

Preface for the *Kana Version of Japanese for Busy People*

When *Japanese for Busy People 1* was first published in 1984, many non-native learners, particularly from non-*kanji* cultures, considered Japanese one of the world's most difficult languages because of its seemingly inaccessible writing system. *Japanese for Busy People* was designed especially for such learners—be they business men from English-speaking countries or learners of Japanese-as-a-second language from other parts of the world—people wished to learn natural, spoken Japanese as effectively as possible in a limited amount of time. To this end, romanized Japanese was included in the *Japanese for Busy People* series so that learners both inside and outside Japan, as well as non-native instructors, could use the textbook to its full extent without the need to read Japanese script. As a measure, however, *kana* and *kanji* were progressively introduced through volumes 1 to 3

But in the decade since *Japanese for Busy People's* first publication, there has been a growing increase in the number of people learning Japanese-as-a-second-language throughout the world. Many of them are now interested in studying Japanese in a more comprehensive way, and wish to learn to read and write as well as speak and understand what is said to them. Educationalists have pointed out the problems of teaching and learning accurate and natural pronunciation through romanization, as well as the inconvenience of not being able to read and write at an early stage. AJALT has received many requests to drop romanization and include more exercises in *kana* and *kanji*. In this, the *Kana Version of Japanese for Busy People*, all the romanization has been omitted so that the learner can now learn Japanese directly through the native script from volume 1.

We sincerely hope that the book will be of much use for the many people interested in Japan and the Japanese language.

September 1995

Association for Japanese-Language Teaching (AJALT)

About the *Kana Version* of *Japanese for Busy People 1*

How can *Japanese for Busy People* help you learn Japanese?

The aim of *Japanese for Busy People* is to help you learn essential Japanese as quickly and as effectively as possible, so that you can actually communicate with native speakers in their own language. It has been prepared under the guidance of a working group of AJALT's experienced and specially-trained language instructors who have tested and revised the material in a working classroom environment. *Japanese for Busy People 1* aims to help you learn Japanese by increasing your awareness of just what *kind of language* Japanese actually is through basic conversational patterns.

The *Kana Version* is a basic textbook for students who intend to master the native *hiragana* and *katakana* scripts early on in their studies. This edition is designed so that it can be used by those attending a course in Japanese and for self-study in combination with either the cassette tapes or compact discs (and indeed all other components in the *Japanese for Busy People* series).

What does *Japanese for Busy People 1* cover?

Japanese for Busy People 1 covers "survival Japanese." This means all the language that you learn—conversation patterns, sentence structures, grammatical principles, and vocabulary—can be put to immediate use in conversational situations with native speakers.

Unlike many other textbooks that overwhelm the beginner with an excessive and all-too-often irrelevant amount of information, *Japanese for Busy People 1* limits vocabulary and grammar patterns to what is essential for the most common situations in which non-native speakers need to communicate in Japanese. Simplistic or even juvenile ways of expression that abound in most introductory texts have been abandoned in favor of uncomplicated *adult* speech. Much more than simple grammatical accuracy, emphasis has been placed on natural and authentic linguistic patterns actually used in Japanese communication. A table clearly showing all ten grammar sections and thirty different practical situations can be found at the end of this chapter.

These then are the specifications that, we believe, make *Japanese for Busy People 1* the essential textbook not only for busy, working people who want to learn basic Japanese, but also for people who already know a little Japanese but wish to review the phrases they know and reconfirm that they are using them in the correct situations.

What the *Kana Version* does not include

The *Kana Version* assumes that you are thoroughly familiar with *hiragana* and *katakana* or are currently working through *Kana for Busy People* or similar workbook. In any case, you should be able to read and recognize all forty-eight *hiragana* characters by the time you reach Lesson 10 of this textbook. Advice and instructions contained in *Kana for Busy People* are not generally repeated in the *Kana Version* of *Japanese for Busy People 1*.

Except for twenty *kanji* introduced in Appendix M, Chinese characters have not been covered in this textbook. *Japanese for Busy People 2* and *3* introduce many more *kanji*, as well as provide more advanced and specialist language skills necessary to function in a professional environment.

The structure of *Japanese for Busy People 1*

Japanese for Busy People 1 is divided into ten grammar sections, covering the most important and useful patterns in the Japanese language. Each grammar section is introduced, reinforced, and later reviewed through a number of different situations. Each lesson is based on one distinct conversational situation, and in the total of thirty lessons are included three revision lessons for reading practice and review. At the back of the book you will find twelve appendices covering, among other things, particles, verb conjugations, counters, and *kanji*. We have also included suggested answers to the Quiz sections, two glossaries, and a full index of the main grammatical items introduced in this book. Following this chapter, we have provided a brief summary of the Characteristics of Japanese Grammar, a page of Useful Daily Expressions, and three pages of Signs in Daily Life. The map of Japan printed on the front endpapers and the *hiragana* and *katakana* tables printed on the back endpapers should also prove useful to your studies.

Typically the lessons evolve around a practical topic or commonly encountered situations such as shopping in Lesson 4 and talking on the telephone in Lesson 12. The title of the lesson and the English topic sentence at the beginning of the lesson should give you a firm idea of the content of the dialogue or reading passage.

All dialogues appear in *kana* only. The type is large and clear enough for even the beginner to read. Without the hindrance of artificial romanized Japanese, which encourages English-style articulation, your pronunciation, intonation, and accent should develop naturally and fluently as you complete each lesson. From Lesson 3 onwards we have marked sentences that are more likely to be used in the written language with a black box symbol ■.

An idiomatic English translation of the dialogue or reading passage appears immediately after the Japanese text. New vocabulary and new usages of previously learned vocabulary are introduced in a list with their English equivalents. Note that new vocabulary is treated in exactly the same way when it appears for the first time in the Practice section.

More detailed analysis of important words and phrases is included in the Notes section of each lesson. Here, we aim to explain, as accurately and briefly as possible, points that many non-native learners commonly find difficult to grasp. Although we have concentrated chiefly on offering linguistic information, in some cases we thought it necessary to add some social or cultural references.

The Practice section reinforces the main points of the topic. Key Sentences are given in both Japanese and English to provide further examples of language patterns and vocabulary usage. Many non-native learners will find these examples useful for reference even after completing all thirty lessons. Exercises encourage you to learn new vocabulary, to practice conjugating verbs, and to acquire many other communication skills, such as telling the time. Short Dialogues summarize all new points introduced in the lesson through variations on the main situation.

Finally we have included a selection of problems in the Quiz section to enable you to check how well you have acquired the new language skills.

In ten special lessons, (Lessons 1, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 16, 18, and 19), you will find a grammar section offering explanation of the grammatical principles of the Japanese language. They will help you understand and apply the conversational patterns introduced in the lessons. The table at the end of this chapter illustrates more fully how the grammar is distributed in this textbook.

The three reading review lessons (Lessons 11, 25, and 30) are somewhat different from other lessons. First, there are no Notes, Practice, and Quiz sections. Second, they are presented in the form of written Japanese. In our experience, students learn Japanese most effectively when studying both conversational and written Japanese from the very beginning. The underlying rationale being that the two modes of communication, oral and written, are different, and it is thought best to highlight the difference at an early stage. When simply talking, speaker and listener share much information that could be omitted from the conversation without detriment to communication. In a story, a report, or a letter, however, it is essential to be more organized, structured, and explicit in order to communicate effectively.

Using Japanese for Busy People 1 for self-study

The *Kana Version* has a number of features that promote ease of use and enable you to check your learning:

- The table on page xiv helps you select the lessons you need to concentrate on.
- Tables and illustrations are often used to explain complex ideas. They are an essential part of the book and often contain information not explained elsewhere.
- Throughout the text you will find questions and activities in the Quiz sections. These are designed to help you check your understanding and assess your progress.

No romanized Japanese is used in the *Kana Version* of *Japanese for Busy People 1*. Mastering *hiragana* and *katakana* from the start will not only help you improve your pronunciation, it will also enable you to move smoothly and quickly to the study of *kanji*. Many educators believe this is the most effective way to learn Japanese.

Before beginning Lesson 1 of this textbook, it may be a good idea to go through *Kana for Busy People* or a similar workbook, if you do not already know *hiragana*. *Kana for Busy People* is particularly useful because the accompanying cassette tape ensures that you learn natural and accurate pronunciation of each *kana* syllable. *Kana for Busy People* will also help reinforce vocabulary and language patterns learned in *Japanese for Busy People 1*. Here are some tips for using *Kana for Busy People*.

- Concentrate first on reading the *kana*. Practice writing after you are able to recognize all the *kana* shapes.
- Listening to the cassette tape will improve your pronunciation.
- In addition to individual *kana* characters, commit to memory *hiragana* words and expressions.
- Read aloud as much as possible.

Within a space of several weeks, you should have completed the two *hiragana* sections in *Kana for Busy People* and mastered the *hiragana* syllabary. Remember your main objective at this stage is to be able to read and recognize the *kana*. Now you are ready to begin