

日本語流 33

The Nihongo Way 33

< Today's dialogue >

You (U) are visiting your former host family in the countryside of Japan. You are talking with your host mother (J1) and host father (J2) after dinner, when you hear insects chirping.



J1: 夏にうるさく鳴いていたセミもすっかりいなくなりましたねえ。(1)	<i>Natsu ni urusaku naiteita semi mo sukkari inaku narimashita nê.</i>
U: でも、その代わり秋の虫が鳴き始めました。	<i>Demo, sonokawari aki no mushi ga nakihajimemashita.</i>
J2: 英語でこういう虫を何て言うの？	<i>Eigo de kôiu mushi o nan te iu no?</i>
U: 僕が知っている虫は cricket だけど、これって辞書を見るとコオロギって書いてありますね。(2)	<i>Boku ga shitteiru mushi wa "cricket" da kedo, kore tte jisho o miru to kôrogi tte kaitearimasu ne.</i>
J1: でも、日本語ではコオロギは一つの種類ですよ。秋に鳴く虫はそれ以外にも、マツムシ、スズムシ、クツワムシ、カネタタキなど、それぞれ別の名前がついていますけど…(3)	<i>Demo Nihongo dewa kôrogi wa hitotsu no shurui desu yo. Aki ni naku mushi wa soreigaini mo matsumushi, suzumushi, kutsuwamushi, kanetataki nado, sozorezore betsu no namae ga tsuiteimasu kedo...</i>
U: あ、今鳴いた虫は何ですか。(4)	<i>A, ima naita mushi wa nan desu ka?</i>
J2: あのリーンリーンリーンと鳴く虫はスズムシだよ。(5)	<i>Ano rîn-rîn-rîn to naku mushi wa suzumushi da yo.</i>
U: スズは英語で bell ですよね。英語にすると、bell cricket ですかねえ。	<i>Suzu wa eigo de "bell" desu yone. Eigo ni suru to, "bell cricket" desu kanê.</i>
J1: あら、いいわねえ。それにしましょうよ。	<i>Ara, ii wanê. Sore ni shimashô yo.</i>
J2: Bell cricket か。うん、いい名前だねえ。そうしよう。	<i>"Bell cricket" ka! Un, ii namae da nê. Sô shiyô.</i>
U: 僕がはじめて付けた英語名ですね！(6)	<i>Boku ga hajimete tsuketa eigomei desu ne!</i>

DIALOGUE OVERVIEW

J1: The cicadas that were singing so noisily in summer are all gone, aren't they!

U: But in their place the autumnal insects have started singing.

J2: What do you call these insects in English?

U: The insect I know is "cricket," but when looking it up in the dictionary, it is written as *kôrogi*.

J1: But *kôrogi* is one type in Japan, and apart from that, insects who sing in autumn each have different names, such as *matsumushi*, *suzumushi*, *kutsuwamushi*, *kanetataki*, and so on.

U: Oh, what is the insect that just sang?

J2: That insect who sings ring-ring-ring is the *suzumushi*.

U: *Suzu* means bell in English, doesn't it? If I put it in English, it's "bell cricket" maybe.

J1: Oh, that sounds good. Let's decide on that.

J2: Bell cricket? Yeah, it's a good name. Let's do that.

U: (This is) the first English name which I have put {made up}, isn't it!

VOCABULARY FOCUS

Nouns

<i>betsu</i>	separate, different
<i>eigomei</i>	English name
<i>mushi</i>	insect
<i>semi</i>	cicada
<i>shurui</i>	kind, type

Adjectives

<i>inai</i>	absent, non-present [animate objects]
<i>urusai</i>	noisy [urusaku: noisily (Adverbial)]

Verbs

<i>naku</i>	cry, (animals/insects) sing
<i>tsukeru</i>	put, attach
<i>tsuku</i>	stick, get attached

Adverbs and **adverbial** phrases

<i>sonokawari</i>	instead (of that)
<i>soreigaini</i>	apart from that
<i>sukkari</i>	utterly, completely

Onomatopoeia

<i>rin rin</i>	ring ring, ding ding
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GRAMMAR FOCUS

Japanese has a very strict, persistent rule: modifiers, long or short, must come before the modified. This rule holds true no matter how long the modifier may be. Today we'll see how nouns are modified by a sentence.

English has a grammatical tool called the "relative pronoun," examples of which are "which," "who" and "that." These modify or add information to a noun via a sentence.

Japanese, however, has no such thing as the "relative pronoun" as the sentence that precedes a noun simply acts as its modifier. Today's dialogue has six such examples, which are all underlined:

(1) – *natsu ni urusaku naiteita* (was noisily singing in summer) modifies *semi* (cicada); hence, as it is, this would be "the was-noisily-singing-in-summer cicadas," which in natural English would be "the cicadas who were singing noisily in summer."

(2) – *boku ga shitteiru* (I know) hooks up with *mushi* (insect); so, this is, "the I-know insect," which is, more naturally, "the insect (which) I know."

(3) – *aki ni naku* (sings in autumn) describes *mushi*; therefore, "the sing-in-autumn insect," which means "the insect that sings in fall."

(4) – *ima* naita* (sang just now) is the modifier for *mushi*; so, "the has-just-sung insect" or "the insect that has just sung."

**Ima* covers the time now including slightly before and after.

(5) – *ano* rin-rin-rin to naku* (sings as "ring-ring") describes *mushi*; hence, "that sings-as-ring-ring insect" or "that insect who sings 'ring-ring-ring'."

**Ano* is not a part of the modifying sentence, but it is a noun-modifier that directly modifies the subsequent noun, *mushi*.

(6) – *boku ga hajimete tsuketa* (I have put for the first time) is the additional remark about *eigomei*; so, literally it reads "the I-put-for-the-first-time English name," i.e., "the English name I have given for the first time."

CULTURE FOCUS

Music or noise?

It is interesting how different cultures perceive the sounds that various animals make. I suppose most cultures think birds "sing," but would most cultures think insects sing, too? Insects often appear in Japanese poems and essays, and are considered to indicate certain mental or emotional feelings – often as a symbol of time's passage or the changing of the seasons.

In Japan, cicadas and grasshoppers are representative of the hot summers, while a variety of crickets (all with different names) are typical singers for the cool, somewhat sentimental, autumnal atmosphere.

In Japan some people raise and keep certain types of crickets, typically *suzumushi*, and even hold contests to determine which *suzumushi* is the best singer.