



Design: Masako Ban

Mr. Pole

Shrunk Japanese

I was talking with a friend the other day, and she used the word "eco-car." I had no idea what she meant at first, but I was gradually able to figure it out. She told me that many Japanese people use such abbreviated expressions a lot. I liked it because it was like a riddle. Anyhow, do you know what an "eco-car" is, Ms. Hirayama?



Pera Pera Penguin's

5-minute Japanese Class by Hitomi Hirayama Vol. 13

■■■ Hmm...well...I wish I could say no...but I do know what it is. It is a shortened form of "ecological car," isn't it? As you have noticed, there are many Japanese words that are shortened so that they are much easier to say. I call such words "Shrunk Japanese." The "shrinking spirit" can be seen in other areas apart from language. For example, the Japanese "shrank" the big cars they imported from the United States and Japan became the land of the automobile. Another example is bonsai which is like a shrunk tree. I believe the Walkman is a well-known example of how Japanese people like to make things smaller and more convenient.

Shrunk Japanese

We often need to communicate quickly since modern life moves at a fast pace, so many people use shortened words. For example, "as soon as possible" is often abbreviated to "ASAP" in English. In a similar way, many Japanese words are shrunk. Even though most "shrunk Japanese" terms are made up from English words, the way they are constructed is unique to the Japanese language. But remember that "shrunk Japanese" is not really polite language, and there are some words that should not be used at work. Some fashionable words are likely to become useless within a few months.

e.g. personal computer	1	convenience-store	5
パーソナル コンピューター		コンビニエンスストア	
remote control	2	foreigner	6
リモートコントロール		がいこくじん	
pocket-bell	3	Bank of Japan	7
ポケットベル		日本ぎんこう日 { nichini }	
air conditioner	4	car navigation system	8
エアコンディショナー		カーナビゲーションシステム	

1. pasokon 2. rimokon 3. pokeberu 4. eakon 5. kombini 6. gaijin 7. nichigin 8. kånabi
1. パソコン 2. リモコン 3. ポケベル 4. エアコン 5. コンビニ 6. がいじん 7. にちぎん 8. カーナビ

日本 Nippon or Nihon ?

In the 18th year of the Meiji era (1868-1912), it is said that the name, "Nippon," was printed on ¥100 bills for the first time. The reason for using the name was that the then finance minister and the Bank of Japan governor were both originally from Satsuma (the old name for Kagoshima Prefecture), where people used to call Japan "Nippon" at the time. Nowadays, we call Japan "Nihon" most of the time. But "Nippon" is still used by the Bank of Japan and the Nippon Broadcasting System Corporation. Most Japanese people say "Gambare (go for it), Nippon!" when they want to encourage the Japanese athletes to do their best during the Olympic Games. I've also heard that the Bank of Japan has been using the name, "Nihon" recently.

Answers

① gaikoku sha foreign country car がいしゃ gaisha	② rental car レンタ renta	③ the engine stalls エンスト ensuto	④ air conditioner エアコン eakon	⑤ convenience-store コンビニ kombini	⑥ telephone card テレカ terekã	⑦ family restaurant ファミレス famiresu	⑧ rusuban denwa answering machine るすでん rusuden	⑨ dotanba (last-moment) cancellation ドタキャン dotakyan	⑩ company party コンパ kompa
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Mr. Pole is looking forward to his first date with a Japanese girl tomorrow. So, he went to Hakone the other day to check out places to visit on his big day.

Hirayama: How did you like Hakone?

Mr. Pole: Well, I had rented an imported car to go to Hakone, but...

実は ① imported car を ② rent したのですが...
jitsu wa o shitano desu ga

it stalled in the mountains, and the air conditioning also broke down.

山の中で ③ stalling of an engine しちゃって ④ air conditioning も 壊れてしまって...
yama no naka de shichatte mo kowareteshimatte
mountain broke down

I found a convenience store a kilometer further on, but it was closed!

1キロ先に ⑤ convenience store を 見つけた けど、閉まってました。
ichi kiro saki ni o mitsuketa kedo shimattemashita
ahead found but closed

I couldn't make a phone call because I didn't have a telephone card.

⑥ telephone card が なくて 電話 が できませんでした。
ga nakute denwa ga dekimasendeshita
didn't have couldn't

I walked for about two hours and finally found a family restaurant.

2時間 くらい 歩いて やっと ⑦ family restaurant を 見つけました。
ni jikan kurai aruite yatto o mitsukemashita
two hours about walking finally found

When Mr. Pole got back to his house, it was after 11 p.m.!

Then, I saw a message on my answering machine, and...

それで ⑧ answering machine に メッセージ が 入っていました。
sorede ni message ga haiteimashita

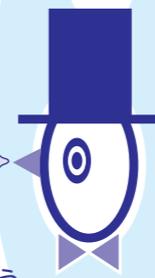
She had called off the date at the last minute.

デートは ⑨ the last moment cancellation です。
date wa desu

Hirayama: Don't feel so bad! Let's go to a party tonight!

そんなに がっかりしないで 今晚 ⑩ company party に 行きましょう。
sonnani gakkarishinaide konban ni ikimasho
so please don't feel bad tonight let's go

Com-pa: From company party, originally a party involving men and women from different companies, though not related to business.



諺

ことわざ
kotowaza
proverbs

ピンからキリまで
1. pin kara kiri made
one from ten to

ピンキリ pin kiri
from the best to the worst
[From "No.1" through "No.10"] pin stands for "No.1" or "the best" in Portuguese. Kiri, however, stands for the cross (the symbol of Christianity), which looks like "十," or "10" in Japanese.

棚からぼた餅
2. tana kara botamochi
shelf from rice cake

たなぼた tana bota
A windfall. [Finding a rice cake on a book-shelf.]
An unexpected piece of good luck.

Mr. Pole: I'm going abroad on vacation next week.

来週 から 海外旅行 に 行きます。
raishū kara kaigai ryokō ni ikimasu
next week foreign travel will go

Hirayama: Wow, that's sudden!

あら 急 ですね。
ara kyū desu ne
oh sudden isn't it

Mr. Pole: I know! My aunt gave me the plane tickets because she couldn't go because of her work.

ええ。叔母 が 仕事 で 行けなくなった ので 航空券
ē oba ga shigoto de ikenakunatta node kōkūken
yes aunt work cannot go so plane ticket

を くれました。
o kuremashita
gave me

Hirayama: What a windfall!

A. unexpected present (you are lucky) です ね。
desu ne

Hirayama: Hotels are competing hard these days because of the recession.

最近 は 不景気 の ため たくさん の ホテル が 競争 を
saikin wa fukēki nanode hotel ga kyōsō o
these days recession competition

しています ね。
shiteimasu ne

Mr. Pole: I think so. That's why their rates vary "from very expensive to the cheapest," and service can also be anything "from very good to simply awful."

ええ。ですから 値段 は B. from the best to the worst です し
ē desukara nedan wa desu shi
therefore price

サービス も B. from the best to the worst です ね。
service mo desu ne
also/too

Answers

A ... 2 B ... 1