

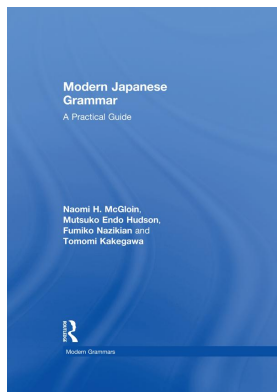
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## **Modern Japanese Grammar A Practical Guide**

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### **Desires and preferences**

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# 63

## Desires and preferences

### 63.1 Expressing one's desires

The most common expressions for stating desires involve the adjectives **hoshii** and **-tai**, both meaning 'want.' Since desires are internal feelings that are accessible only to the person feeling the desire, the Japanese language distinguishes between the speaker's own feelings of desire and the desires of others, which the speaker cannot directly feel.

▶ 58

#### 63.1.1 *hoshii*

The adjective **hoshii** is used when the object of desire is a noun (a thing or a living thing). The target of desire is marked by the particle **ga**, and the subject is always the first person unless it is a question.

▶ 10.1.1

お金がほしい。

**O-kane ga hoshii.**

I want money.

いい友達がほしいです。

**Ii tomodachi ga hoshii desu.**

I want good friends.

おみやげは別にほしくない。

**O-miyage wa betsuni hoshikunai.**

I don't particularly want any souvenirs.

#### 63.1.2 *V-tai*

When the object of desire is an action, the suffix **tai** is attached to the stem of a verb (e.g. **yomi-tai**, **tabe-tai**, etc.) The object of a verb is marked either by **ga** or **o**, and the subject is always the first person, unless it is a question.

日本に行きたい。

**Nihon ni iki-tai.**

I want to go to Japan.

日本食が/を食べたいと思います。

**Nihonshoku ga/o tabe-tai to omoimasu.**

I would like to eat Japanese food.

Verbal nouns such as **ryokoo** 'travel,' **kenkyuu** 'research,' etc. are always used with **-tai**, not **hoshii**, since they denote actions.

ヨーロッパに旅行がしたい。

**Yooroppa ni ryokoo ga shi-tai.**

I want to travel to Europe.

## 63.1.3 V-te hoshii

**Hoshii** 'want' can be combined with the **-te** form of verbs with the meaning of 'I want (you/ someone) to do something.' This is the same meaning expressed by **-te morai-tai** Lit. 'want to receive the favor of someone doing something.'

先生にパーティーに来てほしい。

**Sensee ni paatii ni kite hoshii.**

I would like my teacher to come to my party.

天ぷらの作り方を教えてほしいんですが...

**Tenpura no tsukuri kata o oshiete hoshii n desu ga...**

I would like you to teach me how to make tempura.

## 63.2 Asking about the addressee's desires

**Hoshii** and **V-tai** can be used in question form.

今何が一番ほしいですか。

**Ima nani ga ichiban hoshii desu ka.**

What do you want most right now?

どこへ行きたいですか。

**Doko e iki-tai desu ka.**

Where do you want to go?

田中さん、大学院に行きたいと思う？

**Tanaka-san, daigakuin ni iki-tai to omou?**

Mr/Ms Tanaka, do you want to go to graduate school?

In English, 'Do you want to V?' can be an invitation, but in Japanese, the expression **V-tai desu ka** cannot be used as an invitation. Instead, **-masen ka** (e.g. **ikimasen ka**) is the correct way of inviting someone to go. (see 74.3) Also, asking a superior's desires by using **hoshii desu ka** or **V-tai desu ka** is too direct and is inappropriate. For example, if you are asking your superior if he/she wants to have tea, you do not say, 'Do you want tea?'. Rather, **O-cha ikaga desu ka** 'how about some tea' is the appropriate expression. If you want to ask your teacher if he/she wants to see the DVD you have, you do not say **kono eega o goran ni nari-tai desu ka**. Rather you would say **Kono eega o goran ni narimasu ka**.

## 63.3 Reporting and asking about others' desires

In talking about someone else's desires, you need to add **-garu/-gatte iru** 'to show signs of' to the stems of **hoshii** and **V-tai**.

## ▶ 58

スミスさんは日本に行きたがっています。

**Sumisu-san wa Nihon ni iki-ta-gatte imasu.**

Mr/Ms Smith wants to go to Japan.

クリスマスには子供がほしがっているおもちゃを買ってやろうと思っています。

**Kurisumasu ni wa kodomo ga hoshi-gatte iru omocha o katte yaroo to omotte imasu.**

For Christmas I am thinking of buying the toy that my child wants.

Of course another's desires can also be talked about using **hoshii** and **-tai** if they are accompanied by evidential markers or as a report or a quote.

## ▶ 26.2; 33; 28

田中さんはいつも暇な時間がほしいと言っています。

**Tanaka-san wa itsumo hima-na jikan ga hoshii to itte imasu.**

Mr/Ms Tanaka always says he/she wants free time.

母は温泉に行きたいようです。

**Haha wa onsen ni iki-tai yoo desu.**

My mother seems to want to go to a hot spring.

あの人、車がほしいんだって。

**Ano hito, kuruma ga hoshii n datte.**

He wants a car, I hear.

## 63.4 Expressing one's preferences and asking about someone else's

To express one's own preferences and ask about someone else's, you can use expressions such as **X ga ii** 'I prefer X,' **X de ii** 'X will suffice,' **X no hoo ga ii** 'X is better,' or the like.

日本に行くんだったら、春か秋がいい。

**Nihon ni iku n dattara, haru ka aki ga ii.**

If (I) am going to Japan, I prefer spring or fall.

Q: コーヒーとお茶とあるんですが、どちらにしますか。

**Koohii to o-cha to aru n desu ga, dochira ni shimasu ka.**

We have coffee and tea. Which do you prefer?

A(1): 私はお茶でいいです。

**Watashi wa o-cha de ii desu.**

Tea is fine.

A(2): 私はお茶の方がいいです。

**Watashi wa ocha no hoo ga ii desu.**

I prefer tea.

Q: アニメの中でどれが好き？ (I)

**Anime no naka de dore ga suki?**

Which anime do you like?

A: トトロが好き。

**Totoro ga suki.**

I like Totoro.

Q: ご希望の時間がありますでしょうか。(F)

**Go-kiboo no jikan ga arimasu deshoo ka.**

Do you have a time preference?

A: 午後三時ごろが都合がいいんですが...

**Gogo sanji goro ga tsugoo ga ii n desu ga...**

Three o'clock in the afternoon is convenient for me, but...