

LESSON NOTES

Yojijukugo #18

Avoid this Japanese No-Win Situation

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GRAMMAR

Today's Yojijukugo (四字熟語)(1)	四面楚歌
Kana	しめんそか
Romaji	shimensoka
Meaning	be completely outcast, a no-win situation

	1st Kanji	2nd Kanji	3rd Kanji	4th Kanji
四字熟語	四	面	楚	歌
Kana	し	めん	そ	か
Rōmaji	Shi	Men	So	Ka
Meaning	Four	Surface	Whip	Song

History, Definition, Similar Expressions, etc.

「四面」: It means "four directions."

「楚歌」: It means "song of the old kingdom in China called So (楚)."

「四面楚歌」: It originates from a historical event in China that deals with the king of the country So (楚). The king recognized his defeat when he heard the songs of his own country from the people surrounding his castle. He believed that his subordinates had sold him out to the enemy. Then, it came to mean "circumstances in which one is surrounded by enemies and opponents, with nobody providing any support."

Usage

It is used as a noun. To express a situation in which someone is completely outcast or doesn't have any support from anybody, you can say, "[someone] *wa shimensoka da*" or "[someone] *wa shimensoka ni naru*."

Sample Sentences

僕の意見はみんなに反対されて、四面楚歌だった。
Boku no iken wa minna ni hantai sarete, shimensoka datta.
Everyone was against my opinion, and I was a complete outcast.

友達はタイガースファンばかりで、ジャイアンツファンの僕はいつも四面楚歌だ。
Tomodachi wa Taigāsu fan bakari de, Jaiantsu fan no boku wa shimensoka da.
Most of my friends are fans of the Tigers, but I'm a fan of the Giants. So, I'm always a complete outcast.

そんな勝手ばかりしていると、四面楚歌になるよ。
Sonna katte bakari shite iru to, shimensoka ni naru yo.
If you are always selfish like that, you will be forsaken by all of your friends.

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Today's Yojijukugo (四字熟語)(2)	順風満帆
Kana	じゅんぷうまんぱん
Romaji	junbūmanpan
Meaning	smooth sailing, on course and going full speed ahead

	1st Kanji	2nd Kanji	3rd Kanji	4th Kanji
四字熟語	順	風	満	帆
Kana	じゅん	ぷう	まん	ぱん
Rōmaji	Jun	Pū	Man	Pan
Meaning	Right	Wind	Full	Sail

History, definition, similar expression, etc.

「順風」: It means "following wind."

「満帆」: It means "full sail."

「順風満帆」: It means "everything is going well, like a boat sailing smoothly in a favorable wind."

Usage

It is used as a noun to express a situation in which everything is going well. You can say, "[something] *wa junbūmanpan da.*"

It can also be used as a na-adjective. When you get a smooth start to something, you can express it as, *junbūmanpan na sutāto* (順風満帆なスタート). Also, you can use it as the adverbial *junbūmanpan ni*, as in *junbūmanpan ni susumu* (順風満帆に進む), which means "to sail before the wind" and expresses things that are going well.

Sample Sentences

新しい仕事は、順風満帆だよ。

Atarashii shigoto wa, junbūmanpan da yo.
Everything is going well with my new job.

結婚生活は、順風満帆なスタートだった。

Kekkon seikatsu wa, junbūmanpan na sutāto datta.
My married life got off to a smooth start.

新プロジェクトは、順風満帆に進んでいる。

Shin-purojekuto wa, junbūmanpan ni susunde iru.
The new project is sailing before the wind.