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さくら?

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Pera Pera Penguin's

5-minute Japanese Class by Hitomi Hirayama



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I bought strawberries the other day, and they were so delicious. I went to the same shop to buy some more. When I saw another customer trying to decide whether to buy them or not, I said, "The strawberries are very delicious!" She stared at me and asked, "sakura?" Then, I said "sakura wa senshū deshita." (The cherry blossoms ended last week.) The owner of the shop was alarmed, and said, "chigau chigau" (Oh, no! no!) Ms. **Hirayama**, what did I do wrong?

■■■ When she said "**sakura**" she was not referring to the beautiful cherry blossoms that you see on trees. It's informally written as "偽客" in kanji and means a "false customer (or decoy)." A "**sakura**" is a person who pretends to be a normal customer who says good things about a certain product encouraging other customers to buy the product. Since you said something good about the strawberries, she thought that you could be a "false customer." That obviously alarmed the owner of the shop. For today's lesson, I'll introduce some words that relate to it.

★The listed words here are used in a negative sense.★

(A) False customer / decoy :

さくら **sakura**  
In addition to the explanation above, there are claqueur, a person who enters a theater for free and is employed to applaud performers as if they were popular and arouse the enthusiasm of the audience.

(B) Being undecided / uncommitted :

うやむや **uyamuya**  
To make things inaccurate and ambiguous without clarifying whether a decision has been made.  
● "To obscure where responsibility lies" ● "Uncommitted attitude"  
「責任を\_\_\_\_\_にする」 「\_\_\_\_\_な態度」  
**sekinin o ni suru na taido**

(C) To talk nonsense / incoherent :

でたらめ **detarame**  
● "To talk nonsense" ● "To place numbers at random"  
「\_\_\_\_\_を言う」 「数字を\_\_\_\_\_に並べる」  
**o iu sūji o ni naraberu**

(D) To concoct :

捏造 (する) **netsuzō (suru)**  
To write or present articles or stories as if they are true although they are not based on fact. To fabricate or invent stories

(E) To gloss over :

ごまかす **gomakasu**  
1) To gloss over attitudes, facts and faults by changing the subject or saying whatever comes into one's head, so that one's real intention will not be revealed.  
● "To laugh it off"  
「笑って\_\_\_\_\_」  
**waratte**  
2) To cheat on numbers and prices in order to avoid a disadvantage  
● "To lie about one's age"  
「年を\_\_\_\_\_」  
**toshi o**

(F) Fraud :  
詐欺 **sagi**

To obtain money, goods or advantage by false pretences

● "To commit a fraud" ● "Marriage fraud"  
「\_\_\_\_\_を働く」 「結婚\_\_\_\_\_」  
**o hataraku kekkon**

(G) Counterfeit :  
偽もの **nisemono**

Imitation goods or charlatan  
● "This bag is counterfeit." ● "That doctor is a quack."  
「このバッグは\_\_\_\_\_」 「あの医者は\_\_\_\_\_」  
**kono bag wa ano isha wa**

Complete these sentences:

- (1) This article can't be true!  
この記事は  に違いない。  
**kono kiji wa ni chigai nai**
- (2) Hitomi was deceived by a marriage swindler, and he cheated her out of ¥10 million.  
ひとみさんは 結婚  にあって1000万円 取られたようです。  
**Hitomi-san wa kekkon ni atte issen-man en torareta yō desu**
- (3) It is difficult to distinguish genuine and imitation goods.  
本物か  か 見分けがつかないですね。  
**honmono ka ka miwake ga tsukanai desu ne**
- (4) I just pressed numbers at random, and I opened the cashbox!  
数字を  に押したら金庫が開いた!  
**sūji o ni oshitara kinko ga aita!**
- (5) I heard that he falsified his tax declaration.  
税務署に税金を  申告したらしいです。  
**zēmusho ni zēkin o shinkoku shita rashī desu**
- (6) In the end, arrangements for a formal meeting with a prospective marriage partner were left up in the air.  
結局、お見合いの話は  になってしまった。  
**kekkyoku omiai no hanashi wa ni natte shimatta**

Answers: (1) **netsuzō** (2) **sagi** (3) **nisemono** (4) **detarame** (5) **gomakashite** (6) **uyamuya**



The word "lie" written in the box at left does not always have a negative connotation. It is used in daily life as described in the three cases below.

- (1) When reacting at something with surprise, young women in particular use these phrases.  
No kidding! / Are you kidding? / No way!  
うっそー / 嘘でしょう。 / 嘘だ。  
**ussō uso deshō uso da**
- (2) When something unbelievable has happened, these phrases are used in wonderment.  
It seems like a lie, but \_\_\_. / It is hard to believe. / It seems like a miracle but \_\_\_.  
嘘のように\_\_\_\_\_ / 嘘みたい(だ)。 / \_\_\_\_\_なんて嘘みたいです。  
**uso no yō ni uso mitai (da) nante uso mitai desu**
- (3) Sometimes, it may be necessary to stretch the truth as a method to settle matters peacefully.  
Necessary to stretch truth (To tell a white lie)  
嘘も方便  
**uso mo hōben**

Complete these sentences:

- (A) My son does not like carrots, so I cooked them in a dish so thoroughly they could not be detected. When I assured him, "There are no carrots in it," he ate it all! It is necessary to tell a white lie, isn't it?  
 ですね。  
**desu ne**
- (B) It is hard to believe that I can take a world trip!  
世界一周できる   
**sekai issshū dekiru**
- (C) It seems like a lie, but the pain disappeared suddenly.  
痛みが突然  消えた。  
**itami ga totsuzen kieta**
- (D) Oh, boy... Do I need to do that, again? Are you kidding?  
え~もう一回やり直し?   
**ē mō ikkai yarinaoshi?**

Answers: (A) **uso mo hōben** (B) **nan te uso mitai desu** (C) **uso no yō ni** (D) **uso deshō**

