



嫁のデキ心で知る  
有名スーパーの誠意

*THE HONESTY OF A FAMOUS SUPERMARKET,  
REVEALED BY A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW'S  
SUDDEN URGE*



## 嫁のデキ心で知る 有名スーパーの誠意

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世田谷のS子さん（三一）宅に、<sup>ずし</sup>逗子に住む<sup>しゅうとめ</sup>姑、F子さん（六一）が訪ねてきたのは、梅雨の晴れ間の昼のことだった。

「渋谷まで来たから、ちょっと孫の顔を見にね」

S子さんにとっては鬼より怖い姑である。精いっぱい愛想よくもてなした後、娘を連れて散歩にってもらった。

ホッと一息。気が緩んだせいかわ、空腹を覚えたS子さん、ふと、姑が近くの高級スーパー「Kノ国屋」で買ったというドーナツの袋に目が止まった。逗子の自宅用といていたから、

（これには手を出せないわね）

と一度は思ったものの、空腹は理性より強し。袋を開けると、中には六個のドーナツ。

*THE HONESTY OF A FAMOUS SUPERMARKET,  
REVEALED BY A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW'S  
SUDDEN URGE*

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It was midday during a dry spell in the rainy season when F-ko (61) came from Zushi to visit the home of her daughter-in-law S-ko (31) in Setagaya.

“Since I had already come as far as Shibuya, I just dropped by to see my grandchild’s face.”

For S-ko, her mother-in-law was more frightening than a demon. S-ko did everything she could to be a good hostess for F-ko. Later, her mother-in-law took S-ko’s daughter for a walk.

S-ko breathed a sigh of relief. As she relaxed, S-ko felt hungry, and her eyes suddenly came to rest upon the bag of doughnuts that her mother-in-law had bought at K-nokuniya, a luxury supermarket nearby. F-ko had said that she was going to take the doughnuts home to Zushi.

S-ko thought at first, “I really shouldn’t touch them.”

But hunger is stronger than reason. She opened the bag and found six doughnuts inside.

(一個だけなら分からないか)

と、急いで食べると、パックの蓋ふたを念入りに元に戻しておいた。そうとは知らぬ姑は、散歩から戻ると、ドーナツの袋を提げて、満足げに帰っていった。

ところが、逗子に戻ったF子さん、しっかり、一個足りないのに気がついたから大変。

「天下のKノ国屋がこんなミスをするなんて！」

と、さっそくKノ国屋に延々三十分の抗議の電話。Kノ国屋の担当者も根負けした。翌朝一番に、八十円のドーナツ一個を後生大事に抱え、販売員と売場の責任者がF子さん宅まで謝罪にきたのである。片道二時間余り。聞けば、販売員はそのため五時に家を出たという。

F子さんもこれには、

「さすがにKノ国屋だわー」

と大感激。友人やS子さんに吹聴ふいちょうして回った。もちろん、それを聞いたS子さんは、顔面蒼白そうはく。この秘密は、墓場まで持って行こうと固く決心している。

“Maybe she won’t notice if I eat only one,” S-ko thought. She hurriedly ate a doughnut and carefully re-closed the package.

F-ko returned from her walk none the wiser. Quite satisfied with herself, she left for home carrying the bag of doughnuts.

But sure enough, when F-ko returned to Zushi, she noticed that one doughnut was missing. That’s when the trouble started.

“I can’t believe that, of all the stores in Japan, K-nokuniya would make such a mistake!” F-ko immediately called K-nokuniya to complain. The call dragged on for thirty minutes. F-ko was too much for the person handling the matter at K-nokuniya. The first thing the next morning, clutching a single 80-yen doughnut as if their lives depended on it, the sales clerk and the floor supervisor came to F-ko’s home to apologize. One way, it had taken more than two hours. When asked, the sales clerk said she had left home at five o’clock that morning.

F-ko was greatly impressed. “That’s K-nokuniya for you!” she said.

She spread the story around to her friends and S-ko. Of course, when S-ko heard what had happened, her face turned deathly pale. She has firmly resolved to take the secret to her grave.

## COMMENTARY

### 1a

Title: 嫁<sup>よめ</sup>のデキ心<sup>ごころ</sup>で知る<sup>し</sup>有名<sup>ゆうめい</sup>スーパー<sup>の</sup>の誠意<sup>せい い</sup>

語 嫁 *yome* daughter-in-law / デキ心 *dekigokoro* (bad) impulse / で知る *de shiru* to find out from; to be shown by / 有名 *yūmei* famous / スーパー supermarket / 誠意 *sei* honesty; sincerity

注 デキ心 is usually written 出来心. Katakana is often substituted for kanji or hiragana in informal writing as a kind of playful emphasis. / The phrases 嫁のデキ心で知る and 有名スーパーの both modify 誠意.

### 1b

世田谷<sup>せ た が や</sup>の S 子<sup>エス こ</sup>さん (三一<sup>さんじゅういち</sup>) 宅<sup>たく</sup>に、逗子<sup>ず し</sup>に住む  
姑<sup>しゅうとめ</sup>、F 子<sup>エフ こ</sup>さん (六一<sup>ろくじゅういち</sup>) が訪ね<sup>たず</sup>てきたのは、  
梅雨<sup>つゆ</sup>の晴れ間<sup>は ま ひる</sup>の昼<sup>ひる</sup>のことだった。

語 世田谷 *Setagaya* residential area in western Tokyo / S 子 さん *Esu-ko-san* Ms. S., S-ko / 三一 三十一歳 *sanjū-issai* 31 years old / 宅 *taku* home, residence / 逗子 *Zushi* city near Kamakura, about 50 km south of central Tokyo / 姑 *shūtome* mother-in-law / 訪ねてきた *tazunete kita* came to visit / 梅雨 *tsuyu* the rainy season, which usually comes to all of Japan except Hokkaido in June / 晴れ間 *harema* a brief dry spell

動 訪ねて ㊦ 訪ねる *tazuneru* / きた ㊦ 来る *kuru*

注 The word 宅 can come immediately after a person's name without a connecting の, so S子さん宅 means "S-ko's home." / The phrase 逗子に住む姑 modifies F子さん, so 逗子に住む姑、F子さん means "F-ko, (S-ko's) mother-in-law, who lives in Zushi." / The topic of this sentence is F子さんが訪ねてきたのは "(the time when) F-ko came to visit"; the の is a nominalizing particle. This topic is linked by the copula だった to 梅雨の晴れ間の昼のこと. The core meaning of the sentence is thus "the time when F-ko came to visit was around mid-day during a brief dry spell in the rainy season."

文 The principal characters in the "Dekigotology" stories, and in many similar articles in the popular press, are identified by their initials. The 子 in S子 marks it as a woman's name, perhaps 幸子 *Sachiko* or 静子 *Shizuko*. The mother-in-law F子 might be 文子 *Fumiko* or 藤子 *Fujiko*. Not all women's names end in 子, however, and sometimes you may see names like H美 (for 春美 *Harumi*) or A奈 (for 安奈 *Anna*). / The ages 三一 and 六一 are written in kanji here because that is how they appeared in the original vertically-printed article. In horizontal Japanese text, the numbers would normally be written as 31 and 61. / The kanji 姑 is not one of the 1,945 characters of the 常用漢字 *jōyō kanji* list recommended by the Japanese government for general use. Aside from school textbooks and newspapers, few publications adhere rigorously to that list, and the student of Japanese who learns only the 常用漢字 will remain incompletely literate.

1c

「渋谷<sup>しぶや</sup>まで<sup>き</sup>来たから、ちょっと孫<sup>まご</sup>の顔<sup>かお</sup>を見<sup>み</sup>にね」

語 渋谷 *Shibuya* a major business, shopping, and entertainment area on the west side of central Tokyo / 孫 *mago* grandchild / 顔 *kao* face

動 来た 来る *kuru* / 見 見る *miru*

注 What F-ko means to say at the end of this sentence is ちよっと孫の顔を見に来たんです “I just dropped by to see my grandchild’s face.” F-ko’s omission of the verb is a breezy, familiar style that is common in speech and informal writing. The stories in this book contain many verbless sentences. / The symbols 「 and 」 are used here as quotation marks. Called 鈎括弧 *kagi kakko* “key brackets” because of their resemblance to Japanese L-shaped keys (鈎 *kagi*), these marks are also used for emphasis and to indicate proper names, as in 1g and 6j.

1d

S子<sup>エス こ</sup>さんにとっては鬼<sup>おに</sup>より怖い<sup>こわ</sup>姑<sup>しゅうとめ</sup>である。

語 S子さんにとっては *Esu-ko-san ni totte wa* for S-ko, in S-ko’s opinion / 鬼 *oni* devil; demon / 怖い *kowai* frightening

注 The topic phrase of this sentence is understood to be F子さんは。

文 Conflicts between married women and their husbands’ mothers are a frequent theme of popular fiction and television dramas, reflecting, perhaps, the prevalence of such conflicts in real life.

1e

精<sup>せい</sup>いっぱい愛<sup>あい</sup>想<sup>そ</sup>よくもてなした<sup>あと</sup>後、娘<sup>むすめ</sup>を連れて<sup>つ</sup>  
散<sup>さん</sup>歩<sup>ぽ</sup>にいってもらった。

語 精いっぱい *sei ippai* as much as possible, with a total effort / 愛想よく *aiso yoku* cheerfully; warmly / もてなした entertained (her) / 後 *ato* after / 娘 *musume* daughter / 連れて *tsurete* taking along / 散歩に *sanpo ni* for a walk / いってもらった had gone; [lit.] received (her) going

動 もてなした ⇨ もてなす / 連れて ⇨ 連れる *tsureru* / いって ⇨ 行く *iku* / もらった ⇨ もらう

注 The subject of もてなした and もらった is S子さん, and the subject of 連れて and いって is F子さん.

文 The image of a daughter-in-law playing the perfect hostess while secretly fearing her mother-in-law would be familiar to many Japanese readers.

1f

ホッと一息<sup>ひといき</sup>。

語 ホッと with relief / 一息 *bitoiki* a short rest; [lit.] one breath

注 As in 1a, the katakana in ホッと indicate a mild emphasis, similar to italic type in English. This word appears in dictionaries as ほっと. / Again the verb is omitted. The full idiom is 一息つく *bitoiki tsuku* “to take a breather.”

1g

気が緩んだせいか、空腹を覚えたS子さん、ふと、姑が近くの高級スーパー「Kノ国屋」で買ったというドーナツの袋に目が止まった。

語 気が緩んだ *ki ga yurunda* relaxed; became less tense, less vigilant; [lit.] the 気 *ki* became slack / せい because / 空腹 *kūfuku* empty stomach; hunger / 覚えた *oboeta* felt / ふと suddenly / 近くの *chikaku no* nearby / 高級 *kōkyū* high-class; luxury / 「Kノ国屋」 *Kēnokuniya* abbreviated name of supermarket / 買った *katta* purchased / という *to iu, to yū* which (F-ko) said (she bought) / ドーナツの袋 *dōnatsu no fukuro* bag of doughnuts / 目が止まった *me ga tomatta* (S-ko) noticed; [lit.] (S-ko's) eye stopped on

動 緩んだ ⇨ 緩む *yurumu* / 覚えた ⇨ 覚える *oboeru* / 買った ⇨ 買う *kau* / 止まった ⇨ 止まる *tomaru*

注 The phrase 気が緩んだせいか means “perhaps because she relaxed,” explaining why S-ko suddenly felt hungry. / The topic-marker は *wa* after S-ko-san has been elided. / While 覚える often means “to remember” or “to learn,” here its meaning is “to feel.” / 姑 is the subject of 買った. / S 子 is the topic for 目が止まった.

文 Tokyo residents would recognize Kノ国屋 as 紀ノ国屋 *Kinokuniya*, a luxury supermarket that sells imported food. (There's also an international chain of bookstores called Kinokuniya, but they write their name 紀伊國屋.)

1h

ずしの自宅用じかようといていたから、(これには手てを出せないわね) と一度いちどは思ったおもものの、空腹くうふくは理性りせいより強つよし。

語 自宅用 *jitakuyō* for use at one's home / といていたから *to itte ita kara* because (F-ko) had said that / 手を出せない *te o dasenai* cannot touch; cannot get involved in / わね (shows mild exclamation; used by female speakers) / ものの *mono no* but / 空腹は理性より強し *kūfuku wa risei yori tsuyoshi* hunger is stronger than reason

動 いて ④ 言う *iu* or *yū* / いた ④ いる / 出せない ④ 出せる ④ 出す *dasu* / 思った ④ 思う *omou*

注 The kanji 用 is used as a suffix in many expressions similar to 自宅用. Examples include 客用 *kyakuyō* “for use by guests,” 軍用 *gun'yō* “for military use,” and 社用 *shayō* “for company use.” / The parentheses in (これには手を出せないわね) and in 1j indicate S-ko's unspoken thoughts. / 強し is the archaic literary form of the adjective 強い *tsuyoi* “strong.” / F子さん is understood to be the subject of いていた, while S子さん is the subject of 出せない and 思った.

文 The phrase 空腹は理性より強し is a pun on the proverb ペンは剣より強し *pen wa ken yori tsuyoshi* “The pen is mightier than the sword.”

1i

袋<sup>ふくろ</sup>を開<sup>あ</sup>けると、中<sup>なか</sup>には六<sup>ろっこ</sup>個のドーナツ。

語 開けると *akeru to* when (S-ko) opened / 中には *naka ni wa* inside / 六個 *rokko* six (roundish objects)

注 In full, this sentence would end 六個のドーナツがあった。

1j

(一個<sup>いっこ</sup>だけなら分<sup>わ</sup>からないか) と、急<sup>いそ</sup>いで食<sup>た</sup>べると、パックの蓋<sup>ふた</sup>を念<sup>ねん</sup>入<sup>い</sup>りに元<sup>もと</sup>に戻<sup>もど</sup>しておいた。

語 一個だけなら *ikko dake nara* if only one (doughnut is missing) / 急いで食べる *isoide taberu* to eat in a hurry / パック package / 蓋 *futa* cover / 念入りに *nen'iri ni* carefully; meticulously / 元に戻しておいた *moto ni modoshite oita* reclosed (the package); [lit.] returned (the cover) to its original position (in preparation for F-ko's return)

動 分からない ⇨ 分かる *wakaru* / 急いで ⇨ 急ぐ *isogu* / 戻して ⇨ 戻す *modosu* / おいた ⇨ おく

注 The particle と is used in two distinct meanings in this sentence. The first と can be called the “quoting” と; it is used to report speech, names, or, in this case, thoughts. The quoting と often appears with the verb 言う “to say” or 思う “to think”; it is also used in 1g and 1h, for example. The second と is the “sequential” と; it shows that one action follows another. Examples of the sequential と appear in 1i and 1k.

文 S-ko's impulsive doughnut eating is the デキ心 mentioned in the story's title.

1k

そうとは知らぬ姑は、散歩から戻ると、ドーナツの袋を提げて、満足げに帰っていった。

語 そうとは知らぬ姑 *sō to wa shiranu shūtome* her mother-in-law, who didn't know about that / 散歩から戻ると *sanpo kara modoru to* when (she) returned from her walk / 提げて *sagete* carrying / 満足げに *manzokuge ni* with a satisfied look / 帰っていった *kaette itta* went home

動 知らぬ ⇨ 知る *shiru* / 提げて ⇨ 提げる *sageru* / 帰って ⇨ 帰る *kaeru* / いった ⇨ 行く *iku*

注 The ぬ ending on 知らぬ is a more literary version of the negative suffix ない; 知らぬ has the same meaning as 知らない. / The basic meaning of the verb 提げる is “to dangle; to let hang.” When the object is a shopping bag, handbag, or other object with a strap or handle, the verb is best translated as “to carry.”

11

ところが、<sup>ずし</sup> <sup>もと</sup> <sup>エフ</sup> <sup>コ</sup> 戻った F 子さん、しっかり、  
一個<sup>いっこ</sup>足りない<sup>た</sup>のに<sup>き</sup>気がついた<sup>たいへん</sup>から大変。

語 ところが however (i.e., contrary to what was expected or hoped) / 戻った *modotta* returned / しっかり surely; without missing a thing / 足りない *tarinai* to be lacking; to be missing / 気がついた *ki ga tsuita* noticed / から because / 大変 *taihen* a major crisis

動 戻った ⇨ 戻る *modoru* / 足りない ⇨ 足りる *tariru* / ついた ⇨ つく

注 The adverb しっかり, which modifies 気がついた, suggests that F-ko is the type who lets very little get past her. / As in 1b, the particle の is a nominalizer, so 一個足りないの means “(the fact) that one doughnut was missing.” / Note that the meaning of から depends on the form of the verb it follows. After the past or present tense, it means “because”: 気がついたから “because she noticed.” When preceded by the gerund (*-te*) form, however, it means “after”: 気がついてから “after she noticed.” / The word 大変 often expresses shock or panic. Someone who finds that the bathtub has overflowed and soaked the tatami is likely to shout 「大変だ！」 “Oh, no!” The word’s use in the above sentence expresses S-ko’s sense of impending disaster. / The copula だ after 大変 has been elided.

1m

「天下のKノ国屋がこんなミスをするなんて！」  
と、さっそくKノ国屋に延々三十分の抗議の電  
話。

語 天下の *tenka no* unsurpassed; leading / こんなミス such a mistake / なんて (expresses doubt, surprise, or anger) / さっそく immediately / 延々 *en-en* at length; longwindedly / 抗議 *kōgi* complaint / 電話 *denwa* telephone call

注 As the kanji suggest, the original meaning of 天下 is “under heaven,” that is, “the entire country” or “the world.” When used as a modifier, 天下の means “widely known to be the best.” / The traditional pronunciation of 十分 in the meaning “ten minutes” is *jūppun*, not *jūppun* as shown above. While the former pronunciation can be heard in news broadcasts and the like, the latter is more common in contemporary speech. (When 十分 means “enough; sufficient,” it is pronounced *jūbun*.) / With the unstated verb added, this sentence would end ...抗議の電話をした。

1n

Kノ国屋の担当者も根負けした。

語 担当者 *tantōsha* the person handling the matter / 根負けした *konmake shita* gave up

動 根負けした ⇔ 根負けする *konmake suru*

注 根負けする means “to give up because one’s opponent is more persistent.”

10

翌朝一番よくあさいちばんに、八十円はちじゅうえんのドーナツいっこ一個を後生大ごしょうだい事じに抱えかか、販売員はんばいいんと売り場うりばの責任者せきにんしゃがF子エフこさん宅たくまで謝罪しゃざいにきたのである。

語 翌朝一番 *yokuasa* (or *yokuchō*) *ichiban* the first thing the next morning / 八十円のドーナツ一個 *hachijū-en no dōnatsu ikko* one 80-yen doughnut / 後生大事に *goshō daiji ni* with infinite care / 抱え *kakae* holding (his or her arms around) / 販売員 *hanbai-in* sales clerk / 売り場 *uriba* sales floor (of the supermarket) / 責任者 *sekinin-sha* the manager; the person with senior responsibility / 謝罪に *shazai ni* to apologize

動 抱え ㊦ 抱える *kakaeru* / きた ㊦ 来る *kuru*

注 Other combinations with 翌 include 翌日 *yokujitsu* “the next day” and 翌週 *yokushū* “the next week.” / 抱え is the stem of 抱えます *kakaemasu*, the present formal of 抱える. The present formal stem is used to link clauses. / The difference between 謝罪にきたのである and just 謝罪にきた is that the の followed by the copula である indicates that this sentence is an elaboration of the preceding sentence: it explains what happened after the 担当者 gave up in the face of F-ko’s complaints.

文 The term 後生 is so close in form and meaning to the English “afterlife” that one might think it a loanword. In fact, though, 後生大事 comes from Buddhism and originally meant “caring more about the next life than about this one.” In this story, the meaning is more secular. The supermarket employees were worried about not the Great Beyond but the store’s reputation. There’s a bit of sar-

casual, too, in the use of this full-powered 漢語 *kango* to describe how someone carried an eighty-yen doughnut.

1p

かたみち に じ かんあま き はんばいじん  
片道二時間余り。聞けば、販売員はそのため  
ごじ いえ で  
五時に家を出たという。

語 片道 *katamichi* one-way (trip) / 二時間余り *ni-jikan amari* over two hours / 聞けば *kikeba* when (F-ko) asked / そのため for that purpose / 五時に *goji ni* at five o'clock / 家を出た *ie o deta* left home

動 聞けば 聞 *kiku* / 出た 出 *deru*

注 The opposite of 片道 is 往復 *ōfuku* “round trip.” / Other expressions with 片 include 片手で *katate de* “with one hand” and 片方 *katabō* “one (of a pair).” / After a numerical expression, 余り means “somewhat more than,” as in 十人余り *jūnin amari* “more than ten people; a dozen or so people.” / In this sentence, そのため means “in order to make the one-way trip of over two hours.” / The unstated subject of 聞けば is F子.

文 Nowhere is the gender of the 販売員 specified, nor that of the 担当者 or the 売り場の責任者. Each could be either male or female. This ambiguity is often impossible to maintain in translations into English, in which gender-specific pronouns are unavoidable.

1q

エフ<sup>こ</sup> F子さんもこれには、「さすがに<sup>ケー</sup>Kノ<sup>くにや</sup>国屋だわー」  
と<sup>だいかんげき</sup>大感激。

語 さすがに really; as expected / 大感激 *daikangeki* greatly moved; deeply touched

注 これ “this” refers to the long journey made by the supermarket employees. / The vowel of the exclamation particle わ is lengthened to わー *wā* as emotive emphasis. / 大 *dai* is a prefix meaning “greatly; very much.” / The particle と here is the quoting と (see 1j). / The verb of this sentence is 感激した *kangeki shita*, with the した omitted.

1r

ゆうじん<sup>エス</sup> 友人やS子さんに<sup>ふいちよう</sup>吹聴して<sup>まわ</sup>回った。

語 友人 *yūjin* friends; acquaintances / 吹聴して回った *fuichō shite mawatta* proclaimed; spread the word

動 回った 回る *mawaru*

注 By itself, 吹聴する means “to announce; to spread (news) widely.” The 回った emphasizes that F-ko told this story to one person after another.

1s

もちろん、それを聞いた<sup>き</sup>S子<sup>エスこ</sup>さんは、顔面<sup>がめん</sup>蒼白<sup>そうはく</sup>。

語 もちろん of course / 顔面 *ganmen* face / 蒼白 *sōhaku*  
pale; pallid

動 聞いた ⇨ 聞く *kiku*

注 With the omitted verb replaced, the sentence would end  
顔面蒼白になった “her face blanched.”

文 The kanji 蒼 in 蒼白 means “blue” or “green.” It also has  
the kun reading *ao*.

1t

この秘密<sup>ひみつ</sup>は、墓場<sup>はかば</sup>まで持<sup>も</sup>って行<sup>い</sup>こうと固<sup>かた</sup>く決<sup>けっしん</sup>心  
している。

語 秘密 *himitsu* secret / 墓場 *hakaba* grave / 持って行こう  
と *motte ikō to* to carry away / 固く *kataku* firmly; reso-  
lutely / 決心している *kesshin shite iru* has decided; has re-  
solved

動 持って ⇨ 持つ *motsu* / 行こう ⇨ 行く *iku*

文 S-ko's determination to carry to the grave the secret of her  
furtive doughnut eating has two motives. One is her em-  
barrassment at having forced the supermarket employees  
to take such a long journey for the sake of an 80-yen  
doughnut. The other motive, which gives a sharper edge  
to this story, is S-ko's continuing fear of what her mother-  
in-law would do if she ever found out.

