

PREFACE

With the international situation as complex and Japan's role as important as they are today, there are many people wanting to learn Japanese. The Osaka University of Foreign Studies has been teaching Japanese to foreign students for over twenty years, producing in the process a flexible set of ten texts plus annual research papers. Unfortunately, however, these could not be provided to people wishing to study the language outside of the University. Thus it was with pleasure that we accepted Gakken's suggestion that this latest revision be made more widely available. Nonetheless, this also entailed condensing the existing fifty-lesson course by breaking from its exclusively classroom orientation to a dual structure suited to either the classroom or self-study.

The end result differs from other texts in utilizing living Japanese in common situations to get an understanding of contemporary Japan which transcends mere language education. Although it is impossible to "master" Japanese in only thirty lessons, a mastery of this text will allow intelligent participation in most situations and will lay the foundations for further learning. The vocabulary and characters introduced have been selected from a statistical survey of texts used in Japanese high schools, and the sentence patterns on the basis of extensive research and experience.

All lessons' having presentations, grammar explanations, practice exercises, conversations, and readings, these may be skimmed, stressed, or reordered to suit the individual's needs. In addition, there is a set of accompanying tapes which should prove extremely helpful for anyone wishing to develop his ear for and fluency in Japanese pronunciation and intonation. Yet another feature of this text is the use of romanization and Japanese script as appropriate to each section, such that conversations are in romanization alone, more advanced readings in Japanese alone, and presentations in both.

Finally, a major attempt has been made to avoid the common failing of "textbook Japanese" which is useless in daily life. Although this has at times meant using hard-to-explain and hard-to-translate expressions, the emphasis was still on having natural Japanese, and it is hoped that this will be accepted and learned, as such.

While the time required to complete this text will obviously vary depending upon the person and study method, a total of about 200 hours should be adequate to acquire an everyday-life conversational proficiency and the ability to read real Japanese, albeit with a dictionary.

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