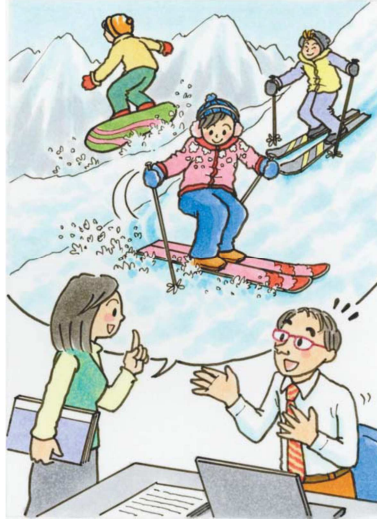


## 日本語流 25

### The Nihongo Way 25

< Today's dialogue >

You (U) are at your office, talking with a work colleague who is Japanese (J).



J1: 陳さん、台湾って雪、降るんですか。①	<i>Chin-san, Taiwan tte yuki furu n desu ka?</i>
U1: いや、降りません。亜熱帯ですから。	<i>Iya, furimassen. Anettai desu kara.</i>
J2: じゃあ、スキーは…	<i>Ja, sukii wa…</i>
U2: ええ、今までスキーもスノーボードもやったことがないです。②	<i>Ê, ima made sukii mo sunobô mo yatta koto ga nai desu.</i>
J3: でしょうね。	<i>Deshô ne.</i>
U3: だから、やってみたいんですよ。	<i>Dakara yattemitai n desu yo.</i>
J4: じゃ、今週末私たちスキーに行きますから、一緒に行きませんか。	<i>Ja, konshûmatsu watashitachi sukii ni ikimasu kara, isshoni ikimasen ka?</i>
U4: え？ いいんですか。③ 初めてなんですよ、僕。④ やり方を教えてくださいませんか。⑤	<i>E? Ii n desu ka? Hajimete na n desu yo, boku. Yarikata o oshietekudasaimasu ka?</i>
J5: 私が教えるより、現地のスクールに入ったほうがいいですよ。⑥	<i>Watashi ga oshieru yori genchi no sukûru ni haitta hô ga ii desu yo.</i>
U5: じゃ、そうします。	<i>Ja, sô shimasu.</i>
J6: 楽しいですよ。	<i>Tanoshii desu yo.</i>
U6: そうですか。楽しみです。	<i>Sô desu ka. Tanoshimi desu.</i>

## DIALOGUE OVERVIEW

The English equivalent to today's dialog:

J1: Mr. Cheng, in Taiwan, does it snow [I am curious]?

U1: No, it doesn't. It is semitropical, so...

J2: Then, skiing is...

U2: Yeah, I have neither skied nor snowboarded ever [up to and including now].

J3: I bet.

U3: So, I want to give it a try.

J4: Well, why don't you join us as we'll go skiing this coming weekend?

U4: What? Are you sure that it's OK? It'd be the first time, you know – for me. Will you teach me how to do it?

J5: Rather than me teaching you, I recommend that you join the school there [at the site].

U5: OK, I'll do so.

J6: It will be lots of fun.

U6: Is that right? I'm looking forward to it.

## VOCABULARY FOCUS

### **Verbs**

*furu* (rain/snow/hail) falls [natural phenomena]

*hairu* join, enter

*oshieru* teach, inform

*yaru* do [more punchy and vulgar than *suru*]

### **Nouns**

*anetai* semitropical zone

*genchi* the local place

*hajimete* the first time

*issho(ni)* together

*sukii* skiing

*sukûru* school

*sunobô* snow-boarding

*tanoshimi* pleasure one looks forward to

*watashitachi* we, us

*yarikata* the way to do, how to do it

### **Adjectives**

*tanoshii* fun, enjoyable

### **Particles**

X *tte* X as quoted; what is called X

X *yor* (rather) than X, compared with X

## GRAMMAR FOCUS

### 1. *V-ta koto ga aru/nai* – Past experience

As previously introduced, *koto* is an abstract noun denoting something like ‘thing’ or ‘case’ in English. So, literally, *yatta koto ga nai* (②) means “the case that I did it does not exist” or “I don’t have the case that I did it”; i.e. “I have never done it.” Hence:

<i>Sukii o yatta koto ga arimasu ka?</i>	Have you ever skied?
<i>Hai, arimasu.</i>	Yes, I have.
<i>ie, arimasen or nai desu.</i>	No, I have not.

Other examples:

*Boku wa sukii wa shita koto ga arimasu ga, sunobô wa shita koto ga arimasen.*

{I have the case that I did skiing at least, but I don’t have the case that I did snowboarding at least}  
I have skied before, but I have never snowboarded.

*Suzuki-san wa Taiwan ni itta koto ga arimasu ka?*

{Is there the case that Ms. Suzuki went to Taiwan?}

Have you ever been to Taiwan, Ms. Suzuki?

Has Ms. Suzuki ever been to Taiwan?

\*{ } indicates a literal translation.

### 2. *V-ta hô ga ii* – Recommendation

“Sukûru ni haitta hô ga ii” (⑥) literally translates as “the alternative that you’ll have entered into a school is good” or “it would be better to join a school”/“You had better join a school”/“I recommend you join a school.”

This is a typical construction used for recommending someone do something. Examples:

<i>Tomodachi to isshoni itta hô ga ii.</i>	I recommend that you go with friends.
<i>Sunobô mo yatta hô ga ii.</i>	You’d better snowboard, too.

When you mention an alternative that you don’t recommend, use the comparison particle *yor* introduced last month:

*Sukii niwa hitoride iku yori tomodachi to isshoni itta ho ga ii.*

For skiing, I recommend that you go with your friends rather than go alone.

*Sukii dake yori sunobô mo yatta hô ga ii.*

You’d better do snowboarding, too, rather than just skiing.

While the perfective tense is a preferred choice, as shown above, it is also possible to use the imperfective tense. Hence, they may be restated as follows, without changing the meaning much.

*Tomodachi to isshoni **iku** hô ga ii.*

*Sunobô mo **yar**u hô ga ii.*

### 3. *li n desu ka?*

Note that ③ is not “*li desu ka?*” (Is it OK?) but “*li n desu ka?*” (Is it that it’s OK?), which is a nominalized sentence. When you use this construction as a question, you show your inquisitiveness. This would, therefore, mean: “Do you really mean it’s OK?” or “Are you sure that it’s OK?”

A similar sort of thing is seen in ①: J sounds more inquisitive here, or doubtful about it snowing in Taiwan, compared with the more usual question pattern: “*Taiwan wa yuki ga furimasu ka?*” (Does it snow in Taiwan?).

### 4. Inverted sentence

Sentence ④ is an “inverted sentence.” Normally it would be:

*Boku hajimete na n desu yo.* For me, it’s that it’ll be the first time.

To stress “the first time” it is put at the head of the sentence with “*boku*” added afterwards. This is similar to English.

### 5. *yarikata*

When *kata* (“way,” “method”) is added to a verb stem (as in *yarikata*, ⑤), it creates a new noun meaning “how to (do something).” Examples:

*Hashi no tsukaikata o oshietekudasai.* Please teach me how to use chopsticks.

*Soko made no ikikata ga wakarimasen.* I don’t know how to get there.

*Kono kanji no yomikata wa ikutsu aru n desu ka?*

How many ways to read this kanji are there? [I’m so curious]

## CULTURE FOCUS

While in English it is natural to say “We have lots of snow in Japan,” the Japanese equivalent is “*Nihon dewa yuki ga takusan furu*” (Snow falls a lot in Japan). Likewise, for “I’m looking forward to it,” Japanese say “*Tanoshimi desu*” (“It’ll be a pleasure”).

I think English is prone to saying things more subjectively while Japanese says things more objectively. Perhaps we could say that English is more people-oriented, while Japanese “people-detached,” at least on the surface. Recall that we see this tendency even in basic greetings, such as: “(I) thank you” vs. “*arigato gozaimasu*” (“it is rare, politely”), and “(I wish you) good morning” vs. “*ohayo gozaimasu*” (“it is early, politely”).