III. Existence Constructions

The verbs meaning "to exist; to be (there)" are arimasu for things, and imasu for people and animals. The subject of the verbs may take either ga or wa depending on the context. A location phrase is marked by the particle ni. There are two types of sentences describing existence, as follows:

1. (A) Tookyoo ni daigaku ga arimasu.  "There are universities in Tokyo."
2. (B) Daigaku wa Tookyoo ni arimasu.  "The university is in Tokyo."

Do not change the word order or the particles (ga, wa, etc.) in the answer from what is in the question. Remember also that the questions containing arimasu and imasu may NOT be answered with "Ee, soo desu" or "Iie, chigaimasu." You must answer them by repeating the verbs.

We have a new set of ko-so-a-do words in this lesson: koko "this place," soko "that place near the listener," asoko "that place far away" and doko "which place." These are all nouns and, therefore, must be used with the particle ni in sentences ending with arimasu and imasu.

(A) LOCATION ni SUBJECT ga VERB "exist" [focus: WHAT/WHO is there]

   A: Ee, (koko ni hon ga) arimasu.  "Yes, there is (a book here)."

4. Q: [Soko ni NANI ga arimasu] ka. "What is there near you?"
   A: (Koko ni) hon ga arimasu.  "There is a book (here)."

5. Q: [Asoko ni kodomo ga imasu] ka. "Is there a child over there?"
   A: Ee, (asoko ni kodomo ga) imasu.  "Yes, there is (a child there)."

6. Q: [Asoko ni DARE ga imasu] ka. "Who is over there?"
   A: (Asoko ni) kodomo ga imasu.  "There is a child (over there)."

7. Q: [Koko ni neko ga imasu] ka. "Is there a cat here?"
   A: Ee, (soko ni neko ga) imasu.  "Yes, there is (a cat there)."

8. Q: [Soko ni NANI ga imasu] ka. "What (animal) is there?"
   A: (Koko ni) neko ga imasu.  "There is a cat (here)."
(B) SUBJECT  wa LOCATION ni VERB "exist" [focus: WHERE something/someone is]

9. Q:  Hon wa koko ni arimasu ka. "Is the book here?"
    A: Ee, Hon wa koko ni arimasu. "Yes, it is (here)."

10. Q:  Hon wa DOKO ni arimasu ka. "Where is the book?"
    A:  Hon wa koko ni arimasu. "The book is here."

11. Q:  Kodomo wa asoko ni imasu ka. "Is the child over there?"
    A:  Kodomo wa asoko ni imasu. "Yes, he (OR the child) is over there."

12. Q:  Kodomo wa DOKO ni imasu ka. "Where is the child?"
    A:  Kodomo wa asoko ni imasu. "He (OR the child) is over there."

13. Q:  Neko wa soko ni imasu ka. "Is the cat over there?"
    A:  Neko wa koko ni imasu. "Yes, she (OR the cat) is here."

14. Q:  Neko wa DOKO ni imasu ka. "Where is the cat?"
    A:  Neko wa koko ni imasu. "She (OR the cat) is here."

Be careful not to confuse the "X  wa Y desu" (Equational) construction with the Existence construction.

15. Q:  Dare desu ka. "Who is he?"
    A:  Tanaka-san desu. "He is Mr. Tanaka."

16. Q:  Dare ga imasu ka. "Who is there?"
    A:  Tanaka-san ga imasu. "Mr. Tanaka is there."

IV. NOUN no LOCATIONAL NOUN

Locational nouns refer to locations relative to something (or someone). They are similar to words such as "top," "front" and "back," but there are also many which do not have equivalents in English. Noun no + locational noun forms a noun phrase and the particle ni is used after the whole phrase in sentences with arimasu and imasu.

1. hako no ue  "on (top of) the box; above the box"
2. hako no shita  "under the box; below the box"
3. hako no naka  "in the box; inside the box"
4. toshokan no mae  "in (the) front of the library"
5. toshokan no ushiro  "in (the) back of the library; behind the library"
6. toshokan no soba  "near the library; close to the library"
7. Sumisu-san no tonari  "next to Mr. Smith"
8. Sumisu-san no yoko  "next to Mr. Smith; beside Mr. Smith"