

18. Comparatives and Superlatives 🎧

林：ロサンゼルスはマイアミより暑いですか。

カワムラ：いいえ、マイアミのほうが暑いです。

林：では、ロサンゼルスとマイアミとどちらのほうがたくさん雨が降りますか。

カワムラ：マイアミのほうがたくさん降ります。

チン：札幌と仙台と東京の中でどこが一番寒いですか。
町田：札幌です。

チン：その三の中でどこが一番北にありますか。

町田：札幌が一番北にあります。

チン：なるほど。

ブラウン：仙台と山形とどちらのほうが寒いですか。
三村：山形のほうが寒いです。

ブラウン：じゃ、どちらのほうが雪がたくさん降りますか。

三村：やはり、山形のほうですね。1メートル*ぐらい降ります。

18.1 A sentence that compares two quantities or qualities, such as *John is taller than Mary* or *John ate more than Mary*, is called a *comparative sentence*. A Japanese comparative sentence takes one of two forms, as follows. *Y* より means *more than Y* or *compared to Y*.

Note that unlike English, adjectives in Japanese do not have comparative or superlative forms.

HAYASHI: Is it hotter in Los Angeles than in Miami? KAWAMURA: No, it's hotter in Miami.

HAYASHI: Well, which has more rain—Los Angeles or Miami? KAWAMURA: It rains more in Miami.
CHIN: Which is coldest—Sapporo, Sendai, or Tokyo? MACHIDA: Sapporo. CHIN: Among them, which is farthest north? MACHIDA: Sapporo is farthest north. CHIN: I see.

BROWN: Which is colder, Sendai or Yamagata? MIMURA: Yamagata is colder. BROWN: Then, which has more snow? MIMURA: As you might expect, Yamagata. It snows about one meter.

*One meter is about 3.3 feet. Some people say *メーター* instead of *メートル*.

(Continues.)

X は Y より adjective

X is more...than Y. (lit., More than Y, X is...)

とうきょう おおさか
東京は大阪より大きい。

Tokyo is larger than Osaka. (lit., More than Osaka, Tokyo is large.)

はやし みむら
林さんは三村さんよりまじめですか。

Is Mr. Hayashi more serious than Mr. Mimura? (lit., More than Mr. Mimura, is Mr. Hayashi serious?)

X は Y より adverb + verb

X does...more (...) than Y. (lit., More than Y, X does...)

ことし ふゆ きよねん あめ
今年の冬は去年の冬より雨がたくさん降りました。
It rained more this winter than last winter.

はらうん はやぶらうん
ブラウンさんはギブソンさんより早く起きました。
Ms. Brown got up earlier than Ms. Gibson.

18.2 To ask a comparative question, use the following construction, which means *Of X and Y, which (alternative) is/does (more)...*

X と Y と どちら(のほう)が adjective or
adverb + verb か

Which (alternative) is more...—X or Y?
Which (alternative) does...more (...)—X or Y?

The answer to this question takes the following form, meaning *The (alternative of) X is (more)...*

X (のほう)が adjective or
adverb + verb

X is more...
X does (something) more...

よこい おおの
横井先生と大野先生とどちら(のほう)がきびしいですか。
Who is stricter—Professor Yokoi or Professor Oono? (lit., Of Professor Yokoi and Professor Oono, which [alternative] is strict?)

おおの
大野先生のほうがきびしいです。

Professor Oono is stricter. (lit., The alternative of Professor Oono is strict.)

ブラウンさんとギブソンさんとどちら(のほう)が早く起きますか。
Who gets up earlier—Ms. Brown or Ms. Gibson? (lit., Of Ms. Brown and Ms. Gibson, which [alternative] gets up early?)

ブラウンさんのほうが早く起きます。

Ms. Brown gets up earlier. (lit., The alternative of Ms. Brown gets up early.)

Notice that when **はやい** is used in its temporal meaning of *early*, the character **早い** is used. When **はやい** means fast or quick, use the character **速い**.

Adverbs Used with Comparatives

The following adverbs expressing degree are often used in comparative sentences.

ずっと	by far
もっと	more
すこ 少し or ちよっと	a little

この大学はあの大学よりずっと大きい。

This university is far bigger than that university.

アンカレッジはバンクーバーよりもっと寒いです。

Anchorage is colder (*lit.*, more cold) than Vancouver.

やまぐち たかだ
山口さんは高田さんより少し(ちよっと)若い。

Mr. Yamaguchi is a bit younger than Mr. Takada.

The counter...**倍** (*times*, as in magnification) or a specific number (plus the appropriate counter, if necessary) specifies the extent of the difference in comparisons. These expressions come before adjectives or adverbs.

でんしゃ でんしゃ ばい ばい
この電車はあの電車より3倍速い。

This train is three times faster than that train.

カップチーノはカフェオレより200円高いです。

Cappuccino costs 200 yen more than cafe au lait.

18.3 A *superlative sentence* is one that compares the quality or quantity of three or more entities and specifies which entity has most of that quality or quantity. For instance, *Who is the most popular actress in the United States—Julia Roberts, Angelina Jolie, or Nicole Kidman?*

A Japanese superlative sentence takes one of the following forms.
いちばん (一 番 [lit., number one] means *most*.)

XとYとZ	の中で	Xが	一番	adjective or adverb + verb
	or	(or other particle)		
	のうちで			

X is the most ... among X, Y, and Z.
X does ... the most (...) among X, Y, and Z.

ロンドンとパリとモスクワの中で、モスクワが一番寒い。
Among London, Paris, and Moscow, Moscow is the coldest.

あの四人のうちで、ギブソンさんが一番速く走ります。
Among those four people, Ms. Gibson runs fastest.

ビール、ジュース、コーラの中でコーラを一番よく飲みます。
Among beer, juice, and cola, I drink cola most often.

18.4 An *equative sentence* is one that equates two entities. For example, *He is as tall as I am*. Equative sentences in Japanese are expressed as follows.

X	は	Y	と	同じぐらい	adjective or adverb + verb
				おな	

As you remember, *同じ* means *same* and *ぐらい* means *about*. The phrase *同じぐらい* means *to (about) the same extent or to (about) the same degree*. This sentence means *X is about the same as Y with regard to...*

ひろしま かごしま おな
広島の三月は鹿児島の三月と同じぐらい暖かいです。
March in Hiroshima is about as warm as March in Kagoshima.
まちだ はやし おな
町田さんは林さんと同じぐらいよくここに来ます。
Ms. Machida comes here about as often as Mr. Hayashi.

A negative equative sentence such as *A is not as ... as B* is expressed with this structure. (*ほど* means *as much as*.)