

Preface

When we communicate across languages, we sometimes face difficulties expressing our feelings. How should I show happiness and joy, or surprise and disbelief? How should I reveal my anger and fear? Or should I reveal those feelings at all? Should I yell, or should I keep silent? What emotion is my partner trying to convey through those curious expressions? Is it love or just teasing? These questions become increasingly relevant as one becomes more competent in the language being learned, and more aware of and sensitive to speech partners.

In addition to these basic questions, learners often wonder how or how not to express the desire for sharing emotional closeness, i.e., empathy. How should I express heartfelt feelings toward my friend? How should I reveal my inner self to reach my friend's heart? We also wonder how to convey the varying emotionally revealing personal and interpersonal responses toward events under discussion. For example, how do I share with my partner the feeling of loss and suffering resulting from an incident? In general, what kinds of strategies are available for sharing feelings and for encouraging warm empathy? Meeting these personal and interpersonal needs is an important part of daily communication.

Emotion and empathy as expressed in Japanese are the themes of this book. By "emotion" I mean a surge of various human feelings, including, for example, the sense of being deeply moved, as well as such basic emotions as happiness, loneliness, and anger. "Empathy" refers to the warm sharing of emotion, to familiarity, and to intimacy between speakers. Emotion and empathy are so pervasive in language that communication can hardly sustain emotional neutrality. It is true that in certain uses of language, for example, in written legal documents, the language is purposefully as emotion-free as possible. However, in daily life, emotion and empathy are expressed in every possible way in many different varieties and intensities. Language is not understood only for its informational content, but also felt for its emotion and empathy.

Although feelings play an enormous part in people's lives, in foreign language education, the expression of feelings is often neglected. In 77 entries, this book introduces, catalogues, and explains "expressive Japanese," namely, emotion words and expressive strategies frequently used in contemporary Japan.

To benefit from this book, the reader should have a firm grasp of the fundamentals of elementary Japanese, including basic vocabulary and grammar. Basic knowledge of hiragana, katakana, and kanji is also expected. In terms of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (administered by the Japan Foundation Language Center), the reader is expected to possess at least Level 3 knowledge. More concretely, this book assumes knowledge of the basic materials covered in my 1990 book for elementary Japanese students, *An Introduction to Japanese Grammar and Communication Strategies*. To assure the background understanding associated with each entry, the reader is encouraged to consult books and dictionaries that explain basic elementary Japanese.

This book can be used as a reference for students studying Japanese language and culture at institutions or as a guide for students studying on their own. It can be read from beginning to end or episodically, with the reader going directly to the items of interest. It can also be used as a reference using either the English cues or the Japanese (key) expressions as listed in the indexes.

More specifically, this book can be used in the following ways; (1) to look up Japanese expressions when you want to express your emotion and empathy, (2) to find out what Japanese emotion words and expressive strategies mean and how they are used, (3) to familiarize yourself with a variety of contemporary Japanese expressions representing multiple genres, and particularly (4) to learn expressive Japanese that usually does not appear in language textbooks, including playful and creative uses.

Expressing one's feelings is both dangerous and rewarding. Emotion and empathy are so close to the heart that one can both hurt and be hurt by others, especially when expressions misfire in foreign languages. At the same time, to be able to touch someone's heart in another language is all the more rewarding.

This book contains explanations and examples based on how the Japanese language is typically used. But it does not mean that the reader should imitate everything. As we all know, language learning is a creative experience, requiring much more than simple imitation. Language is also filled with playfulness and creativity, and it always communicates one's sense of self and identity. The expressions contained in this book often illustrate these aspects of the Japanese language. Given many examples, the reader must remain critical of specific expressions, and make up his or her own mind in choosing whatever is appropriate. I hope that by learning and going beyond the examples given in this book, the reader will explore not only the emotional side of Japanese communication but also the many emotional voices reverberating in all of us.

For many years I have enjoyed teaching Japanese language and linguistics at American institutions (in chronological order, the University of Hawai'i, Connecticut College, Harvard University, and Princeton University), and especially at Rutgers University. I thank students and colleagues I have met at vari-

ous places for their friendship, inspiration, and encouragement. This book is dedicated to past, present, and future students of the Japanese language at Rutgers University. It is also dedicated to students learning Japanese on their own or at many institutions worldwide. For those students who are interested in exploring expressive Japanese (as well as my related studies in Japanese linguistics and discourse analysis), some of my theoretical and pedagogical works are listed in the References.

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“On the Banks of the Old Raritan”

