provide broader perspectives on those entries. 
C. **Main Entries** constitutes the core of this book. Each entry is organized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. [entry name]</th>
<th>2. [part of speech]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. [meaning / function]</td>
<td>4. [English counterpart(s)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[antonym]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. [related expression(s)]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Key Sentence(s)**: Key sentences present basic sentence patterns in frames according to sentence structure. The parts in red color are recurrent elements. The same is true of *Formation*.
- **Formation**: The word formation rules / connection forms for each item are provided with examples.
- **Examples**: Example sentences are provided for each entry.
- **Note(s)**: Notes contain important points concerning the use of the item.
- **[Related Expression(s)]**: Expressions which are semantically close to the entry are compared and their differences are explained.

D. **Appendixes** contains information such as tables of verb / adjective conjugations, a list of connection rules for important expressions and a list of counters.

E. **Indexes** contains three indexes: the grammar index, the English index and the Japanese index. The reader, therefore, has three means of access to the word he is looking up.
**List of Abbreviations**

- **Adj(i)=i-type adjective** (e.g. takai ‘high, expensive’, yasui ‘inexpensive’)
- **Adj(na)=na-type adjective** (e.g. genki ‘healthy’, shizuka ‘quiet’)
- **Adv.=adverb**
- **Aff.=affirmative**
- **ANT.=antonym**
- **Aux.=auxiliary**
- **Conj.=conjunction**
- **Cop.=copula (=da / desu, datta / deshita)**
- **Fml.=formal (=des-, -mas-)**
- **Gr.=Group**
- **Inf.=informal**
- **Irr.=Irregular (e.g. kuru ‘come’, suru ‘do’)**
- **KS=Key Sentence**
- **LSV=Location + Subject + Verb**
- **N=Noun**
- **Neg.=negative**
- **Nom.=nominalizer (=no and koto)**
- **NP=Noun Phrase**
- **Phr.=phrase**
- **Pl.=plural**
- **Pot.=potential**
- **Pref.=prefix (e.g. o-, go- ‘politeness markers’)**
- **Pro.=pronoun**
- **Prt.=particle**
- **REL.=Related Expression**
- **S=Sentence**
- **Sinf.=Sentence that ends with an informal predicate (e.g. Nihon ni iku of Nihon ni iku n desu ‘It is that I am going to Japan.’)**
- **SLV=Subject + Location + Verb**
- **S.o.=someone**
- **S.t.=something**
- **SOV=Subject + Object + Verb**
- **SV=Subject + Verb**
- **Str.=structure**

- **Suf. = suffix** (e.g. -sa ‘-ness’, -ya ‘store’)
- **V = Verb**
- **Vcond = conditional stem of Gr. 1 Verb** (e.g., hanase of hanaseba ‘if s.o. talks’)
- **Vinf = informal form of verbs** (e.g., hanasu ‘talk’, hanashita ‘talked’)
- **Vmasu = masu-stem of Verb** (e.g., hanashi of hanashimasu ‘talk’)
- **Vneg = informal negative stem of Gr. 1 verb** (e.g., hanasa of hanasanai ‘s.o. doesn’t talk’)
- **Vstem = stem of Gr. 2 Verb** (e.g., tabe of taberu ‘eat’)
- **Vte = te-form of Verb** (e.g., hanashite ‘talk and ~’, tabete ‘eat and ~’, kite ‘come and ~’, shite ‘do and ~’)
- **Vvol = volitional form of Verb** (e.g., hanasō ‘let’s talk’, tabeyō ‘let’s eat’, koyō ‘let’s come’, shiyō ‘let’s do it’)
- **WH-word = an interrogative word** (e.g., nani ‘what’, doko ‘where’, dare ‘who’, itsu ‘when’, dō ‘how’, naze ‘why’)

**List of Symbols**

- ≡ = See or refer to.
- ? = The degree of unacceptability is indicated by the number of question marks, three being the highest.
- * = ungrammatical or unacceptable (in other words, no native speaker would accept the asterisked sentence.)
- {A | B} C = AC or BC (e.g., {V/Adj(i)}inf = Vinf or Adj(j)inf)
- θ = zero (in other words, nothing should be used at a place where θ occurs.
- Thus, Adj(na) θ (o | datta) kamoshirenai is either Adj(na) kamoshirenai or Adj(na) datta kamoshirenai.)
Characteristics of Japanese Grammar

1. Word Order

Japanese is typologically classified as an SOV (Subject+Object+Verb) language, whereas English is classified as SVO. An important fact about Japanese word order is that each sentence ends in a verb, an adjective or a form of the copula, and that the order of the other sentence elements is relatively free, except for the topic noun or noun phrase, which normally comes at sentence-initial position. A sample sentence follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject (topic)</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Direct Object</th>
<th>Verb (transitive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sumisu-san</td>
<td>wa</td>
<td>Nihon</td>
<td>de nihongo o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mr. Smith is studying Japanese in Japan.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Location and the Direct Object can be switched, but the Subject (topic) and the Verb must normally be in sentence-initial and sentence-final positions, respectively.

The word order principle for Japanese is the modifier precedes what is modified. This principle holds whether the modified word is dependent or fully independent. The function of the modifier is to specify the meaning of the modified word. Thus, in (1), the verb benkyōshite iru ‘is studying’ is modified by the preceding elements Subject, Location and Direct Object. Observe the following phrases and clauses.

In (2) and (3) where the modified word is an independent noun the basic principle holds; in (4) (5) and (6) where the second element is a dependent word, such as a particle, conjunction, or nominalizer, the basic modificational principle also holds, because the meaning of the modified word is fully specified by the modifier. Unlike independent words, however, dependent words require modifiers.

It is important for students of Japanese to recognize and understand some of the most basic Japanese sentence types and their word order. Examples of these basic sentence types are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun Phrase</th>
<th>Relative Clause</th>
<th>Noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>父 が きのう 読んだ 本</td>
<td>chichi ga kinō yonda</td>
<td>hon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a book which my father read yesterday)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ageru あげる  v. (Gr. 2)
S.o. gives s.t. to a person who is not a member of the giver's in-group but whose status is about equal to that of the giver.

Key Sentence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic (subject)</th>
<th>Indirect Object</th>
<th>Direct Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watashi</td>
<td>wa</td>
<td>hana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ni</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>ageta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>agemashita.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(I gave Yoshiko flowers.)

Examples

(a) 大野さんは山本さんに本をあげた。
Ono-san wa Yamamoto-san ni hon o ageta.
(Ms. Ono gave Mr. Yamamoto a book.)

(b) 君はアンに何をあげましたか。
Kimi wa An ni nani o agemashita ka.
(What did you give to Ann?)

Notes

1. Ageru あげる is one of a set of giving and receiving verbs; the meaning is 'give'. However, ageru cannot be used when the indirect object is the first person (i.e., I or we) or a person with whom the speaker empathizes (usually a member of the speaker's in-group). Thus, (1a) and (1b) are ungrammatical.

   (1)  a. *花子は私に本をあげた。
   *Hanako wa watashi ni hon o ageta.
   (Hanako gave me a book.)

   b. *花子は私のむすこに本をあげた。
   *Hanako wa watashi no musuko ni hon o ageta.
   (Hanako gave my son a book.)

The reason for this is as follows: Ageru あげる requires the giver's point of view or a neutral point of view when describing an event. When an event involves the first person or a person the speaker empathizes with,
however, the event is normally described from that person's point of view. (See Characteristics of Japanese Grammar, 9. Viewpoint.) Therefore, if the first person or a person the speaker empathizes with has a recipient in ageru-sentences, a viewpoint conflict arises, making the sentences ungrammatical. The grammatical sentences for (1a) and (1b) are (2a) and (2b), respectively. 

(⇒ kureru¹)

(2) a. 花子は私に本をくれた。
Hanako wa watashi ni hon o kureta.
(Hanako gave me a book.)

b. 花子は私のむすくに本をくれた。
Hanako wa watashi no musuko ni hon o kureta.
(Hanako gave my son a book.)

2. The humble polite version of ageru is sashiagaru. Example:

(3) 私は先生に本をさしあげました。
Watashi wa sensei ni hon o sashigemashita.
(I gave my teacher a book.)

The degree of politeness expressed in sashiagaru is higher than that of kudasaru and itadaku, which are the polite versions of kureru and morau, respectively. 

(⇒ kureru¹, REL. II)

3. When the giver is in a higher position than the recipient or the recipient is a person very close to the speaker, yaru is used instead of ageru. Examples:

(4) a. 私は弟に本をやった。
Watashi wa ototo ni hon o yatta.
(I gave my little brother a book.)

b. ひろしは猫にミルクをやった。
Hiroshi wa neko ni miruku o yatta.
(Hiroshi gave milk to the cat.)

c. [Tom is the speaker's intimate friend.]
私はトムにケーキをやりました。
Watashi wa Tomu ni keki o yarimashita.
(I gave a cake to Tom.)

ageru² あげる aux. v. (Gr. 2)

S.o. gives some action as a favor to a person who is not a member of the giver's in-group but whose status is about equal to that of the giver.

【REL. kureru² (morau³)】

Key Sentences

(A)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic (subject)</th>
<th>Indirect Object</th>
<th>Direct Object</th>
<th>Vte</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>私</td>
<td>は</td>
<td>信男さん</td>
<td>に</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watashi</td>
<td>wa</td>
<td>Nobuo-san</td>
<td>ni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(I bought a tie for Nobuo.)

(B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic (subject)</th>
<th>Direct Object</th>
<th>Vte</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>僕</td>
<td>は</td>
<td>奉子さん</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boku wa</td>
<td>Haruko-san</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(I consoled Haruko.)

Formation

Vte あげる

- ageru
- 話してあげる (talk for s.o.'s sake)
- hanashite ageru
- 食べてあげる (eat for s.o.'s sake)
- tabete ageru

Examples

(a) 君はお母さんに何をしてあげましたか。
Kimi wa o-kā-san ni nani o shite agemashita ka.
(What did you do for your mother?)

(b) 田中さんはスミスさんにお金を貸してあげた。
Tanaka-san wa Sumisu-san ni hon o kashite ageta.
(Mr. Tanaka lent a book to Mr. Smith.)
### Appendixes

#### Appendix 1  Basic Conjugations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1 verbs</th>
<th>inf., neg., nonpast</th>
<th>formal, nonpast (masu-form)</th>
<th>inf., nonpast (dictionary form)</th>
<th>conditional</th>
<th>volitional</th>
<th>te-form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>書く (write)</td>
<td>書かない</td>
<td>書きます</td>
<td>書く</td>
<td>書け</td>
<td>書いで</td>
<td>書いて</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaku</td>
<td>kakanai</td>
<td>kakimasu</td>
<td>kaku</td>
<td>kakeba</td>
<td>kake</td>
<td>kaite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>行く (go)</td>
<td>行かない</td>
<td>行きます</td>
<td>行く</td>
<td>行け</td>
<td>行って</td>
<td>行って</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iku</td>
<td>ikanai</td>
<td>ikimasu</td>
<td>iku</td>
<td>ikeba</td>
<td>ikatu</td>
<td>itte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>話す (talk)</td>
<td>話さない</td>
<td>話します</td>
<td>話す</td>
<td>話せ</td>
<td>話す</td>
<td>話す</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hanasu</td>
<td>hanasainai</td>
<td>hanashimasu</td>
<td>hanasu</td>
<td>hanaseba</td>
<td>hanasou</td>
<td>hanashite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>待つ (wait)</td>
<td>待たない</td>
<td>待ちます</td>
<td>待つ</td>
<td>待てば</td>
<td>待つ</td>
<td>待つ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matsume</td>
<td>matanai</td>
<td>machimasu</td>
<td>matsu</td>
<td>mateba</td>
<td>matou</td>
<td>matte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>死ぬ (die)</td>
<td>死なない</td>
<td>死にます</td>
<td>死ぬ</td>
<td>死ねば</td>
<td>死ぬ</td>
<td>死んで</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shinu</td>
<td>shinanai</td>
<td>shinimasu</td>
<td>shinu</td>
<td>shinbe</td>
<td>shinu</td>
<td>shinide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>読む (read)</td>
<td>読まない</td>
<td>読みます</td>
<td>読む</td>
<td>読めば</td>
<td>読む</td>
<td>読んで</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yomu</td>
<td>yomanai</td>
<td>yomimasu</td>
<td>yomu</td>
<td>yomeba</td>
<td>yomu</td>
<td>yonde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>愛する (ride)</td>
<td>愛らない</td>
<td>愛ります</td>
<td>愛る</td>
<td>愛れば</td>
<td>愛る</td>
<td>愛って</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noru</td>
<td>noranai</td>
<td>norimasu</td>
<td>noru</td>
<td>norabe</td>
<td>noru</td>
<td>note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ある (exist)</td>
<td>ない</td>
<td>あります</td>
<td>ある</td>
<td>あれば</td>
<td>ある</td>
<td>あって</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nai</td>
<td>aru</td>
<td>arimasu</td>
<td>aru</td>
<td>areba</td>
<td>aru</td>
<td>atte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>買う (buy)</td>
<td>買わない</td>
<td>買います</td>
<td>買う</td>
<td>買えば</td>
<td>買う</td>
<td>買って</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kawanai</td>
<td>kawanai</td>
<td>kaimasu</td>
<td>kau</td>
<td>kaeba</td>
<td>kau</td>
<td>katto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>泳ぐ (swim)</td>
<td>泳がない</td>
<td>泳ぎます</td>
<td>泳ぐ</td>
<td>泳げば</td>
<td>泳ぐ</td>
<td>泳い</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oyoynu</td>
<td>oyoynai</td>
<td>oyoynimasu</td>
<td>oyoynu</td>
<td>oyoynbe</td>
<td>oyoynu</td>
<td>oyoynde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>呼ぶ (call)</td>
<td>呼ばない</td>
<td>呼びます</td>
<td>呼ぶ</td>
<td>呼べば</td>
<td>呼ぶ</td>
<td>呼ぶ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yobu</td>
<td>yobanai</td>
<td>yobimasu</td>
<td>yobu</td>
<td>yobebae</td>
<td>yobu</td>
<td>yonde</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Group 1 verbs:  
2. formal, nonpast (masu-form):  
3. inf., nonpast (dictionary form):  
4. conditional:  
5. volitional:  
6. te-form:
highway. But after having driven about an hour I became used to the speed, and every now and then I almost fell asleep. Before we reached Kyoto, I stopped at service areas about five times and drank coffee. Because I drove while talking a lot with Hanako sitting next to me, I didn’t feel that Kyoto was that far. If the trip is this pleasant, I would like to make it again.)

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**GRAMMAR INDEX**

Note: X < Y) indicates that X is found under Y.

- **adverb**: amari, dō, ichiban, mada, mö, sekkaku, yahari
- **auxiliary**: darō, mashō, sōda
- **auxiliary adjective**: hosshin, mitai-da (yōda), nikui, rashii, sōde, tai, yasui, yōda, yōni
- **auxiliary verb**: Ageru, aru, dasu, garu, hajimeru, iku, iru, kudasai, kureru, kuru, miru, morau, nasai, oku, owaru, rareru, shimau, sugiru
- **causative**: saseru, susu (saseru)
- **causative passive**: saseraru (rare
- **cause**: de, kara, node, tame (ni), te
- **cleft sentence**: no wa ~ da
- **command** ⇒ imperative
- **comparison**: hō ga ~ yori, yori
- **conditional**: ba, nara, yara, to
- **conjecture**: darō, rashii, sōda, yōda
- **conjunction**: ato de, ba, ga, kara, keredo (mo), mae ni, nagara, nara, node, noni, shi, sore de, sore de wa, sore kara, sore nara, soretomo, sono-shite, suru to, sura, datte, te mo, to, toki, uchi ni, ya, yōni
- **contrastive**: wa, jibun
- **coordinate conjunction**: ga
- **copula**: da
- **dependent noun** ⇒ noun
- **direct object marker**: o
- **ellipsis**: Characteristics of Japanese Grammar 3
- **empathy** ⇒ viewpoint
- **exhaustive listing**: ga, to
- **existence**: aru, iru
- **experience**: koto ga aru
- **gerund**: te
- **giving and receiving verb**: ageru, aru, dasu, garu, hajimeru, iku, iru, kudasai, kureru, kuru, miru, morau, nasai, oku, owaru, rareru, shimau, sugiru
- **honorable expression**: o, ni naru, o, ni suru, Characteristics of Japanese Grammar 6
- **humble expression**: o, ~ suru
- **imperative**: na, nasai, Appendix 1
- **indefinite pronoun**: no
- **inexhaustive listing**: ~ tari ~ tari
- **suru, ya
- **infinitive**: -shi
- **nominalizer**: koto, no
- **noun**: hazu, koto, mama, mono (da), tame (ni), toki, tsu
- **particle**: bakari, dai, deke, de, demo, e, ga, giri, hodo, ka, kai, karai, kashira, kurai, made, made ni, mo, na, nado, nanka (nado), ne, ni, shite wa, shite, to, toki, uchi ni, ya, yōni
- **passive**: rareru, Characteristics of Japanese Grammar 5
- **phrase**: aida (ni), ba yokatta, deke (wa) naku ~ (mo), hō ga ii, hō ga ~ yori, kawari ni, koto ga aru, koto ga dekiri, koto ni naru, koto ni suru, koto wa, nai de, nakereba naranai, naku naru, nakute, ni chigai
ni suru, no da, o ~ ni naru, o ~ suru, tara dō desu ka, tamaranai, ~ tari ~ tari suru, te mo ii, to ieba, to iu, tokoro da^3, wa ikenai, wake da, yōn iu, yōn i aru, yōn i suru, yō to omou, zu ni (nai de)

plural -tachi
polite expression ⇒ honorifics
possessive no^1
potential kikoeru, koto ga dek iru, mieru, rareru^3
prefix go- <o->, mai-, o-
pronoun jibun^3, no^2
purpose ni^2, noni^2, tame ni
quotation to^2, tte^2
question marker dai, ka^2, kai
reason de^3, kara^3, node, tame (ni), te
relative clause Relative Clause
request kudasai
Semantic Derivations De, Ni, To
sentence-final particle dai, ka^3, kai, kashira, na, ne, no^4, wa^1, yo, Characteristics of Japanese Grammar 7

structure ~ mo ~ mo, ~ no wa ~ da, ~ wa ~ da, ~ wa ~ ga
subject marker  ga^1
subordinate conjunction aida (ni), ato de, ba, kara^3, keredo (mo), mae ni, nagara, nara, node, noni^2, tame (ni), tara, tatte, te mo, to, toki, uchi ni, yōn i^1
suffix -chan (-sama), -goro, -kata, -kun, -sa, -sama, -san (-sama)-tachi, -ya
superlative ichiban
tag question ne
to-form te
topic to ieba, to ittara (to ieba), to kira (to ieba), tara (to ieba), tte, wa^1, Characteristics of Japanese Grammar 2
viewpoint ageru^3, iku^3, jibun^1, kureru^3, kuru^1^2, morau^3, passive, tai, Characteristics of Japanese Grammar 9
volitional mashō

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Note: X / Y indicates that X is found under Y.

at the time when  toki
audible  kikoeru

B
be  aru^1, iru^1
be -able  rareru^3
be able to  koto ga dek iru, rareru^3
be about to do s.t.  tokoro da^2
because  kara^3, mono (da), node
because ~ not ~  nakute
because of  de^3, tame (ni)
be done  aru^2
be -ed  rareru^1
before  mae ni, uchi ni
begin to  dasu, hajimeru, kuru^2
be in a place where it takes ~ to get
be -ing  iru^2
be in the midst of doing s.t.  tokoro da^3
be like  yōda
be ready to do s.t.  bakari
both ~ and ~  mo ~ mo ~
but  dega (ga^5), dakedo (ga^5), demo (ga^5), ga^3, keredo, shikashi (ga^6)
by  de^2, made ni, ni^3
by (the time when)  made ni

called  to iu
can do s.t.  koto ga dek iru, rareru^3
can hear  kikoeru
cannot do s.t.  wa ikenai