

Japanese Culture Now

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若者ことば その2Young People's Language Part 2:
I Want to Be Able to Show Everyone My True Self!

In *TJF Newsletter* No. 26, published in September 2002, we took up the topic of young people's language. This second installment introduces more expressions currently in use mainly by high school students in Japan.

Please keep in mind that the expressions introduced in our Young People's Language feature are reserved for use in informal situations and in the context of close relationships, such as between friends. Should you misjudge a situation and use these expressions in the wrong context, you could run the risk of offending someone or even destroying good relations. Many young people in their teens and twenties who pepper their language with expressions such

as these are the target of criticism for having no grasp of conventional ways of talking and for the low level of their speech.

By knowing young people's language, however, you can turn to informal expressions that can convey your desire for closeness with others, and for an open and honest relationship based on expression of true feelings.

In any language, you must consider carefully that the way you talk will affect your image. By providing an introduction to these patterns of speech, we would like you to get a taste for the lively colloquial way young people speak and communicate their thoughts in their everyday lives.

ゲットする *getto suru*

Example 「最新のケータイ、もうゲットしたよ!」
 (「最新型の携帯電話を、もう手にいれました。」)
 "I've already *snagged* the newest cell phone!"
 ("I have already got the newest type of mobile phone.")

Explanation:

Word derived from the English word "get," used in Japanese specifically to acquire something desired. It is also used to signify success in one's flirtations with the opposite sex; to "get the girl" or "get the guy."

パニクる *panikuru*

Example 「ここんとこ忙しくて、ちょーパニクってたんだよ。」
 (「このところ(最近)忙しくて、すごく混乱してました。」)
 "I've been so busy lately, it's a *real panic*."
 ("I've been so busy lately I'm in a total panic.")

Explanation:

Taken from the English word "panic," this is a shortened form of the phrase *panikku ni naru*. It means to become panicked, confused, dismayed, disorganized, or mixed up.

ドタキャン *dotakyan*

Example 「昨日のデート、彼にドタキャンされちゃった。ちょーブルー。」
 (「昨日のデート、直前になって、彼に來れないって言われて中止になりました。すごく寂しいです。」)
 "My boyfriend *bailed out* on our date yesterday. I was so *bummed*." ("My date yesterday fell through when my boyfriend called at the last minute to say he couldn't come. I was so disappointed.")

Explanation:

Dota is an abbreviation of *dotanba de* (at the last minute) and *kyan* is short for the English word cancel (*kyanseru*). *Dotanba de kyanseru* means cancelling at the last moment. When someone else is canceling on the speaker it is *dotakyan sareru*, but when the speaker is doing the canceling it becomes *dotakyan suru*.

はまる *hamaru*

Example 「タカシのやつ、ゲームにはまっちゃって、学校こねーんだよ。」
 (「タカシは、ゲームにのめりこみすぎて、学校にきません。」)
 "That bum Takeshi; he's *addicted* to videogames and never comes to school."
 ("Takeshi has become so involved in videogames that he no longer comes to school.")

Explanation:

Originally, *hamaru* means "to fit exactly into a frame or hole." Here it means "to get caught up in something and be unable to get out," or "to be utterly absorbed in an activity." It is also used to refer to the inability to extricate oneself from a group, like a club or a job; meeting with misfortune; the deterioration of a situation; and so on.

…すぎー *sugi*

Example 「国語の授業、ちょー楽しかった。佐藤先生ってば、おもしろすぎー。」
 (「国語の授業は、すごく楽しかったです。佐藤先生は、おもしろすぎます。」)
 "Japanese class was so fun. Sato-sensei is *beyond interesting*." ("Japanese class was really enjoyable. Sato-sensei is fascinating.")

Explanation:

The state of exceeding a certain degree. Meaning: "exceedingly," "very." Aside from the usual negative connotation, young people's use of *sugi* can also carry a positive meaning.

Photo: Hongo Jin