

LESSON NOTES

Yojijukugo #13

Are you Getting Desperate?

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VOCABULARY

Kanji	Kana	Romaji	English
絶体絶命	ぜったいぜつめい	zettaizetsumei	to have one's back against the wall
前代未聞	ぜんだいみもん	zendaimimon	unprecedented

SAMPLE SENTENCES

こんなに大きな失敗は、前代未聞だ。
Konna ni ōki na shippai wa zendaimimon da.

This kind of giant failure is unprecedented.

GRAMMAR

Today's Yojijukugo(四字熟語)(1)	絶体絶命
Kana	ぜったいぜつめい
Romaji	<i>zettaizetsumei</i>
Meaning	to have one's back against the wall

	1st Kanji	2nd Kanji	3rd Kanji	4th Kanji
四字熟語	絶	体	絶	命
Kana	ぜつ (ぜっ)	たい	ぜつ	めい
Rōmaji	Zetsu	Tai	Zetsu	Mei
Meaning	Discontinue	Body	Discontinue	Life

History, Definition, Similar Expressions, etc.

「絶体」「絶命」: Both of them indicate that one's body or life is pushed into a corner, and then one's luck runs out.

「絶体絶命」: It means "to be in a critical situation from which there seems to be no way out of danger or difficulty."

Usage

It is often used as a prenominal modifier, as in [zettai zetsumei no] + [noun] (絶体絶命の~). Nouns like *kiki* (危機; danger) or *pinchi* (ピンチ; pinch) often come after *zettai zetsumei no*.

Or, when someone is driven to the wall, you can say, "[someone] wa zettai zetsumei da. (~は絶体絶命だ)."

Sample Sentences

山で道に迷った。もう水も食べ物もない。これは、絶体絶命の危機だ。

Yama de michi ni mayotta. Mou mizu mo tabemono mo nai. Kore wa zettai zetsumei no kiki da.

I'm lost in the mountains and have no more water or food. It's a desperate situation.

ピッチャーが怪我をしてしまった。俺たちは、絶体絶命だ！

Picchā ga kega o shite shimatta. Ore-tachi wa zettai zetsumei da!

Our pitcher got injured. Our backs are against the wall.

彼女に嘘がばれてしまったよ。もう絶対絶命だ。

Kanojo ni uso ga barete shimatta yo. Mou zettai zetsumei da.

My girlfriend figured out my lie. I'm in a real bind now.

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Today's Yojjukugo(四字熟語)(2)

前代未聞

Kana

ぜんだいみもん

Romaji

zendaimimon

Meaning

without precedent, unprecedented, unheard of

	1st Kanji	2nd Kanji	3rd Kanji	4th Kanji
四字熟語	前	代	未	聞
Kana	ぜん	だい	み	もん
Rōmaji	Zen	Dai	Mi	Mon
Meaning	Before	Generation	Not yet	Hear

History, Definition, Similar Expressions, etc.

「前代」: It means "the previous generation" or "the past."

「未聞」: It means "to not have been heard of before."

「前代未聞」: It means "something too rare to have been heard of before."

Usage

It is used as a prenominal modifier, as in [*zendaimimon no*] + [noun]: *zendaimimon no jiken* (前代未聞の事件; an unprecedented affair) or *zendaimimon no hanashi* (前代未聞の話; unprecedented story.)

When something unprecedented happens, you can say, "[that happening] *wa zendaimimon da.*"

Sample Sentences

この映画は、前代未聞の大ヒット作品だ。
Kono eiga wa, zendaimimon no dai-hitto da.
This movie is an unprecedented hit.

総理大臣が1日で辞任した。これは、前代未聞だ。
Sōri daijin ga ichinichi de jinin shita. Kore wa zendaimimon da.
The Prime Minister resigned after one day in office. It's unprecedented.

主役の俳優が途中で交代するとは、前代未聞だ。
Shuyaku no haiyū ga tochū de kōtai suru to wa, zendaimimon da.

It's totally without precedent for the actor playing the leading role to be replaced midway through the performance.