

APPENDIX 3: Glossary of Onomatopoeia

This glossary, containing the most common onomatopoeic words in Japanese, is a supplement to Lesson 29. If you haven't studied that lesson yet, we recommend that you do so before you continue reading.

Onomatopoeia in manga

More and more manga works are being published in English, and some publishing companies do not translate the onomatopoeia that is often part of the artwork of a manga frame so as not to change the original picture. However, this practice leaves the Western reader without the rich “sound atmosphere” that the Japanese onomatopoeia contributes to the manga.

Even if you have mastered hiragana and katakana, you may find that you are still unable to understand the Japanese onomatopoeia in a manga. Although some of them are very obvious, there are also many whose meaning is difficult to understand. This glossary, or “dictionary of onomatopoeia,” has been designed with the aim of helping the manga reader who wants to fully enjoy Japanese comic books with the original Japanese onomatopoeia.

Points to bear in mind when using this glossary

In manga, onomatopoeia can be found in hiragana or katakana, without distinction, even though we have listed them all here in hiragana.

Those onomatopoeia that in an oral context add a っ and *tto* (as in ちらっと *chiratto*), sometimes appear in manga without the latter character (*chira*). In the glossary, we have placed the *tto* in parentheses to indicate this peculiarity.

Some onomatopoeia that repeat one same sound, like どきどき *dokidoki* or にこにこ *nikoniko*, sometimes appear in manga with the abrupt ending っ. Thus, we may find どきっ *doki* or にこっ *niko*. In these cases, the word usually has the same meaning as the onomatopoeia with a double sound, so remember this when you find words of the にこっ *niko* kind.

Also bear in mind that the world of onomatopoeia is very wide, more so in manga where authors tend to “invent” new onomatopoeia; therefore, you will sometimes find some that are not listed here.

The sign “|” divides different meanings for one onomatopoeia.

A

<i>assari</i>	あっさり	easygoing, lighthearted light or delicate (flavor)
<i>atafuta</i>	あたふた	flustered, in a hurry

B

<i>ba(tto)</i>	ばっ(と)	quick movement
<i>bacchiri</i>	ばっちり	something is perfect, ideal
<i>bachan</i>	ばちゃん	something big falls into water (“splash”)
<i>bakibaki</i>	ばきばき	violent blows by which something cracks
<i>ban</i>	ばん	something explodes or bursts
<i>barabara</i>	ばらばら	scattered, severed to take apart to pieces, to break up
<i>baribari</i>	ばりばり	to do something with enthusiasm to destroy something
<i>basha(tto)</i>	ばしゃっ(と)	to slop in a puddle
<i>bashi(tto)</i>	ばしっ(と)	to break with a “crack”
<i>batabata</i>	ばたばた	very busy, up and down with frenzied activity to kick up a fuss
<i>batan</i>	ばたん	a door slams shut
<i>battari</i>	ばったり	running into someone unexpectedly falling flat on the ground
<i>bechabecha</i>	べちゃべちゃ	to be sticky to talk “here and there.”
<i>berabera</i>	べらべら	to speak without thinking to be fluent in a language
<i>berobero</i>	べろべろ	to lick something (also pero) to be totally drunk
<i>beron</i>	べろん	to stick out one’s tongue
<i>betobeto</i>	べとべと	to be sticky
<i>bikkuri</i>	びっくり	to be surprised
<i>bisshori</i>	びっしより	to be soaked
<i>bō(tto)</i>	ぼうっ(と)	to be in a daze, “zone out” an almost senile old man
<i>bochibocho</i>	ぼちぼち	gradually soon no change
<i>boke(tto)</i>	ぼけっ(と)	to have one’s head in the clouds, to be in a daze
<i>boroboro</i>	ぼろぼろ	destroyed smashed to pieces
<i>bosabosa</i>	ぼさぼさ	to be very worn out with one’s hair in a mess
<i>bosoboso</i>	ぼそぼそ	whisper to be bland (food)
<i>bukubuku</i>	ぶくぶく	to be fat to bubble (water)
<i>buruburu</i>	ふるふる	to tremble
<i>busu(tto)</i>	ぶすっ(と)	to stab, to make a stabbing sound to be grouchy, sullen
<i>būbū</i>	ふうふう	pig’s grunt (“oink, oink”)
<i>buyobuyo</i>	ぶよぶよ	to be pudgy, flaccid

C

<i>charachara</i>	ちゃらちゃら	sound of bells to flirt
<i>chibichibi</i>	ちびちび	little by little drop by drop small sips
<i>chichi</i>	ちっちっ	birds’ chirping

<i>chimachima</i>	ちまちま	small but well made shyness
<i>chira(tto)</i>	ちらっ(と)	quick glance something is just glimpsed
<i>chirinchorin</i>	ちりんちりん	sound of a bell
<i>chiyahoya</i>	ちやほや	to overspoil somebody
<i>chokonto</i>	ちょこんど	alone, quiet
<i>chokotto</i>	ちょこっと	a little
<i>choppiri</i>	ちよっぴり	a tiny bit
<i>chu</i>	ちゅっ	kiss
D		
<i>daan</i>	だあん	explosion or shot (“bang”)
<i>daradara</i>	だらだら	shattered, dripping with sweat to ooze out
<i>deredere</i>	でれでれ	to be in a daze (a man in front of a beautiful woman)
<i>dododo</i>	どどど	walking fast on a wooden floor or on tatami strong blizzard
<i>dokan</i>	どかん	explosion
<i>dokidoki</i>	どきどき	sound of heartbeat nerves, thrill, excitement
<i>dokun</i>	どくん	sound of heartbeat nerves, fear, tension
<i>don</i>	どん	strong blow shot (“bang”)
<i>dondon</i>	どんどん	strong and reiterative sound rapidly, without delay
<i>doo</i>	どお	a big object moves
<i>doron</i>	どろん	to appear suddenly, perhaps with a small explosion
<i>dorotto</i>	どろっ(と)	a viscous or muddy liquid flows or drips
<i>dosa(tto)</i>	どさっ(と)	something heavy falls on the floor a large person sits abruptly
<i>dosha(tto)</i>	どしゃっ(と)	violent fall on something that breaks
<i>dotabata</i>	どたばた	to do something in a hurry, nervously
<i>dotadota</i>	どたどた	to run hurriedly (on wooden floor or tatami)
<i>dote</i>	どて	to drop on the floor calmly
F		
<i>fufu</i>	ふふ	sarcastic laugh
<i>fun</i>	ふん	sound of disapproval to show disagreement
<i>funwari</i>	ふんわり	something soft and spongelike
<i>furafura</i>	ふらふら	to walk with unsteady steps, on the verge of fainting, dizzy
<i>fuwa(tto)</i>	ふわっ(と)	something very light floats to be very soft to feel relieved
G		
<i>gaagaa</i>	があがあ	deep sound sound of ducks (“quack, quack”)
<i>gabagaba</i>	がばがば	to be very loose fitting (clothes, for example)
<i>gacha</i>	がちゃっ	a door opens
<i>gakkuri</i>	がっくり	to suffer some disappointment

<i>gaku(tto)</i>	がくっ(と)	sudden surprise
<i>gakun(to)</i>	がくん(と)	sudden surprise to suddenly stop feeling like doing something
<i>gan</i>	がん	strong blow
<i>gangan</i>	がんだん	headache to gulp down
<i>garagara</i>	がらがら	a sliding door opens rubble falls
<i>gasshiri</i>	がっしり	to be strong and muscular
<i>gatagata</i>	がたがた	to tremble (from cold, fear, etc.)
<i>gatsun</i>	がっつん	a hard object (usually sharp) bumps into another
<i>gennari</i>	げんなり	to be very tired
<i>geragera</i>	げらげら	to laugh boisterously
<i>giku(tto)</i>	ぎくっ(と)	sudden surprise
<i>girigiri</i>	ぎりぎり	just, at the limit
<i>gishi(tto)</i>	ぎしっ(と)	something squeaks
<i>gochagocha</i>	ごちゃごちゃ	messy, confused, chaotic
<i>gohon</i>	ごほん	to cough
<i>gokun</i>	ごくん	to gulp down (food)
<i>goo</i>	ごー	sound of wind airplane engine something flies noisily
<i>gorogoro</i>	ごろごろ	to be lazing around sound of thunder
<i>goshigoshi</i>	ごしごし	to rub a cloth over something to clean it
<i>gotsun</i>	ごっつん	dull noise of something falling
<i>gūgū</i>	ぐうぐう	sound of pigeon snore to be sound asleep
<i>gui</i>	ぐい	to grab something flexible (e.g., somebody by their clothes)
<i>gui(tto)</i>	ぐいっど	to grab something, squeezing it
<i>guruguru</i>	ぐるぐる	to turn round
<i>gussuri</i>	ぐっすり	to sleep like a log, to be sound asleep
<i>gusugusu</i>	ぐすぐす	to weep silently, to let out a tear
<i>guttari</i>	ぐったり	to be very tired
<i>guzuguzu</i>	ぐずぐず	to lose time, to go slowly runny nose
<i>gyaagyaa</i>	ぎゃあぎゃあ	whine baby crying
<i>gyūgyū</i>	ぎゅうぎゅう	to be squeezed in a narrow place

H

<i>ha(tto)</i>	はっ(と)	to be startled, to get suddenly tense
<i>haa haa</i>	はあはあ	difficult breathing, somebody tired, gasp
<i>haha</i>	はは	laugh (“ha ha”)
<i>hakkiri</i>	はっきり	to say things clearly
<i>hakusho(n)</i>	はくしょ(ん)	sneeze (“atchoo!”)
<i>harahara</i>	はらはら	to be nervous, on the edge of one’s seat to flutter to the ground
<i>hatahata</i>	はたはた	a piece of cloth fluttering (like a flag)
<i>hehe</i>	へへ	laugh (“he he”)

<i>henahena</i>	へなへな	to be weak
<i>herahera</i>	へらへら	silly laugh
<i>hetoheto</i>	へとへと	to be very tired, exhausted (similar to <i>kutakuta</i>)
<i>hihiin</i>	ひひいん	horse's neigh
<i>hii</i>	ひい	high-pitched cry of terror (uttered by cowards or weak people)
<i>hikku</i>	ひっく	sob hiccup
<i>hin'yari</i>	ひんやり	something is fresh (positive)
<i>hirihiri</i>	ひりひり	pain or irritation
<i>hisohiso</i>	ひそひそ	to talk in a low voice, to whisper
<i>hiyahiya</i>	ひやひや	to be scared to feel cold
<i>ho(tto)</i>	ほっ(と)	to feel sudden relief
<i>hoho</i>	ほほ	laugh ("ho ho")
<i>hyuu</i>	ひゅー	to fly with a shrill noise (like a plane) strong blizzard
I		
<i>ichaicha</i>	いちゃいちゃ	a couple groping each other in public
<i>iraira</i>	いらいら	to be very nervous to be annoyed
<i>isoiso</i>	いそいそ	to be very cheerful, lighthearted
J		
<i>jarijari</i>	じゃりじゃり	something with a rough or sandy texture
<i>jiiii</i>	じー	to look at something inquisitively, as if expecting something
<i>jiijii</i>	じいじい	something is being fried sound of cicadas
<i>jirijiri</i>	じりじり	to advance slowly but steadily to be scorching (the sun rays)
<i>jiro(tto)</i>	じろっ(と)	to look inquisitively
<i>jirojiro</i>	じろじろ	to look inquisitively to look, trying to find out something
<i>jitabata</i>	じたばた	to make a scene to kick and struggle to panic
<i>jiwajiwa</i>	じわじわ	slow but insistent
K		
<i>ka</i>	かっ	steps
<i>kaa</i>	かぁ	to blush
<i>kaakaa</i>	かあかあ	usually a crow's cawing, but also bird's honking or quacking
<i>kachin</i>	かちん	to go click
<i>kachiri</i>	かちり	quite loud metallic sound
<i>kan</i>	かん	short loud sound (generally metallic)
<i>kankan</i>	かんかん	something is very hot somebody is very furious sound of a bell
<i>karakara</i>	からから	something is dry to be thirsty to laugh with delight
<i>karikari</i>	かりかり	something creaks to be writing with a pencil nerves on edge
<i>kerakera</i>	けらけら	to laugh heartily

<i>kerokero</i>	けろけろ	frog's croaking
<i>kichinto</i>	きちんと	properly
<i>kii</i>	きい	screaching of breaks
<i>kiikii</i>	きいきい	monkey's screaming
<i>kinkin</i>	きんきん	very shrill sound
<i>kinkonkankon</i>	きんこんかんこん	sound of the bell when school classes start
<i>kirakira</i>	きらきら	to shine very brightly
<i>kirikiri</i>	きりきり	to tighten something to the utmost to be stressed
<i>kokekoko</i>	こけこっこ	rooster's cry ("cock-a-doodle-doo")
<i>kongari</i>	こんがり	to toast something just right
<i>konkon</i>	こんこん	knocking on the door deep sound cough
<i>kopokopo</i>	こぼこぼ	to pour liquid into a cup
<i>koro(tto)</i>	ころっ(と)	to roll
<i>korokoro</i>	ころころ	to roll over and over
<i>korori</i>	ころり	to roll
<i>kosokoso</i>	こそこそ	to do something stealthily
<i>kotsukotsu</i>	こつこつ	to try hard, but without much fuss
<i>kudokudo</i>	くどくど	to insist on something over and over again
<i>kukkiri</i>	くっきり	something is seen distinctly
<i>kunekune</i>	くねくね	a body wriggling in a strange way
<i>kurakura</i>	くらくら	to feel dizzy
<i>kuru(tto)</i>	くるっ(と)	to turn something quickly (usually, the head)
<i>kusukusu</i>	くすくす	mischievous low laugh
<i>kutakuta</i>	くたくた	to be exhausted, worn out
<i>kyorokyoro</i>	きょろきょろ	to look around nervously

M

<i>mechakucha</i>	めちやくちや	to be absurd to be messy, a shambles
<i>mekimeki</i>	めきめき	to be worth mentioning
<i>meromero</i>	めろめろ	to get sentimental, affectionate
<i>mesomeso</i>	めそめそ	to sob
<i>mōmō</i>	もうもう	cow's mooing ("moo, moo")
<i>morimori</i>	もりもり	to feel energetic to eat with relish
<i>muka(tto)</i>	むかっ(と)	angry, fed up, sick of
<i>mukamuka</i>	むかむか	to be sickened

N

<i>nadenade</i>	なでなで	to caress with affection
<i>nikkori</i>	にっこり	kind smile
<i>nebaneba</i>	ねばねば	sticky (in a delicious way)

<i>nikoniko</i>	にこにこ	kind smile
<i>nitanita</i>	にたにた	smiling evilly
<i>nōnō</i>	のうのう	having no worries
<i>norarikurari</i>	のらりくらり	loafing about
<i>nyannyan</i>	にゃんにゃん	meow
O		
<i>odoodo</i>	おどおど	uptight, tense, nervous lacking self-confidence
<i>orooro</i>	おろおろ	faltering and clumsy movements
P		
<i>pa(tto)</i>	ぱっ(と)	suddenly, in a flash
<i>paa</i>	ぱあ	to suddenly spoil something
<i>pachipachi</i>	ぱちぱち	clapping
<i>pakupaku</i>	ぱくぱく	to eat with relish, to munch, to gobble
<i>pan</i>	ぱんっ	gun shot (“bang”)
<i>paripari</i>	ぱりぱり	to eat something crunchy (like biscuits)
<i>patapata</i>	ぱたぱた	something flaps in the wind to run with pattering feet
<i>pechanko</i>	ぺちゃんこ	to crush something to be flat
<i>pechapecha</i>	ぺちゃぺちゃ	to chatter
<i>pekopeko</i>	ぺこぺこ	to be hungry to lower one’s head when bowing
<i>perapera</i>	ぺらぺら	to talk a lot to speak a foreign language fluently
<i>pero(tto)</i>	ぺろっ(と)	to lick something (also bero)
<i>peshari</i>	ぺしゃり	to crush something
<i>peta(tto)</i>	ぺたっ(と)	something sticks to a flat surface
<i>pichipichi</i>	ぴちぴち	to be very lively
<i>pika(tto)</i>	ぴかっ(と)	gleam, brightness
<i>pikapika</i>	ぴかぴか	bright, sparkling
<i>piku(tto)</i>	ぴくっ(と)	to be taken by surprise, to be caught unawares tapping
<i>piripiri</i>	ぴりぴり	spicy (food) to be very nervous
<i>pita(tto)</i>	ぴたっ(と)	something stops suddenly and stays still at a place
<i>pittari</i>	ぴったり	something fits perfectly
<i>poi</i>	ぽいっ	to toss something casually
<i>pokan</i>	ぽかん	with one’s mouth open wide
<i>poroporo</i>	ぽろぽろ	to shed copious tears from sadness
<i>puchi(tto)</i>	ぷちっ(と)	something breaks (sharp sound) patience running out
<i>puripuri</i>	ぷりぷり	to be in a rage
<i>putsun</i>	ぷっつん	something breaks suddenly to lose one’s cool

S

<i>sa</i>	さ	fast and determined movement
<i>saa(tto)</i>	さあっ(と)	fast and determined movement
<i>sakusaku</i>	さくさく	soft crunching (treading on snow or sand)
<i>sarasara</i>	さらさら	to be very soft (hair, for example)
<i>sawasawa</i>	さわさわ	crowd, many people walking and moving at once
<i>sharishari</i>	しゃりしゃり	something creaks
<i>shiin</i>	しーん	(absolute silence)
<i>shikkari</i>	しっかり	to brace oneself up, to be brave, to pluck up courage
<i>shikushiku</i>	しくしく	to weep silently sharp but not strong pain
<i>shitoshito</i>	しとしと	drizzling rain that slowly dampens everything
<i>shittori</i>	しっとり	to be very damp to be calm
<i>shoboshobo</i>	しょぼしょぼ	to be depressed, feeling low
<i>sowasowa</i>	そわそわ	to feel nervous, excited
<i>soyosoyo</i>	そよそよ	a cool breeze blows
<i>subesube</i>	すべすべ	to be very soft to the touch
<i>suka(tto)</i>	すかっ(と)	to feel better, to feel refreshed (similar to <i>sukkiri</i>)
<i>sukkiri</i>	すっきり	to be relieved, refreshed
<i>sunnari</i>	すんなり	to go smoothly to easily gain access to something
<i>surari</i>	すらり	to be nimble, to do something quickly to be thin
<i>sururi</i>	するり	nimble, quick movement
<i>sūsū</i>	すうすう	the air goes through a small hole

T

<i>tappuri</i>	たっぷり	full, overflowing
<i>taratara</i>	たらたら	to be dripping with sweat
<i>tonton</i>	とんとん	soft and repetitive rapping (such as knocking softly on the door)
<i>toro(tto)</i>	とろっ(と)	movement of quite viscous liquid
<i>tsurutsuru</i>	つるつる	sound of sipping to be slippery to be bald
<i>tsuyatsuya</i>	つやつや	to be glossy

U

<i>ukauka</i>	うかうか	to be absentminded
<i>ukkari</i>	うっかり	to totally forget something
<i>unzari</i>	うんざり	to be sick of something
<i>utouto</i>	うとうと	to fall asleep from utter exhaustion
<i>uttori</i>	うっとり	to be enraptured, really happy
<i>uu</i>	うう	groan, grimace of pain
<i>uwaaa</i>	うわー	scream (“yipes!”) to cry at the top of one’s voice

W

<i>waaa</i>	わー	incomprehensible screams from crowd
<i>wakuwaku</i>	わくわく	to be nervous, excited
<i>wanwan</i>	わんわん	dog's barking ("bow wow")

Y

<i>goro</i>	よろ	to be dizzy or drunk, to stagger
<i>yukkuri</i>	ゆっくり	slowly in a relaxed manner
<i>yurayura</i>	ゆらゆら	to waver (in hot air, like a mirage)
<i>yuttari</i>	ゆったり	mellow, carefree; leisurely spacious

Z

<i>za(tto)</i>	ざっ(と)	abrupt sound
<i>zaazaa</i>	ざあざあ	heavy rain sth. like sand or dust which moves in great quantities
<i>zakuzaku</i>	ざくざく	to break something with a repetitive creak snow crunching
<i>zawazawa</i>	ざわざわ	a crowd approaches (threateningly)
<i>zeezee</i>	ぜえぜえ	difficult breathing, somebody tired, ("gasp"), wheezing
<i>zo(tto)</i>	ぞっ(と)	to get a sudden fright
<i>zokuzoku</i>	ぞくぞく	to tremble from cold or nerves, fear, expectation, etc.
<i>zorozoro</i>	ぞろぞろ	a crowd approaches decisively
<i>zozo</i>	ぞぞ	feeling a chill
<i>zubari</i>	ずばり	to get straight to the point (in a conv.) to cut with a bold stroke
<i>zukezuke</i>	ずけずけ	without reserve, frankly
<i>zushizushi</i>	ずしずし	something heavy and large moves
<i>zuzuzu</i>	ずずず	to drag something heavy along the floor to slurp soup