

## Short Autumn?

Autumn in Japan has officially started, or has it? Lately, the temperature has been pretty unusual, and people have noticed how it can go from a cozy 24 to a freezing 6 degrees. According to reports, winter-like temperatures are expected to come earlier than usual, which means it's going to be a colder autumn season this year. Because of that, experts suggest wearing warmer clothes to prevent getting sick. Colder temperatures mean autumn foliage may not last as long as usual, so if you're planning to see it, you'd better start now, or you might miss the

*autumn foliage 秋の紅葉*

## THE BEST FESTIVALS IN NOVEMBER

### KARATSU KUNCHI (SAGA), NOVEMBER 2-4



One of Kyushu's most famous festivals, **Karatsu Kunchi** features huge, colorful floats shaped like warriors' helmets, dragons, and sea creatures. The lively parades with drums and chants bring in visitors from all over Japan.

*chant 唱えること, creatures 生き物*

### ARASHIYAMA MOMIJI FESTIVAL (KYOTO), MID-NOVEMBER



Held along the Oi River in Kyoto, this festival recreates scenes from the Heian period. Boats decorated with flowers carry people in traditional costumes while music and dance performances take place, all surrounded by beautiful autumn leaves.

*recreate 再現する*

### NIINAME-SAI (ISE JINGU, MIE), NOVEMBER 23



A traditional harvest festival where the emperor offers the season's first rice to the gods. The ritual at Ise Jingu is especially famous, giving thanks for food and celebrating the importance of nature's blessings.

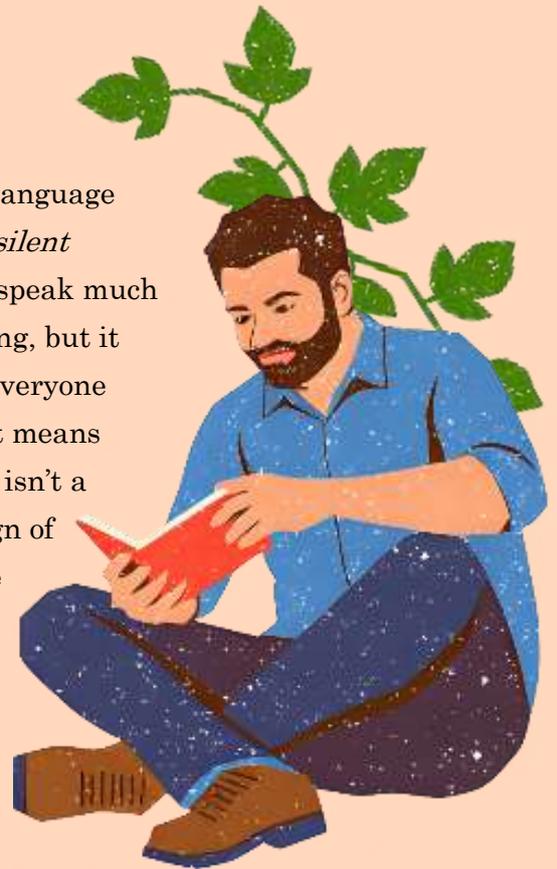
*harvest 収穫, ritual 儀式, blessing 祝福*



# SILENT PERIOD

Do you ever wonder why it feels so difficult to express yourself in a language you're learning? Don't worry, you might just be in what's called the *silent period*. This is a stage in language acquisition where learners don't speak much while they're still developing their skills. It may seem like a bad thing, but it isn't. In fact, it's a natural part of the learning process that almost everyone experiences. People who haven't heard of this concept might think it means their skills aren't improving, but that's not the case. Although there isn't a single clear reason why it happens, experts believe it's actually a sign of progress. As we learn more about a language, we often become more careful with grammar and vocabulary. The silent period can also occur because we're still gathering the knowledge we need before feeling confident enough to speak.

*language acquisition* 言語習得, *expert* 専門家, *occur* 起こる



## DREAM

By M.I.

I ran through the endless corridor  
her footsteps echoing —  
a scary old woman.

Breath sliced the air like broken glass  
and fear stitched itself into my skin.

I fell —  
the world turned slow,  
and her hands found my throat,  
warm, familiar  
like they'd been waiting all along.

No air,  
only the rhythm of my heartbeat  
humming against her fingers —  
or were they mine?

When I woke up,  
the truth clung to me:  
it wasn't her who tried to take my breath.

*corridor* 廊下, *echoing* 反響する, *stitched* 縫った, *humming* 鼻歌を歌う, *clung* しがみついた

