



## Oh no ... I won!

Earlier today I made a quick trip on the train over to a nearby major shopping area; I had to visit a big electronics shop to get some office supplies: printer toner, address labels, and an adapter for the microphone I use to record the audio for these little stories.

It's quite a fascinating place, many stories high, and packed to the rafters with all manner of new and exciting products. It's where I buy most of my computer-related supplies, as the prices are very competitive, and they nearly always have in stock the items I need.

As I was wandering the aisles looking for the items on my shopping list, I heard at one point the sound of a large bell clanging. Over at a nearby cash register, it seems one of the customers had won some kind of prize, and the clerk was loudly ringing the bell to announce it to everyone in the store. I then noticed the posters that were scattered everywhere - the store was having a major sales campaign, and one in every hundred customers received their purchase free, as chosen by the computerized cash registers.

Now, one in a hundred isn't great odds, but it seemed like a good idea for the shop; each person coming to the register to purchase their goods felt like they were playing a kind of lottery. It was fun!

A while later, when I approached one of the sales counters with my pile of shopping, which amounted to nearly 20,000 yen (printer toner is expensive!), I wondered if my purchase would be one of those randomly selected ... but, sad to say, it wasn't. Mine was *hazure* ... I guess in English the receipt would have perhaps said "Sorry ... better luck next time!"

I collected my purchases and began to leave the store. But just as I was about to leave I suddenly remembered that I hadn't picked up the audio adapter I needed, so I turned around and returned to that section of the store. I found the item - it was 871 yen - and headed to the checkout.

You know what's coming up, right?!

Yep, as the clerk rang up the sale, the register spit out the message *atari* ... 'Congratulations, You Win!'. The clerk picked up his bell and as he clanged it back and forth, nearby shoppers eagerly peered to see what I had won.

I held up the little 871 yen adapter, and everybody smiled and laughed. The clerk grinned too, as he bowed and said "*Omedetou gozaimasu*". I took it like a man, smiled back at everybody, and said my thank yous.

So now I know what 'better luck next time' really means!

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