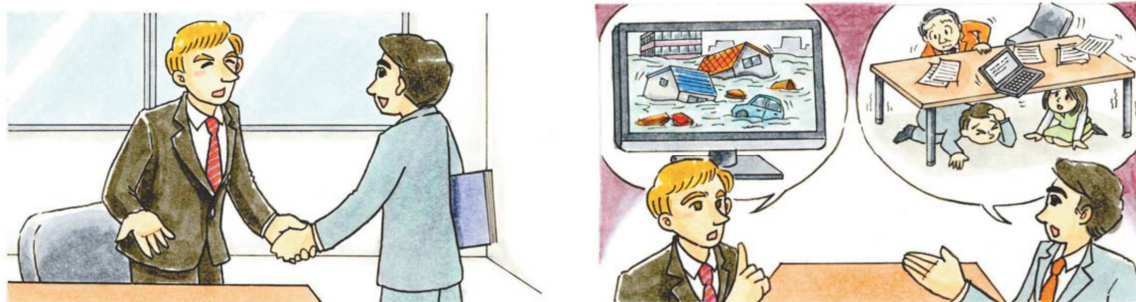


日本語流 15

The Nihongo Way 15

< Today's dialogue >

You (U) have just arrived in Tokyo to visit a business friend, Mr. Suzuki (J), for the first time after the Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami. This is the warm-up talk before the business meeting.



U: 鈴木さん、こんにちは。お久しぶりです。	<i>Suzuki-san, konnichiwa. Ohisashi-buri desu.</i>
J: そうですね。 お元気でした？	<i>Sô desu nê. Ogenki deshita?</i>
U: ええ、お陰様で。	<i>Ê, okagesamade.</i>
U: 鈴木さんはあの地震の時はどこにいました？ ①	<i>Ano-toki Suzuki-san wa ano-jishin no toki wa doko ni imashita?</i>
J: 僕はオフィスにいました。② オフィスで会議中でした。③	<i>Boku wa ofisu ni imashita. Ofisu de kaigi-chû deshita.</i>
U: 怖くなかったですか。	<i>Kowaku nakatta desu ka?</i>
J: もちろん、怖かったですよ。 みんな机の下にもぐりました。④	<i>Mochiron, kowakatta desu yo. Minna tsukue no shita ni mogurimashita.</i>
U: おけがはなかったですか。	<i>Okega wa nakatta desu ka?</i>
J: ええ、お陰様でみんな平気でした。	<i>Ê, okagesamade minna heiki deshita.</i>
U: それから、あの津波—あれは物凄かったですね え。私はロンドンでYouTubeで観ました。⑤	<i>Sorekara, ano-tsunami – are wa monosugokatta desu nê. Watashi wa Rondon de Yûchûbu de mimashita.</i>
J: 僕も次の日、家でテレビで観ました。⑥	<i>Boku mo tsugi no hi, ie de terebi de mimashita.</i>
U: 信じられない光景でしたねえ。	<i>Shinjirarenai kôkei deshita nê.</i>
J: イギリスには地震も津波也没有せんよね？ ⑦	<i>Igirisu niwa jishin mo tsunami mo arimasen yone?</i>
U: ええ、ありません。	<i>Ê, arimasen.</i>

As promised, let's continue to discuss more basic *joshi* (phrase-particles). Today we focus on *de*, as compared with *ni*, for location, introduced previously.

DIALOGUE OVERVIEW

Here are English equivalents to today's dialog:

U: Mr. Suzuki, how are you? It's been a good while, hasn't it!

J: That's right.

Have you been well?

U: Yes, thank you.

U: Where were you at the time of that earthquake, Mr. Suzuki?

J: I was at the office. I was in the middle of a meeting at the office.

U: Weren't you scared?

J: Of course, I was.

We all dove under desks.

U: Did you not get hurt?

J: Thank God, we were all uninjured.

U: And that tsunami – oh, that was just devastating.

I saw it on Youtube in London.

J: I saw it on TV in my house the next day, too.

U: It was an unbelievable sight, wasn't it?

J: You have neither earthquakes nor tsunami in UK, do you?

U: No, we don't.

VOCABULARY FOCUS

Nouns

<i>genki</i>	animated, good spirited
<i>heiki</i>	undisturbed
<i>hi</i>	day
<i>Igirisu</i>	UK
<i>jishin</i>	earthquake
<i>kaigi</i>	meeting, conference
<i>kaigichû</i>	middle of a meeting
<i>kega</i>	injury
<i>kôkei</i>	sight, scene
<i>shita</i>	a place underneath
<i>tsukue</i>	desk

Verbs

<i>arimasu (ar-u)</i>	something exists
<i>imasu (i-ru)</i>	someone exists [something animate exists]
<i>mimasu (mi-ru)</i>	watch, see, look at
<i>mogurimasu (mogur-u)</i>	dive

Adjectives

<i>hisashii</i>	a long while [archaic]
<i>kowai</i>	scared, scary, frightened, frightening
<i>monosugoi</i>	terrible, devastating, overwhelming
<i>nai</i>	non-existent, missing
<i>shinjirarenai</i>	unbelievable, incredible

Cliché

hisashiburi desu It's been a while since we last met. Long time, no see.

okagesamade thanks to you, thank God

GRAMMAR FOCUS

1. *imasu* vs. *arimasu*

Japanese, unlike English, uses different verbs to describe the existence of things based on whether they are animate or inanimate.

Arimasu is used for inanimate objects, while *imasu* is used for people and animals (but not plants); hence:

Jishin ga arimashita. (There was an earthquake. An earthquake occurred)

Suzuki-san wa ofisu ni imashita. (Mr. Suzuki was in the office)

Keep in mind the difference with English.

In distal-style, the negative forms follow the same pattern:

arimasu → *arimasen* [there is not something]

imasu → *imasen* [there is not someone]

However, the negative of *aru* (direct-style of *arimasu*) is not *aranai* but just *nai*, an adjective meaning “non-existent.” So, to say “there is not” in distal-style, you have two choices: *arimasen* (verb) and *nai desu* (adjective).

2. Phrase-particle: *de*

<place word> + *de*

You have already seen the phrase-particle *ni* used immediately following a place word to indicate location.

In today's dialogue, the following four are examples:

1 *doko ni imashita?* (where were you?)

2 *ofisu ni imashita* (I was in the office)

4 *tsukue no shita ni mogurimashita* (we dove under desks)

7 *Igirisu niwa* jishin mo tsunami mo arimasen yone***?* (There are neither earthquakes nor tsunami in UK, right?)

**niwa* is a combination of two phrase-particles. “*Igirisu niwa*” is presented as a topic for the moment, like “in the UK at least.”

** yone is a combination of two sentence-particles. It is used to confirm your understanding when you are not too sure.

Now, compare with the following, where *de* is immediately after a place word:

- 3 *ofisu de kaigichû deshita* (I was in the middle of a meeting in the office)
- 5 *Rondon de mimashita* (I saw it in London)
- 6 *ie de mimashita* (I saw it at home)

When expressing an event happening in/at a place, Japanese employs *de*, instead of *ni* which is dedicated to indicating location. As English does not distinguish between these, you need conscious effort for mastery.

Interestingly, however, *ni* and *de* are both possible in the following sentence:

Nihon de/ni wa jishin ga arimasu. (In Japan we have earthquakes)

This reflects people's viewpoints – although *de* is preferred for events like earthquakes, *ni* can be used to reiterate location. Likewise,

Nihon de umaremashita and *Nihon ni umaremashita* are both possible for “I was born in Japan,” depending on your focus – whether on event or location.

Language reflects your subjective mind. Don't be bound by grammar; take advantage of it to freely and best express your mind.

<instrument> + *de*

When *de* is used after an item, not a place, the item represents the means for the action. In today's dialog:

- 5 *yûchûbu de mimashita* (I saw it by means of Youtube)
- 6 *terebi de mimashita* (I saw it via TV)

Youtube and TV are instruments for watching the tsunami.

While English changes prepositions for the means depending on the item, such as: by bus, with a pen, in ink, on TV, etc., the Japanese equivalent is invariably *de*, whatever the item or instrument.

3. hisashi-buri

The suffix *buri* is very convenient. At the end of a time period, it means “[period of time] has passed since [we] last met.” Thus:

Hisashi-buri desu (It's been a long while since we last met)

Ninen-buri desu (It's been two years since we last met)