

## LESSON NOTES

# Newbie S5 #14

## Choosing the Right Japanese Birthday Gift Is Tricky!

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# 14

## KANJI

1. まどか: ママ、誕生日おめでとう。
2. お母さん: あら？ケーキ？ありがとう！
3. ケント: おばさん、お誕生日おめでとうございます。  
これ、お花です。
4. お母さん: あら・・・あ
5. まどか: なにこれー。  
ケント、これ、仏様のお花だよ。
6. ケント: なにそれ？
7. お母さん: まどか、大丈夫よ。  
ありがとう、ケント君。うれしいわ。

## KANA

1. まどか: ママ、たんじょうびおめでとう。
2. おかあさん: あら？ケーキ？ありがとう！
3. ケント: おばさん、おたんじょうびおめでとうございます。  
これ、おはなです。
4. おかあさん: あら・・・あ
5. まどか: なにこれー。  
ケント、これ、ほとけさまのおはなだよ。

CONT'D OVER

6. ケント: なにそれ?
7. おかあさん: まどか、だいじょうぶよ。  
ありがとう、ケントくん。うれしいわ。

## ROMANIZATION

1. MADOKA: Mama, tanjōbi omedetō.
2. O-KĀ-SAN: Ara? Kēki? Arigatō!
3. KENTO: Oba-san, o-tanjōbi omedetō gozaimasu.  
Kore, o-hana desu.
4. O-KĀ-SAN: Ara... a.
5. MADOKA: Nani kore--.  
Kento, kore, hotoke-sama no o-hana da yo.
6. KENTO: Nani sore?
7. O-KĀ-SAN: Madoka, daijōbu yo.  
Arigatō, Kento-kun. Ureshii wa.

## ENGLISH

1. MADOKA: Happy birthday, Mom.
2. MOTHER: What's this? Cake? Thank you!

CONT'D OVER

3. KENT: Happy birthday, Aunt.  
I have some flowers for you.
4. MOTHER: Wow... Oh. (laughs)
5. MADOKA: What are THESE?  
Kent, these are flowers to honor the dead!
6. KENT: What do you mean?
7. MOTHER: Madoka, it's fine.  
Thank you, Kent. I'm so happy.

## VOCABULARY

Kanji	Kana	Romaji	English
お誕生日おめでとう ございます。	おたんじょうびおめ でとうございます。	O-tanjōbi omedetō gozaimasu.	Happy birthday.
おめでとう。	おめでとう。	Omedetō.	Congratulations.
ありがとう。	ありがとう。	arigatō	Thank you.
仏様	ほとけさま	Hotoke-sama	a Buddha, deceased person
花	はな	hana	flower
うれしい	うれしい	ureshii	happy, glad, pleasant (-i adjective)

## SAMPLE SENTENCES

お誕生日おめでとうございます。 <i>O-tanjōbi omedetō gozaimasu.</i>	おめでとう！ <i>Omedetō!</i>
Happy birthday.	Congratulations!

<p>教えてくれてありがとう。 <i>Oshiete kurete arigatō.</i></p> <p>Thank you for telling me.</p>	<p>仏様にお参りしました。 <i>Hotoke-sama ni o-mairi shimashita.</i></p> <p>I prayed to the Buddha.</p>
<p>この花はとてもきれいです。 <i>Kono hana wa totemo kirei desu.</i></p> <p>This flower is very beautiful.</p>	<p>明日は給料日です。うれしい！ <i>Ashita wa kyūryōbi desu. Ureshii!</i></p> <p>Tomorrow is pay day! I'm so happy!</p>

## VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

### **omedetō (おめでとう)**

The word *omedetō* (おめでとう) by itself simply means "Congratulations!" There are many set expressions that contain *omedetō* that we use when congratulating someone on something specific:

Japanese	Romanization	"English"
たんじょうびおめでとう！	<i>tanjōbi omedetō</i>	"Happy Birthday!" (explained in detail below)
あけましておめでとう！	<i>akemashite omedetō</i>	"Happy New Year!"
ご結婚おめでとう！	<i>go-kekkon omedetō</i>	"Congratulations on your marriage!"

### **arigatō (ありがとう)**

Even people who have not studied Japanese may be familiar with this word, which means "thank you." What they may not know is that this phrase is very casual! When thanking friends or family members, it is perfectly fine to use *arigatō* (ありがとう); however, when thanking a stranger or someone who has a higher status than you, it is better to add *gozaimasu* to this word to make it formal: *arigatō gozaimasu* (ありがとうございます).

### **ureshii (うれしい)**

This is an *i* adjective that means "happy." When presented with flowers for her birthday, Madoka's mother exclaimed *ureshii wa!* (うれしいわ!), meaning "I'm so happy!" For more information on the particle *wa* we use here, please check the grammar notes below.

## GRAMMAR

## The Focus of This Lesson Is Reversing Sentence Order in Informal Japanese.

なにこれ~。

*Nani kore~.*

"What are THESE?"

In this lesson, you'll learn how we reverse sentence order in informal Japanese. You'll also learn how to wish someone a happy birthday in Japanese.

### Reversing Sentence Order in Informal Japanese

When speaking casually with friends or family, it's common to switch around sentence order in Japanese with no change in meaning. In English, word order is very important, and changing around word order can drastically change the meaning, but the same doesn't necessarily hold true for Japanese. Changing around the order of a sentence sounds very colloquial but can come off as natural sounding when done right. Most often, we do this to give emphasis to what we are saying.

**For Example:**

Original Order	⇒	Reversed Order	"English"
これ(は)なに? Kore (wa) nani?	⇒	なにこれ? Nani kore?	"What's this?"
これ(は)おいし い! Kore (wa) oishii!	⇒	おいしい、これ! Oishii, kore!	"This is good!"
あれ(は)だれ? Are (wa) dare?	⇒	だれ、あれ? Dare, are?	"Who's that?"

### Examples from This Dialogue

1. まどか : なにこれ~。  
*Madoka: Nani kore~.*  
"Madoka: What are THESE?"

2. ケント：なにそれ？  
*Kento: Nani sore?*  
"Kent: What do you mean?"

## Wishing Someone a Happy Birthday

In the dialogue, Madoka and Kent wished Madoka's mother a happy birthday. Madoka used informal Japanese, while Kent used formal Japanese. Let's look at the two expressions they use to say "Happy Birthday":

Japanese	Romanization	Politeness Level
おたんじょうびおめでと うございます。	<i>O-tanjōbi omedetō gozaimasu.</i>	Formal
たんじょうびおめでと う。	<i>Tanjōbi omedetō.</i>	Informal

There are two main differences to note: the elimination of *gozaimasu* in the informal phrase, and the addition of the polite prefix *o-* to the word *tanjōbi*, which means "birthday," in the formal phrase.

## Examples from This Dialogue

1. まどか：ママ、誕生日おめでとう。  
*Madoka: Mama, tanjōbi omedetō.*  
"Madoka: Happy birthday, Mom."
2. ケント：おばさん、お誕生日おめでとうございます。  
*Kento: Oba-san, o-tanjōbi omedetō gozaimasu.*  
"Kent: Happy birthday, Aunt."

Note: The prefix *o-* (お-) attaches to the beginning of certain words to make them more polite.

## For Example:

<b>Word</b>	⇒	<b>Polite Version</b>	<b>"English"</b>
<i>tanjōbi</i> (たんじょうび)	⇒	( <i>o-tanjōbi</i> ) おたんじょうび	"birthday"
( <i>namae</i> ) 名前	⇒	( <i>o-namae</i> ) お名前	"name"
( <i>genki</i> ) 元気	⇒	( <i>o-genki</i> ) お元気	"fine," "energetic"

### Language Tip: The Feminine Particle *Wa* (わ)

In the dialogue, Madoka's mother expressed her happiness by saying *Ureshii wa!* (うれし  
いわ!) The particle *wa* expresses a weak assertion, desire, intent, emotion, and so on.  
We often use it to soften what the speaker is saying, and older female speakers often use  
it in this way. Note that this particle is different from the topic-marking particle *wa* (は).  
We write them differently but pronounce them the same.