

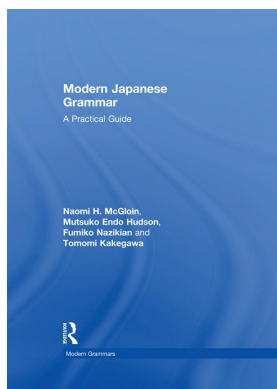
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## **Modern Japanese Grammar A Practical Guide**

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### **Provisions, conditions, and hypotheses**

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# 55

## Provisions, conditions, and hypotheses

### 55.1 Expressing open conditions

In open conditions, where conditions may or may not be fulfilled, there are basically four conditionals in Japanese, **tara**, **nara**, **ba** and **to**. All of these express the idea of 'if,' as in the following.

#### ▶ 24

お金があったら、車を買えます。

**O-kane ga attara, kuruma ga kaemasu.**

If you have money, you can buy a car.

お金があるなら、車を買えます。

**O-kane ga aru nara, kuruma ga kaemasu.**

If you have money (as you say you do), then you can buy a car.

お金があれば、車を買えます。

**O-kane ga areba, kuruma ga kaemasu.**

If you have money, you can buy a car. (All you need to buy a car is money.)

お金があると、車を買えます。

**O-kane ga aru to, kuruma ga kaemasu.**

If you have money, you can buy a car.

The following are some points to remember in using these forms. In the following discussions, S1 refers to the clause preceding the conditionals and S2 to the clause that follows it.

#### 1) To vs. tara

In both S1 **to** S2 and S1 **tara** S2, S1 is completed before S2 (when two actions are involved). **To** gives the sense that S2 is a natural or logical consequence of S1. Among the four conditional forms, **to** is the least conditional and most temporal in nature and it is more likely used when S1 is certain to happen. Hence, **to** is the most frequently used form in written narratives.

#### 2) Tara vs. nara

One big difference between **tara** and **nara** is that, while S1 is completed before S2 with **tara**, such is not the case with **nara**. With **nara**, generally, S2 is an event or situation that occurs either concurrently with S1 or before S1 occurs. If S2 is an event which can only be realized after another event in S1 takes place, **nara** is inappropriate.

この本を読むなら、字引がいります。

**Kono hon o yomu nara, jibiki ga irimasu.**

If you are going to read this book (as you say you are), you will need a dictionary.

\*この本を読んだら、字引がいります。

**\*Kono hon o yondara, jibiki ga irimasu.**

\*If you are going to read this book (after you read this book), you will need a dictionary.

Since you need a dictionary while reading the book (i.e. S1 and S2 are concurrent), not after reading the book, **tara** is inappropriate.

\*運動をするなら、やせますよ。

\***Undoo o suru nara, yasemasu yo.**

If you are going to do exercise, you will lose weight.

運動をしたら、やせますよ。

\***Undoo o shitara, yasemasu yo.**

If you do exercise, you will lose weight.

In this case, since you don't lose weight until after you do exercise, **tara** is appropriate, but not **nara**.

### 3) **Tara vs. ba**

As is indicated above, what is important with the use of **tara** is the temporal sequencing of the two events. **Ba**, on the other hand, gives the necessary and sufficient condition for the realization of S2. So, **ba** often gives the sense of 'all you need to do to realize S2 is S1.'

練習したら、上手になりますよ。

\***Renshuu shitara, joozu ni narimasu yo.**

If you practice, you (your skill) will improve.

練習すれば、上手になりますよ。

\***Renshuu sureba, joozu ni narimasu yo.**

If you practice, you (your skill) will improve.

With **tara**, the implication is that S1 precedes S2 – i.e. if you practice, you will get better. With **ba**, on the other hand, the implication is that you need to practice if you want to improve.

The following examples show similarities and differences between these conditionals.

- (a) あなたが行ったら、私も行きます。  
\***Anata ga ittara, watashi mo ikimasu.**  
If (after) you go, I will go too.
- (b) あなたが行くなら、私も行きます。  
\***Anata ga iku nara, watashi mo ikimasu.**  
If you go (as you say you will), I will go too.
- (c) あなたが行けば、私も行きます。  
\***Anata ga ikeba, watashi mo ikimasu.**  
If (provided that) you go, I will go too.
- (d) \*あなたが行くと、私も行きます。  
\***Anata ga iku to, watashi mo ikimasu.**  
Whenever you go, I go too.

Sentence (a) simply indicates that 'your going' takes place before 'my going.' Sentence (b) with **nara** is used when the interlocutor asserts that he/she is going. In (b), 'my going' can take place before 'your going' or concurrently. Sentence (c) expresses that the only way 'I' will go is if 'you' go. 'Your going' is a necessary condition for 'my going.' Sentence (d) with **to** sounds strange because the sentence implies that 'whenever you go, I always go' as if it is something which automatically happens.

- (e) 日本に行ったら、日本語が上手になるでしょう。  
\***Nihon ni ittara, Nihongo ga joozu ni naru deshoo.**  
If (after) you go to Japan, your Japanese will improve.
- (f) 日本に行けば、日本語が上手になるでしょう。  
\***Nihon ni ikeba, Nihongo ga joozu ni naru deshoo.**  
If you go to Japan, your Japanese will improve.  
All you have to do to improve your Japanese is to go to Japan.

- (g) \*日本に行くなら、日本語が上手になるでしょう。  
**\*Nihon ni iku nara, Nihongo ga joozu ni naru deshoo.**  
 If you go to Japan (as you say you will), your Japanese will improve.
- (h) 日本に行くと、日本語が上手になるでしょう。  
**Nihon ni iku to, Nihongo ga joozu ni naru deshoo.**  
 If one goes to Japan, one's Japanese will improve.

Again, **tara** focuses on the fact that one's Japanese improves after going to Japan. **Ba** indicates that going to Japan is a necessary condition for improving one's Japanese. **Nara** sounds strange because the sentence indicates that one's Japanese improves even before going to Japan simply upon making an assertion that one is going to Japan. **To** gives the sense that it is a general truth that one's Japanese improves after going to Japan.

## 55.2 Expressing unfulfilled conditions

A condition which cannot be fulfilled or which is contrary to fact can be expressed by the conditionals **tara** and **ba**. The main sentence generally ends with conjunctions such as **noni** 'although' or **ga** 'but.'

### ▶ 24; 22.5

もっと勉強したら、パスできたのに。  
**Motto benkyoo shitara, pasu dekita noni.**  
 If I had studied harder, I could have passed.

お金があれば、行けるんですが。  
**O-kane ga areba, ikeru n desu ga.**  
 If I had money, I could go (but since I don't have money, I can't).

前もって言うてくれれば手伝ってあげたのに。  
**Maemotte itte kurereba tetsudatte ageta noni.**  
 If you had told me beforehand, I would have helped you.

日本に留学すればよかったのに。  
**Nihon ni ryuugaku sureba yokatta noni.**  
 You should have gone to study abroad.

The conditional **nara** sometimes expresses this type of counter-factual condition.

私がばかなら、あなたもばかです。  
**Watashi ga baka nara, anata mo baka desu.**  
 If I am a fool, so are you.

This sentence might be said when the interlocutor said something like 'you are a fool,' and the speaker strongly denies the interlocutor's assertion.

## 55.3 Expressing hypotheses

### 55.3.1 Use of *moshi* and *man'ichi*

Using adverbials such as **moshi** 'if' and **man'ichi** 'if ever' makes it clear that the speaker is presenting a hypothetical situation.

健康保険がないので、もし病気になったら困ります。  
**Kenkoo hoken ga nai node, moshi byooki ni nattara komarimasu.**  
 Since I don't have health insurance, I will be in trouble in the event (= if) I get sick.

万一問題があったら、連絡します。

**Man'ichi mondai ga attara, renraku shimasu.**

In the unlikely event that (= if) there are problems, I will let you know.

### 55.3.2 (moshi, man'ichi, karini) . . . to shitara

Another expression which presents hypotheses is predicate (plain) + **to shitara** or **to sureba**, with or without **moshi**, **man'ichi** or **karini**.

もし一億円の宝くじがあたったとしたら、どうしますか。

**Moshi ichiokuen no takarakuji ga atatta to shitara, doo shimasu ka.**

If you won one hundred million yen on a lottery, what would you do?

パーティーをするとしたら、いつがいいでしょうか。

**Paatii o suru to shitara, itsu ga ii deshoo ka.**

If we were to have a party, when would be good?

仮にかれの言っていることが正しいとしたら、だれかが嘘をついていることになる。

**Karini kare no itte iru koto ga tadashii to shitara, dare ka ga uso o tsuite iru koto ni naru.**

If what he is saying is right, then someone else is lying.

間違っているとすれば、どこを直せばいいでしょうか。

**Machigatte iru to sureba, doko o naoseba ii deshoo ka.**

If I have made mistakes, which (part) should I correct?

## 55.4 Other conditional expressions

### 55.4.1 sae . . . ba conditional 'if only'

This expression can be used to express a sufficient condition for attaining a desired result. In this sense, it is a stronger statement than the simple **ba** conditional sentence.

The particle **sae** 'only' is most often used with a noun (N **sae** V **ba**) or a verb (V(stem) **sae** **sureba** or V-te **sae** **ireba**).

#### ▶ 10.3; 24.2

あの人は、暇さえあれば寝ている。

**Ano hito wa, hima sae areba nete iru.**

He sleeps whenever he has free time.

あの人は、暇がありさえすれば寝ている。

**Ano hito wa, hima ga ari sae sureba nete iru.**

He sleeps whenever he has free time.

かぜは、薬さえ飲めばなおります。

**Kaze wa, kusuri sae nomeba naorimasu.**

You will recover from a cold if you just take the medicine. (That's the only thing you need to do.)

かぜは、たくさん寝さえすればなおります。

**Kaze wa, takusan ne sae sureba naorimasu.**

You will recover from a cold if you just sleep a lot.

When **sae** follows a noun, the focus is on that noun in contrast to other nouns. So, **kusuri sae nomeba** means 'if only you take (drink) medicine, not juice, not milk, etc.' On the other hand, when **sae** follows a verb, it is contrasting with other actions. Hence, **ne sae sureba** means 'if you just sleep, not eat, not go to the doctor, etc.'

毎日クラスに出てさえいれば、そんなに悪い成績はとらないでしょう。

**Mainichi kurasu ni dete sae ireba, sonna ni warui seeseeki wa toranai deshoo.**

If you just attend classes every day, you won't get such bad grades.

### 55.4.2 N demo, -te mo

Te-form + **mo** means 'even if' or 'even though.'

子供でもわかります。

**Kodomo demo wakarimasu.**

Even children will understand.

不便でもかまいません。

**Fuben demo kamaimasen.**

Even if it is inconvenient, it is fine.

高くても、いいものなら買います。

**Takute mo, ii mono nara kaimasu.**

Even if it is expensive, I will buy it if it is a quality product.

雨が降ってもやります。

**Ame ga futte mo yarimasu.**

Even if it rains, (we) will do it.

辞書を使わなくても読めます。

**Jisho o tsukawanakute mo yomemasu.**

Even without using a dictionary, (I) can read (it).

This expression can be used with question words such as **ikura** 'how much,' **donna ni** 'how,' **nani** 'what,' **dare** 'who,' and the like. This would mean 'no matter how much, no matter what, no matter who,' etc.

#### ▶ 4.3

どんなに静かでも、図書館では勉強できません。

**Donna ni shizuka demo, toshokan de wa benkyoo dekimasen.**

No matter how quiet it is, I can't study in the library.

何を食べても太らない人がいるそうです。

**Nani o tabete mo futoranai hito ga iru soo desu.**

I hear that there are people who do not gain weight, no matter what they eat.

だれに聞いてもわからないことはたくさんあります。

**Dare ni kiite mo wakaranai koto wa takusan arimasu.**

There are many things that (we) don't know, no matter whom we ask.

Very colloquial forms of these expressions are **datte** and **tatte**.

こんな簡単な漢字、子供だって読めるよ。

**Konna kantan na kanji kodomo datte yomeru yo.**

Even children can read this kind of easy **kanji**.

日本語を話す時は、少しぐらい間違っただって、気にしない。

**Nihongo o hanasu toki wa, sukoshi gurai machigatta tte, ki ni shinai.**

When you speak Japanese, you don't have to worry even if you make some mistakes.

幸せは、お金があっただって買えない。

**Shiawase wa, o-kane ga atta tte kaenai.**

You can't buy happiness (even if you have money).