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# Using keigo for oneself?? Huh?



*Ms. Hirayama, thank you very much for everything you have taught me. I'm thinking of going back home soon. I learned **keigo**, but recently, I've felt a bit nervous about using Japanese. To tell the truth, I met a close friend yesterday, whom I hadn't seen for a while. While I was talking to her using the **keigo** that I've learned, I felt that she was unfriendly by the way she spoke to me. Maybe, what I said to her was not quite right...I tried to think of the reason, but I have no idea what was wrong. I'm tired of the effort it takes to maintain a good relationship with other people.*

■■■ What happened to you, Pole-san? Did you buy your ticket already? If not, please study **keigo** in today's lesson, and you'll want to stay in Japan. To tell the truth, the usual explanation on the usage of **keigo** is different from the way Japanese people really use **keigo** (Vol.62~66) commonly and unconsciously in real life. In this lesson, I will explain the psychological usage of **keigo**. Depending on the usage, the distance between the listener and the speaker will be affected, whether it will be shorter (drawing them closer) or longer (leading them farther away). It will be a flexible relationship!

### 1) Keigo is a "yardstick" for intellect and education.

Since the majority of Japanese people consider themselves to be "middle class," it seems like they all have a similar status. However, they try to estimate and measure the intellect, education and background of others by observing the way they speak, especially whether they can use **keigo** properly or not. The **keigo** of today has little meaning in terms of its original usage to "show respect to others." Instead, Japanese people unconsciously use **keigo** in order to "let others see a positive side to oneself," "make oneself a better person" and "let others think that he/she is highly educated."

### 2) Keigo is used for oneself in order to make one's situation better or gain an advantage from an adverse situation.

In this lesson, I will explain "convenient **keigo** used for oneself" that Japanese people commonly and unconsciously use in real life. Using this type of **keigo** places one at an advantage and elevates one's own position. It has nothing to do with a "vertical relationship" that is the original usage of **keigo**.

### 2)-1: Breaking contact

If you start speaking politely and without feelings all of a sudden when you were speaking in a friendly manner before that, or if you reply politely although the other person is talking to you in a friendly way, he feels a certain distance between the two of you.

(さ) <del>せ</del> <del>ま</del> <del>す</del> <b>(sa) se masu</b> causative form	+	ていただきます <b>te itadakimasu</b>
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e.g., If someone you are not interested in asks you out and you make the following reply, he will think you don't like him and will never ask you out again.

Friend: Hi, there. Are you free next week? How about dinner?

ねね、来週時間ない？食事しようよ！  
**ne ne, raishū jikan nai? shokuji shiyō yo!**

You: Thank you, but I'm afraid I'll have to decline your invitation.  
せっかくですが、遠慮させていただきます。  
**sekkaku desu ga, enryo sasete itadakimasu**

#### ■ Change the underlined words.

1. I would like to quit this job today.

今日で仕事を辞めます。  
**kyō de shigoto o yamemasu**

→ Your boss will not prevent you from quitting.

2. Allow me to get a divorce.

離婚して下さい。  
**rikon shite kudasai**

→The listener thinks there is no way to keep the marriage together.

Answers	1. <b>yamesasete itadakimasu</b>	2. <b>sasete itadakimasu</b>
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### 2)-2: Making your situation better

You will not let the listener prevent you. The listener will have to give in to you, thinking, "There is no other way."

Sometimes you might be asked to go to a dinner party and you have to do so out of obligation. In such a case, if you say the following phrase, you will essentially be saying "No" without causing offense.

e.g.,

It would be a great honor, but I'm afraid I have to decline.

せっかくですが、遠慮させていただきます。

**sekkaku desu ga enryo sasete itadakimasu**

#### ■ Change the underlined words.

1. (on the phone) Hello, I've got a cold, so I would like to take the day off today.

もしもし、風邪を引いたので今日休みます。  
**moshi moshi kaze o hita node kyō yasumimasu**

2. I would like to do it by all means!

ぜひやります！  
**zehi yarimasu!**

Answers	1. <b>yasumasete itadakimasu</b>	2. <b>yarasete itadakimasu</b>
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### 2)-3: Approval after the fact

As a rule, you need permission in advance, but there are some cases when you cannot get permission for some reason, or you had to do something without prior approval. In such a case, if you use the following phrase, the listener will reluctantly consent to what you did.

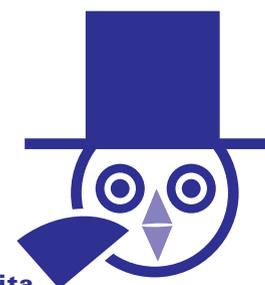
reason / excuse	+	(さ) <del>せ</del> <del>ま</del> <del>す</del> <b>(sa) se masu</b> causative form	+	ていただきました <b>te itadakimashita</b>
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e.g., You: I wish I could have told you sooner, but I had some urgent business to attend to yesterday and I had to return home at 3 o'clock.

すいません、きのう急用ができ3時に帰らせていただきました。  
**suimasen kinō kyūyō ga deki san-ji ni kaerasete itadakimashita**

Boss: Oh, I see...Is everything OK?

あ、そう。大丈夫？  
**a sō daijōbu?**



#### ■ Change the underlined words.

1. Since you weren't here, I had to do it for you.

いらっしゃらなかったので、代わりにしました。  
**irassharanakatta node kawari ni shimashita**

2. Since you weren't here, I had to use your computer.

いらっしゃらなかったので、コンピューターを使いました。  
**irassharanakatta node computer o tsukaimashita**

3. Since there was not enough time, I had to make the decision without you.  
時間がありませんでしたので、勝手に決めました。

**jikan ga arimasen deshita node katte ni kimemashita**

Answers	1. <b>sasete itadakimashita</b>	2. <b>tsukawasete itadakimashita</b>	3. <b>kimesasete itadakimashita</b>
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The boss comes back from a business trip, and asks a subordinate how things were during his absence. Change the underlined words into the appropriate form.

Boss: Huh? When was this thing decided?

あれ？これはいつ決まったのかね？  
**are? kore wa itsu kimatta no ka ne?**

Subordinate: Oh, I'm sorry I didn't inform you sooner.

あ、お伝えするのが遅くなって申し訳ございません。  
**a, otsutae suru noga osokunatte mōshiwake gozaimasen**  
Well, I had to make the decision since you weren't here.  
実は部長がいらっしゃらなかったのが私が決めました。  
**jitsuwa buchō ga irassharanakatta node watakushi ga kimemashita**

Boss: Oh, I see...Well, what about the other business matter?

あ、そう・・・そういえば、あのもうひとつの件はどうなったかね。  
**a sō...sō ieba ano mō hitotsu no ken wa dō natta ka ne**

Subordinate: Oh, I also did that as there was not much time.

あ、それも時間ありませんでしたので、私がしました。  
**a, sore mo jikan ga arimasen deshita node watakushi ga shimashita**

Boss: Oh...I see...

あ、そう・・・。  
**a sō...**

Subordinate: And I wish I could have asked you sooner, but I would like to take off all of next week.

あの急ですいませんが、来週から1週間休みます。  
**ano kyū de suimasen ga raishū kara isshūkan yasumimasu**

Boss: Sure, Sure! Please take as many days off as you wish.

はい、どうぞどうぞお好きなだけお取り下さい。  
**hai dōzo dōzo osukina dake otori kudasai**  
(By suddenly using keigo, the boss tries to create some distance between him and his subordinate.)

Subordinate: Thank you. However, I will start working for a new company in two weeks, so I want to quit this job next week.

ありがとうございます。でも2週間後には新しい会社に  
**arigatō gozaimasu demo nishūkango niwa atarashii kaisha ni**  
移りますので、来週で辞めます。  
**utsurimasu node raishū de yamemasu**

Answers	1. <b>kimesasete itadakimashita</b>	2. <b>sasete itadakimashita</b>	3. <b>yasumasete itadakimasu</b>	4. <b>yamesasete itadakimasu</b>
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