

■ 「猿」を使った表現 'Saru' expressions

「猿も木から落ちる」

Literally 'Even a monkey falls from a tree', this means that even an expert sometimes makes mistakes. Another expression which has the same meaning in Japanese is 「弘法も筆の誤り」, even Kobo (a famous Buddhist priest known also as an excellent calligrapher) makes mistakes in calligraphy.

「猿まね」

Monkey imitation. This is used to express a shallow imitation.

e.g. 「この映画は日本のアニメの猿まねだね」 ' This movie is just an imitation of a Japanese animation.'

「犬猿の仲」

Literally 'relationship between a dog and a monkey ', this refers to two people who hate each other and always 'fight like cats & dogs.'

「猿でもわかる～」

This is a recently coined colloquial expression. It is often used to refer to explanations which are 'so easy that even monkeys can understand'. e.g. 「猿でもわかる日本語」 'Japanese for Dum- mies'

ふる にほん いえ なか 古い日本の家の中 Inside old Japanese houses

いろり Square-shaped fireplace in the middle of the floor used for cooking and heating. People eat dinner sitting around it.

みず
水がめ Because there was no city water system, people had to bring water from the river or 井戸 (well), and keep it in 水がめ (jug).

うす
臼 A wooden mortar used for making rice cakes (mochi).



■ 擬声語・擬態語 Onomatopoeic expressions

Japanese is rich in onomatopoeic expressions. Here are some which appear in さるかにがっせん.

「パチン」 the sound of something bursting, like the popping of popcorn, a bubble, and so on.

「ブーン」 the buzzing of a bee or fly.

「ブンブン」 expresses the buzzing of many flying insects.

「チクリ」 to feel a prick, variant form 「チクツ」
eg. (before an injection) 「ちょっとチクリと／チクツとします」
'You might feel a slight pricking pain.'

「ドスン」 thump or thud, used for a sound of something heavy falling on the ground.

■ おむすび／おにぎり Omusubi/Onigiri

There are two words in Japanese for rice ball; おむすび and おにぎり. Some say that おむすび is mainly used in eastern Japan and おにぎり in western Japan. Some say that おむすび is big and triangle-shaped, whereas おにぎり is small and round. But in modern Japanese, there is no distinction between these two words.



The prefix お originally expressed politeness as in おべんとう, but it has now become an inseparable part of the word. (むすび can be used only as part of a compound like 天^{てん}むすび 'tempura rice ball', and にぎり means a kind of sushi, not rice ball). Other examples of words with an inseparable お are おなか (stomach), お^{まわ}巡りさん (policeman), おむつ (nappy), おなら (gas, wind) and so on.

■ 漢字 Kanji

The basic kanji 木^き(tree), derived from the shape of a tree, is learned by Japanese children at a very early stage. You probably also know the



compounds 林^{はやし} (wood) and 森^{もり} (forest).

In the kanji for persimmon, 柿^{かき}, 木 becomes the radical 「木偏^{きへん} (tree radical)」。 There are many kanji

which belong to this tree radical group, all of them with a meaning related to trees.

1	Kanji for a kind of tree: ^{かき} 柿 (persimmon), ^{さくら} 桜 (cherry blossom), ^{まつ} 松 (pine tree), ^{もも} 桃 (peach), ^{うめ} 梅 (plum)
2	Kanji for things made of wood: ^{つくえ} 机 (desk), ^{たな} 棚 (shelf), ^{さか} 板 (board), ^{はしら} 柱 (pole), ^{はし} 橋 (bridge).

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