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## **Beyond Polite Japanese: A Dictionary of Japanese Slang and Colloquialisms (Power Japanese)**

*Akihiko Yonekawa*

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**Akihiko Yonekawa : Beyond Polite Japanese: A Dictionary of Japanese Slang and Colloquialisms (Power Japanese)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Beyond Polite Japanese: A Dictionary of Japanese Slang and Colloquialisms (Power Japanese):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Mr. Akihiko Yonekawa brings a very high level of education and literacy to this complex yet common level of language. He makes tBy Robert HannAs an amateur translator, I have spent quite a large amount of time working with Japanese video games over the past few years. I picked up Beyond Polite Japanese intending to quickly thumb through it for an overview of the book. Three hours later, I had gone through the entire book and made ninety little red marks in the index. Most of these marks were words and expressions I recognized, but I had never been able to find their meaning. The book contains much more than can be grasped in such a short amount of time. There are many entries I did not mark and many nuances of the use of Japanese yet to be discovered in the very well done and colorful sample sentences. Mr. Akihiko Yonekawa brings a very high level of education and literacy to this complex yet common level of language. He makes the learning as fun, as it is broad and thorough.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Helpful bookBy S. BaergenMy dad is taking classes in Japanese, but more often than not, polite Japanese is what's taught so that students can speak properly and not offend

Japanese citizens when they travel. This book teaches exactly what it's supposed to--slang and rude Japanese. It's safe to say most teachers don't teach slang or rude things in classroom settings. It's useful to know slang because it's how a lot of people talk in Japanese and at the very least, people don't speak textbook Japanese (despite this, though, it's safe to not speak like the examples in the book). But anyway, my dad likes the book a lot. I've read it too and it's pretty funny. I know that unless I'm really angry at my close friends, I'll probably never speak like this for fear of being shunned by society (the language in the book does get very harsh). The book got to me in good shape and on time, so thank you, especially since I ordered it around Christmas. Thank you! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A great resource for your collection. By Steve Duvall This is a good resource for words you don't often learn in class. The terms are explained as to source where appropriate and sentences are provided displaying usage.

Presents expressions that all Japanese, but few foreigners, know and use every day. The book includes sample sentences for every entry. The Power Japanese series presents a selection of guides to difficult or confusing aspects of the Japanese language. The student can find a quick reference to particles, a guide to the myriad levels of politeness, books of idioms, vocabulary builders, emotive expressions and turns of speech - all with natural examples.

"An indispensable reference ... as you switch on the TV to watch a cop show or a soap opera." Asahi Evening News From the Publisher Preface to the Book [slightly abridged and without original macrons] It is not necessarily true that textbookish Japanese is the same as the Japanese spoken daily throughout Japan. Or, to put it differently, the language of the people is necessarily not the language of the textbooks. There are, of course, many cogent reasons for this, as well as some reasons that are perhaps not so cogent. In any case, the present book proposes to help you, the student, go beyond the language of the textbooks by offering a number of useful, meaningful, and interesting words and phrases that are generally unavailable in the school curriculum--at least not with the meanings given here. In short, this book aims to help the student to acquire (in a relatively easy manner) vocabulary that would otherwise require years upon years of Japanese residency. The entry words and phrases are all colloquial or slang. "Colloquial" means, of course, that they are more characteristic of the spoken language than the written. It also means, secondarily, that their meanings have occasionally taken on slightly different nuances from what is considered standard. Many of these words have already been adopted into large Japanese-language dictionaries; others have not. The criteria for inclusion in this book are several: frequency of use, usefulness, and sheer interest. The last aspect, "interest," I feel is important, for an interest in words is a strong stimulus to learning a language. The slang included here is, for the most part, traditional slang. It has been accepted as slang for a long time, and will likely retain that status for decades to come. This is the slang that one hears in movies or reads in novels, and thus is most likely to be reinforced through those media as well as "on the street." It is also the slang that will be most understood if the reader chooses to put it into practice. Other slang included here is more contemporary, popular among high school and university students, but even then I have tried to select items that will be long-lived. Longevity, in fact, has set the tone for the book in many crucial ways. It seemed to me that students who want to get closer to the vernacular might first wish to start with what is fairly established rather than with what is ephemeral, transient, and fugitive. Naturally, the fleeting can be fascinating, just as the historical can. But putting first things first is not a bad rule in language learning, and so I decided to deal with more basic vocabulary in this area rather than being led astray by the less substantial. The book has been divided into ten chapters: seven of which focus on meaning, three on form. The seven categories represented by the first seven chapters are largely arbitrary: many words could just have easily been placed in one or another of a number of chapters. Nonetheless, it still seemed better to group the words (no matter how unscientifically) according to content rather than simply listing them in alphabetical order. This arrangement, hopefully, will give the reader something to focus on in terms of content as well as provide an occasional opportunity to compare words of similar meaning. The construction of each entry is fairly simple: 1) the entry word romanized, 2) the common (not sole) Japanese orthography, 3) the literal meaning, 4) English definitions or equivalents, 5) the sample sentence or sentences in Japanese, romanization, and English translation, 6) a comment or note when called for. All of the above is pretty straightforward. Only the "literal meaning" perhaps needs additional explanation. Sometimes this meaning can be taken literally: e.g., where *notarin* is "short-of-brains." In other cases, the literal meaning tries to take a step back in the evolutionary history of the word to give a prior (dead or alive) meaning which clarifies the present one. Sometimes the step taken back is a short one, sometimes longer. In other cases, the literal meaning, for want of anything better, simply attempts to give a feeling for the Japanese word or phrase, either in terms of sound or meaning, and sometimes, more ideally, in both. In whichever case, however, "literal meanings" are to be seen as nothing more than as tools for coming to grips with the entry in question; they are not to be taken as viable translations or authenticated etymologies. This is not to say, of course, that they are fabrications without basis in fact (even given the uncertain state of Japanese etymology). A look at some of the better Japanese-language dictionaries will verify this point. As far as the English translation is concerned, it strives for equivalency rather than literal meaning. In other words, in its attempt to convey the Japanese nuances, the English concentrates on the rendering of whole sentences rather than individual words. This is perhaps inevitable in translation of this sort, since the tone of colloquial Japanese is often determined by verb

endings and sentence-ending particles--parts of speech that cannot be transferred as-is into English. Thus a particular Japanese sentence might be composed of unexceptional verbs and nouns etc., but still have a strong colloquial or slangy flavor due to the conjugations and particles. A literal translation of such sentences couldn't possibly capture the meaning of the originals, even though each word were painstakingly translated. In many cases the English provides not natural renditions of the Japanese, but rather an approximation of what English speakers might say in a similar situation; here again equivalency has taken precedence over literalness. Further, some of the English idioms appearing here might be termed "international" in that they are held in common throughout the English-speaking world. Many others, though, are strongly American, as is the tone of the book as a whole. It would be nice if colloquial or slangy Japanese could be translated into a variety of colloquial or slangy English that had currency with speakers of English throughout the world, but such an undertaking at this point in time seems highly dubious, if not downright impossible. In general, I have assumed that the reader of this book has already mastered the fundamentals of the language. Thus not everything is explained. The reader I have in mind already knows that the standard word for "to eat" is *taberu*, and thus I have not bothered to mention this fact in the entry for the colloquial *kuu*. This approach was adopted, first of all, so as not to bore the reader unnecessarily but also as a space-saving device. Finally, it is my hope that the present book will prove of use to the struggling student. All words require care in use, and the words and phrases in this book are no exception. There will be some that the student will instantly see can be put to immediate use. Others require precisely the right moment and situation, and will perhaps be more useful as part of your passive vocabulary rather than the active. All that, of course, is left to the reader's discretion.....About the AuthorAKIHIKO YONEKAWA is a professor at Baika Women's College in Osaka.