

Ready, Set, NihonGO!

ことばあそび <6>



ASO Yukata

Nihongo-Pro Teacher

Aso-sensei, a veteran Japanese instructor with decades of teaching experience, teaches private Japanese lessons at the beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels.

After teaching in Taiwan, Vietnam, and Malaysia, Aso-sensei now lives in the [Yamagata prefecture](#), located in northern Japan.

Aso-sensei also enjoys fishing, writing poetry, and mountain-climbing.

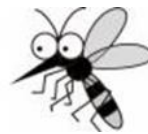
ことばあそ にはんご かいめ きょう
言葉遊び＝おもしろ日本語の6回目です。今日は「なぞなぞ」です。

「なぞなぞ」ってご存知ですか。たとえば、「朝は四本足、昼は二本足、夕は三本足。この生き物は何？」というなぞなぞは世界的に有名ですね。答えは「人間」。なぜって、赤ん坊のときは四つんばいで歩き、大人になると二本の足で立ち、老人になると杖をつけて三本足になるからですね。

にはんご
じゃ、日本語のなぞなぞ、いきましょう。

だいもん せかい ま なか むし なに
第1問: 世界の真ん中にある虫は何？

わかりましたか。世界の真ん中にある虫は「蚊」です。だって、
せかい ま なか あいだ か
「世界」の真ん中、「せ」と「い」の間には、「か→蚊」ですね。



だいもん なに
第2問: 「まみむねも」これは何？

ハイ、この答えは、目が悪い人がかけるもの、「めがね」です。ほら、「まみむ」のつぎ、<「め」が「ね」>、になっていますね。

もんだい
じゃ、おまけの問題です。

す いろ なんしよく
おまけ: 「あたたかい」ところに住んでいるたぬきの色は何色でしょう。

こた あか かんが
ハイ。答えは「赤」です。どうしてか、考えてみてください。わからな
しつもん
かったら、[Nihongo-Pro](#)に質問してください。

くに おし わら
みなさんの国のなぞなぞも、ぜひ教えてください。いっしょにクスツと笑いましょう。



Wordplay #6

This is number six in our wordplay—or fun(ny) Japanese—series. Today’s selections are riddles (*nazonazo*, literally “puzzle puzzle”).

Do you know any riddles? For example, there’s this world-famous one: “What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon, and three legs in the evening?” Answer: “Humans.” We crawl on hands and knees as a baby, walk on two legs as an adult, and walk using a cane in old age.

OK, then, let’s have at some Japanese riddles.

Riddle 1: What insect is found in the center of the world (*sekai*)?

Did you get it? The answer is *ka* (mosquito), because it is between *se* and *i* in *se-ka-i*.

Riddle 2: What is “*ma mi mu ne mo*”? (*Translator’s note:* Read this one carefully!)

That’s right—the answer is the accessory that people with bad eyes wear: *megane* (eyeglasses). The sound that usually follows “*ma mi mu*” is “*me*” (as in “*ma mi mu me mo*”), but here “*me*” is “*ne*”, or, in Japanese, “*me ga ne*”.

OK, now for the bonus question.

Bonus: What color is a raccoon dog (also known as a Japanese raccoon) that lives in a warm (*atatakai*) place?

It’s *akai* (red). Hmm... give that some thought. If you need help, [write us at Nihongo-Pro](#).

(*Translator’s hint:* How do you say “raccoon dog” in Japanese?)

なぞ なぞ

No one loves wordplay more than the Japanese—partly due to the structure of the Japanese language itself.

Japanese kids learn hiragana, katakana, and a smattering of kanji in the first grade. Knowing just hiragana, they can correctly spell nearly any word, phrase, or name they know. (Japanese kids write their own names in hiragana until they learn the kanji.) Naturally, this new-found skill leads to a lot of word games—rearranging hiragana to form new words, connecting the last hiragana from one word to the first hiragana in another word (a game called *shiritori*), and so on.

In this same spirit, Japanese has developed a rich collection of puns and riddles, like the three Aso-sensei introduces here. [nazo2.net](#) groups hundreds by difficulty ([beginner](#), [intermediate](#), and [advanced](#))—you’ll need some kanji skills even at the beginner level, but give it a try!

わたし なまえ かんじ か 私の名前を漢字で書くと… <5>



OKUBO Kazumi
Nihongo-Pro Teacher

Okubo-sensei teaches private lessons at all levels except advanced.

Okubo-sensei is originally from Japan's [Shizuoka prefecture](#), but she and her husband now live in Berlin.

She has also taught Japanese while in Russia (and speaks Russian), making her a leading member among Nihongo-Pro's elite team of international teachers.

こんかい わたし なまえ かんじ か たよ
今回「私の名前を漢字で書くと…」のコーナーにお便りをくださったのは、インドネ
ざいじゆう
シア在住のエドムンド・ドミンゴ(Edmundo Domingo)さんです。エドムンドさんのお
なまえ か おと はい
名前をカタカナで書くと、「エドムンド・ドミンゴ」と、「ド」の音が3つ入っています。「ド」
おと あらわ かんじ ひと なまえ つか かぎ
という音を表す漢字で、人の名前に使えそうなものは限られているので、かなり
きあい い かんが
気合を入れて考えました。

さっそくかんじ なまえ ひろう
それでは早速漢字のお名前を披露しましょう。

エドムンド ドミンゴ
「江戸武士 努民護」

えど むかし とうきょう ぶし まも いみ
「江戸(昔の東京)の武士のように、がんばってみんなを護る」という意味です。そ
くわ ひともし み
れでは、詳しく一文字ずつ見ていきましょう。

えど むかし とうきょう
エド→江戸… 昔の東京です。

ぶ ぶし ぶ かんじ よ
ムン→武… 武士つまり「サムライ」のことです。「武」の漢字は「ム」と読みます
よ かんじ む よ
が、「ムン」と読める漢字はないので、ここでは「武」を「ムン」と読むことにします。
かんじ よ かた じゅうなんせい じぶん なまえ かんじ
漢字の読み方は、このように柔軟性があるので、自分の名前を漢字にすると
さんこう
きの参考にしてください。

ど えど とち えど いみ
ド→土… 江戸の「土地」、つまり「江戸で」という意味です。

ど いみ
ド→努… がんばるという意味です。

みん じんしゅう
ミン→民… 「民衆」、つまり「みんな」です。

ご まも ひとびと あんしん く まも
ゴ→護… 護る、人々が安心して暮らせるように、みんなを護ります。



(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

いかがでしょうか。外国の名前を漢字で表す際、カタカナ一つひとつを漢字にする作業はそれ程難しくありません。でも、いくつかの漢字を組み合わせたときに、その漢字の意味がばらばらだと、バランスが悪くなってしまいます。ですから、全体を通してきれいな意味になるように工夫した結果、このようなお名前になりました。私としてはとても男性らしい、かっこいい名前ができたと思います。エドムンドさんに気に入っていただけたら幸いです。

みなさんの中で、ご自分の名前を漢字にするのにいいアイデアが浮かばないという方がいらっしゃるかもしれません。ぜひご連絡をください。一生懸命いいお名前を考えます。お待ちしております！

えいやく

英訳 ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Writing Your Name In Kanji #5

For this edition of writing one’s name in kanji, Indonesia resident Edmundo Domingo has requested his name. In katakana, Edmundo’s name

is written **エドムンド・ドミンゴ**, and contains

three occurrences of **ド**. Kanji characters that are pronounced “ド” and that can be used in people’s names are limited in number, so I sat down and put on my thinking cap.

Here’s what I came up with:

江戸 武士 努民護

It means “work hard to protect everyone, like a samurai from Edo (old Tokyo)”. Let’s look in detail at each character.

エド → **江戸** Edo is the old name for Tokyo.

ムン → **武** This is the first character of **武士**, which means warrior or samurai. While this kanji can be read as “mu”, there is no kanji for “mun”, so let’s take advantage of the flexibility in kanji readings and make it “mun”. This flexibility is handy when writing your own name in kanji.

ド → **土** This refers to the **土地** (land) of Edo—i.e., meaning “in Edo”.

ド → **努** Means to put forth effort (as in **努力**).

ミン → **民** From **民衆** (the people)—i.e., everyone.

ゴ → **護** This character means **護る** (to protect)—i.e., protect the people so they can live peacefully.

What do you think? When putting a non-Japanese name into kanji, it isn’t that difficult to transliterate each katakana character piecemeal into kanji. However, if the meanings of the various kanji are also taken piecemeal, the name can lack coherence and a good balance.

Instead, I tried to consider the name as a whole and choose kanji that result in a pleasing overall meaning. I think it has a good look and is appropriate for a man’s name. I hope Edmundo likes it, too.

Now, how about your name? If you are stuck coming up with good characters for your own name, [please write to us](#). I will give it my best. Looking forward to hearing from you!



If you've taken a look at our [student testimonials](#), you'll see contributions from students learning Japanese in many different environments and with many different goals.

Several months ago, Leonid submitted the very funny testimonial shown below, after having started Araki-sensei's lessons in 2015. He proves there are indeed many paths to Japanese fluency!

Drinking my way to Japanese conversation? ... in a totally responsible manner.

by Leonid Pavlov

For the last eight years or so I've been living in a small Swiss village: more cows than inhabitants, lot of nature and zero entertainment.

Naturally, one starts drinking to fight the boredom. Well, at least it's quite natural given my Russian background. In Russia drinking is considered to be a social activity—hence you need at least two people to drink in a socially acceptable manner (or drink responsibly). It's however quite difficult to find a reliable drinking partner in a small village overcrowded with hard-working Swiss farmers and their milk cows...

One day I had to attend a—I can't remember exactly what it is called, but it was one of these brain-washing, team-building things every company nowadays tortures their employees with. We started with a short introduction round—name, hobby, etc. Of course, everybody had model hobbies like hiking or reading or reading while hiking.

Everyone except this one Japanese guy, who said without any false modesty: "My hobby is drinking."

So, he and I started drinking together. Regularly. Meaning almost every day. But in a totally responsible manner.

One thing led to another—or, to be more precise, drinking together led to cultural exchange—or, to be absolutely precise, he started drinking Russian vodka and I started learning Japanese. It was fun, but I wasn't really

making much progress in Japanese, although I was (and still am) quite committed to learning the language. Maybe I wasn't focused enough though...

Thanks to Nihongo-Pro I discovered that one can learn Japanese without drinking! What a mind-blowing experience! Well, to be honest, with [Araki-sensei](#) we quite often talk about food and drinks, but so far we have managed to remain sober.

The most amazing thing though is that online Japanese lessons with Araki-sensei actually, really help. Before my first lesson I was, let's say, a bit concerned whether I'd be able to understand anything, but right from the first minutes, Araki-sensei involved me in a conversation I couldn't even imagine I was capable of. But by means of some voodoo magic (or maybe due to Araki-sensei's experience?) all of a sudden I realized that I can be quite talkative, even in Japanese.

It has been almost a year since our first lesson. The only disadvantage of online lessons I have discovered so far is that one can't drink together with the teacher. But collaboration technology and tools are rapidly improving, so I'm pretty sure the day will come when Araki-sensei and I will have an online Japanese class while drinking.

Of course, in a totally responsible manner.

