

LESSON TRANSCRIPT

Lower Beginner #15 Lucking Out in Japan

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INTRODUCTION

Alisha: Hi everyone! アリッシャです！ Alisha here!

Natsuko: こんにちは！ ナツコです！ Hi everyone, I'm Natsuko.

Alisha: Welcome to Lower Beginner Season 1 lesson 15 – “Lucking Out in Japan”.

Natsuko: So, Alisha, what are we going to learn in this lesson?

Alisha: In this lesson, we'll learn a lot of polite expressions.

Natsuko: Politeness and good manners are very important in Japanese society. And where does this lesson's dialogue take place?

Alisha: Emily goes to a shop and now she's at the check out. Please pay attention, as this is a typical conversation between a cashier and a customer.

Natsuko: では、聞きましょう！

Alisha: Let's listen to the conversation!

POST CONVERSATION BANTER

Alisha: Natsuko, why did the cashier ask Emily if she wanted shopping bags? Aren't they free to take?

Natsuko: Yes and No. Recently, Japanese companies have been trying hard to be eco-friendly. Japanese レジ袋, which means the shopping bags are not paper bags any longer. They are plastic bags made from fossil fuel.

Alisha: I see. So when we throw them away, it could contribute to air pollution?

Natsuko: It's considered so. Also shops are aiming to reduce the number of plastic bags, so there is less unnecessary rubbish.

Alisha: That's why people take their own bags to supermarkets!

Natsuko: That's right! We call those bags エコバッグ meaning “eco-friendly bag”, and often made of fabrics like cotton. Many supermarkets and shops give you what's called “eco points” on your member's card, or sometimes a direct discount from the bill. Some shops charge you for the plastic bags.

Alisha: That will encourage people to use their own re-usable bags! Listeners, do you have a similar system in your country? Please tell us in the comments for this lesson! Now, let's move on to the vocabulary.

KEY VOCAB AND PHRASES

Alisha: Let's have a closer look at the usage for some of the words and phrases from this lesson. The first word we'll look at is....

Natsuko: お会計

Alisha: The word kaikei means “check”, “bill”, “reckoning” or “accounting”. In polite

speech, you need to add the honorific prefix “o” to this word.

Natsuko: When you are at restaurants or bars and ask for the check, this word comes in handy. Simply add お願いします to say “please” after お会計; お会計、お願いします and this means “check please”.

Alisha: Also you’ll often hear お会計 as the total amount. In the dialogue, the shop clerk said お会計、1000円です, which means “your total comes to 1,000 yen”.

Natsuko: That’s right! Okay, next we have レジ袋.

Alisha: You said earlier that レジ袋 means shopping bags, but shopping in Japanese is 買い物, right?

Natsuko: Right. レジ袋 literally means “cash register bag” and this name was given because those bags are given at checkout, which is レジ in Japanese. “Bag” in Japanese is ふくろ, but combining it with レジ, it becomes ふくろ.

Alisha: レジ for “cash register”... Japanese people really love shortening words! (笑)

Natsuko: Yes (笑), and it makes easier for Japanese learners, so, “win-win”.

Alisha: That’s about right. Okay, what’s the next word we have?

Natsuko: ふくびき. This means “lottery”, but you don’t usually pay for the tickets.

Alisha: Free tickets? How does it work? If it’s free, people might take tickets until they win enough!

Natsuko: Don’t worry; it’s usually give-away ticket according to the amount you spend. For example, you get one ふくびき ticket for 1,000 yen spending.

Alisha: I see. So if I spend 3,000 yen, I’ll get three tickets?

Natsuko: Exactly! ふくびき literally means “to pull the good luck”. ふく means “good luck” or “happiness” and びき comes from the verb 引く meaning “to pull”.

Alisha: So, the more money you spend on shopping, the more chances of pulling happiness or good luck you can get!

Natsuko: That’s right!

Alisha: Okay, let’s move on to the grammar.

LESSON FOCUS

Alisha: In this lesson, you’re going to learn the polite Japanese phrases that you’ll hear at shops. Let’s go through the phrases we heard in the dialog. The first point is to ask whether or not you need something.

Natsuko: When shop assistants ask you if you need something, you’ll often hear ご利用
よろしいですか literally meaning “do you use?” but in a very polite way.

Alisha: So, it’s more like “would you like to use [something]”?

Natsuko: Yes, pretty much! As we talked about shopping bags earlier, you now have the choice of using plastic bags or your own shopping bags in most of the supermarkets and drug stores. So you’ll have more chances to hear the whole

sentence レジ袋、ご利用ですか asking you whether or not you'd like plastic bags to carry purchased items.

Alisha: What are the best ways to respond?

Natsuko: You can simply reply hai, "yes" or iie, "no", but it'd be nice to say like いいえ、使いません No, I don't use it, just like Emily said in the dialog.

Alisha: So, if I want some plastic bags, ...はい、使います?

Natsuko: That's right! You can also say, はい、お願いします like "yes, please".

Alisha: That's convenient. お願いします can appear everywhere!

Natsuko: (笑) そうですね, you're right. Another thing you often hear when you pay at any shops or restaurants is レシート、ごりようですか meaning "would you need the receipt?"

Alisha: Why do they even ask that? We have to receive the receipt for what we pay, don't we?

Natsuko: Some people don't like to have too many receipts in wallets and purses. So, they can actually reject it.

Alisha: So, instead of saying "here's your receipt", they might say "do you want a receipt?"

Natsuko: Exactly. Let's practice a bit! Listeners, please repeat after me.ごりようですか。

Alisha: [wait 5 sec.] We practiced レジ袋 earlier, so listeners, let's try "would you like to use shopping bags?"

Natsuko: [wait 5 sec.] レジ袋、ごりようですか。

Alisha: Did you get it right? Now, to say "no; I don't use them"? Please repeat after Natsuko.

Natsuko: いいえ、使いません。 [wait 5 sec.]

Alisha: And if you want to have some?

Natsuko: はい、お願いします。

Alisha: [wait 5 sec.] Alright; how did you go, listeners?

Alisha: I believe our listeners hear a lot of these polite Japanese phrases when they visit Japanese shops and restaurants.

Natsuko: Yes, that's right. If you have Japanese shops in your country, they still keep the same polite standard, so you might even hear them outside Japan. So, wherever you are, please try to pay attention to what Japanese shop assistants say!

OUTRO

Alisha: Okay, that's all for this lesson. Please leave us your comments, questions, and any feedback you have on the lesson page. See you next time.

Natsuko: じゃ、また。